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LET THERE BE LIFE: NOTES TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF ART
IN THE WORK OF D. H. LAWRENCE AND WALLACE STEVENS

by

Michael Dace Caufield

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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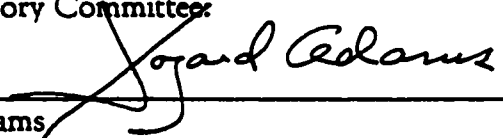
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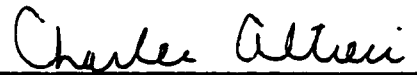
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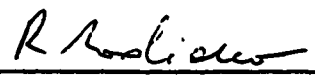


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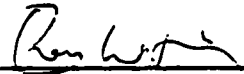
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Abstract

LET THERE BE LIFE: NOTES TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF ART
IN THE WORKS OF D. H. LAWRENCE AND WALLACE STEVENS

by Michael Dace Caufield

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This dissertation is a study of D. H. Lawrence and Wallace Stevens. It examines the philosophical attitudes with which Lawrence and Stevens viewed their own creative powers. How Lawrence and Stevens developed aesthetic theories based on "feeling" is the thesis of the dissertation (in a strict etymological sense of the word "aesthetic" -- *aisthesthai* [f. vb. stem *αἰσθε* -- 'feel, apprehend by the senses' OED]). The relationship between traditional rationalist philosophy and feeling (Reason vs Imagination) provides the dialectical agon of the study as Lawrence and Stevens are analyzed within the context of their modernist contemporaneity, and, simultaneously and more broadly, within a frame combining recent critical theory, biological theories of feeling, cosmological theories of quantum mechanics, and formal academic criticism of their work.

The idea of unmediated experience -- of feeling the world -- is presented by examining themes it configures in Lawrence and Stevens: 'nobleness' of refined sensate perception, the need for 'newness', belief in art as a redemptive power, and the aestheticising of creative isolation while effecting a nomenclature for spirits of mind and place. These themes are charted in conjunction with Lawrence's flight from England and Stevens's withdrawal into imagined landscapes. How a homeless English literalist and a home-bound American abstract realist come to establish similar conceptions of the primordial creative force, how feeling manifests itself in descriptive

language, and, how thought, as the very act of description itself, determines identity are questions this dissertation works through to suggest how Stevens and Lawrence arrive at congruent conclusions about what is at the center of their literary pursuits: "The all-commanding subject matter of poetry is life. It is life that we are trying to get at in poetry. Thought is life" (NA 28, OP 185, 198); "Nothing is important except life.... What we want is life, and life-energy inside us. Where it comes from, or what it is, we don't know, and never shall. It is the capital X of all our knowledge" (PH 535, PHII 428).

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ABBREVIATIONS

References to the works of D. H. Lawrence and Wallace Stevens are cited parenthetically in the text by abbreviated title and page numbers. Complete publishing information is listed in the bibliography.

Lawrence, D. H.

- AR *Aaron's Rod*
- AP *Apocalypse*
- CP *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence*
- EP *Etruscan Places*
- FU *Fantasia of the Unconscious/Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*
- FLC *The First Lady Chatterly*
- JTLJ *John Thomas and Lady Jane*
- KG *Kangaroo*
- LCL *Lady Chatterly's Lover*
- L *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, Volumes I-VII*
- MN *Mr. Noon*
- PH *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*
- PHII *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works by D. H. Lawrence*
- PS *The Plumed Serpent*
- RB *The Rainbow*

RDP *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*
SS *Sea and Sardinia*
SL *Sons and Lovers*
SM *St. Mawr and The Man Who Died*
SCAL *Studies in Classic American Literature*
WL *Women in Love*

Stevens, Wallace

CP *Collected Poems*
L *Letters*
NA *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*
OP *Opus Posthumous*

Introduction

Everyone knows that there is no agreement in method. The Neo-Kantians all believe that the procedure of philosophy must consist in the analysis of concepts and their reduction to the ultimate elements of cognition. Bergson and Max Scheler consider intuition to be the decisive philosophical act. The phenomenological method of Husserl and Heidegger is flatly opposed to the empirio-criticism of Mach and Avenarius. The logicist of Bertrand Russell and Whitehead is the avowed enemy of the dialectic of Hegel. The kind of philosophizing one prefers depends, according to William James, on one's character and experience.

-- Max Horkheimer: *The Social Function of Philosophy*

There are therefore essentially but three kinds of philosophers and more are not possible: the one is those who give the whole to the subject and make the object a mere result involved in it; secondly those who give the whole to the object and make the subject, that is the reflecting and contemplating, feeling part, the mere result of that; and lastly those who, in very different ways, have attempted to reconcile these two opposites and bring them into one.

-- Coleridge: *Philosophical Lectures*

The philosopher proves that the philosopher exists. The poet merely enjoys existence.

-- Wallace Stevens: *The Necessary Angel*

This dissertation will present a study of D. H. Lawrence and Wallace Stevens. Its basic goal will be to evaluate the philosophical attitudes with which Lawrence and Stevens viewed their own creative powers. This evaluation will show how Lawrence and Stevens, to greater and lesser degrees, developed aesthetic theories based on "feeling" (in a strict etymological sense of the word aesthetic: *aísthēthai* [f. vb. stem αἰσθε- 'feel, apprehend by the senses.' OED]). "We have no language for the feelings" (PH 757), admits Lawrence when commenting on the difficulties experienced by writers caught up in "reconciling their metaphysic, their theory of being and knowing, with

their living sense of being" (PH 479). "What feelings do we want to carry through into the next epoch?" (PH 520), asks Lawrence,

What feelings will carry us through? What is the underlying impulse in us that will provide the motive power for a new state of things? . . . How shall we even begin to educate ourselves in the feelings? Not by laying down laws, or commandments, or axioms and postulates. . . Not by words at all. . . We can look in the real novels, and there listen-in. Not listen to the didactic statements of the author, but to the low, calling cries of the characters.

(PH 520, 757, 759-60)

Stevens gives a similar directive to poets in *The Necessary Angel* when speaking of "the inarticulate voices which it is their business to overhear and record. . . . In which the feeling of one man is communicated to another in words . . . that take away all their verbatim" (NA 35, 118). The definition of feeling and its relationship to art, the body, consciousness, creative 'motive powers', absolutism in general, language in particular, and the artist in between, will provide a frame and act as non-binding thesis. As the dissertation advances, Lawrence will become the major object of study, Stevens the constant minor.

The evolution of critical assessments of Stevens and Lawrence continues. Stevens, after a slow start, attracted increasing attention as critical theory progressed from New Criticism to recent post-structural breakdowns and reassessments of canonic tradition. Lawrence, from the banning of *The Rainbow* onwards, found himself the star of a critical legacy which reflects his own compositional nature more than any category the canon uneasily held out for him: passionate, brilliantly haphazard (experimental) and variably prolific (to such a wide-ranging degree as to invite limited critical focus ~ just the novels or the poetry or the short stories or the travel literature or the essays or the philosophical treatises). "The times are especially auspicious for further studies," declares Virginia Hyde in her 1992 *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology* as she advances the claim that Lawrence's canon "argues anew the necessity

of our learning unfamiliar systems in order to understand. . . . His works require such treatment as Blake's have received, unlocking the "code" of typological meaning."¹ Michael Black calls for similar action in his 1991 *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works*: "Any new approach must be based on a radical re-reading. It happens that the fundamental scholarly work being done on the texts and the life make such a re-reading possible and necessary."² Such statements could serve as partial answer to Sandra M. Gilbert in her introduction of Gail Mandell's *The Phoenix Paradox* (1984), where, after listing the usual famous complaints by Eliot, Blackmur, and others, she asks, "How and why have so many readers failed to understand . . . truths about Lawrence?"³

The 'failure' to understand Lawrence, or at least the effort needed to appreciate his works on terms suitable to the site they inhabit, is being redressed in the work of critics like Michael Bell and Anne Fernihough. Bell pursues Lawrence ontologically with Heideggerian models on the premise that "the dramatic study of feeling in Lawrence is philosophically specific. States of feeling are inseparable from states of being. Without an appreciation of the one aspect the other loses much of its point."⁴ Fernihough, also employing Heidegger, maps the tight-wires between aesthetics and ideology upon which Lawrence, as misread modernist, moved: "One of the most obvious links between Lawrence and Heidegger is their shared hostility towards what they see to be the inherently idealist bent of Western culture. For both of them, aesthetics brings into sharp focus a disabling opposition at the heart of Western metaphysics, namely the distinction between the sensuous and suprasensuous worlds, and, indeed, for both of them the expression 'Western metaphysics' is a virtual tautology."⁵ Feeling and its relation to the activity of making differentiations between

¹ Virginia Hyde, *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1992) xvi.

² Michael Black, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works* (London: Macmillan, 1991) 1.

³ Gail Mandell, *The Phoenix Paradox: A Study of Renewal through Change in the Poems of D. H. Lawrence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1984) xv.

⁴ Michael Bell, *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) 5-6.

⁵ Anne Fernihough, *D. H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 7.

sensuous and suprasensuous worlds is crucial for 'understanding' Lawrence. The works of Hyde, Black, Bell and Fernihough approach this relation with the overall aim of contextualizing Lawrence in traditions -- typological, philosophical, and political. Stevens as well has received similar treatment, from, among many, B. J. Leggett's careful tabulation of Stevens under the influence of philosophers in *Wallace Stevens and Poetic Theory* (1987), James Longenbach's look at politics and war in *Wallace Stevens: The Plain Sense of Things* (1991), and John Newcomb's assessment of critical positions in *Wallace Stevens and Literary Canons* (1992). Yet, of all the influential relationships Lawrence and Stevens maintained over their careers, a primary one has received little attention: their direct *felt* relationship with the creative force. This study will resist the mediational and favor the heuristic principle of criticism in order to pursue the ahistorical aspects of feeling -- what Stevens calls "that part of the truth of the world that has its origin in the feelings" (OP 190). Rather than overattempt an historicist taxonomy of feeling generic to physical or philosophical constitutions, feeling will be factored as a constant variable, a delta x to the unknowable y of the creative force as it generates precise descriptions by Lawrence and Stevens in "the book of reconciliation,/ Book of a concept only possible/ In description, canon central in itself" (CP 345). The creative force itself will receive extra critical attention in deference to its being the principle object of their description. Tzvetan Todorov comments that literature "is not required -- even assuming the task is within the realm of possibility -- to describe the specific historical forms of a society; that is not where the truth lies. . . . Literature is always an attempt to reveal to us an unknown side of human existence, and thus although it has no privileged access to truth, it never stops searching for it."⁶

The exploration of the unknown sides of human experience proceeds by feeling one's way out of what Lawrence calls "the great dark knowledge you can't have in

⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, *Literature and Its Theorists: A Personal View of Twentieth-Century Criticism*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) 164.

your head -- the dark involuntary being" (WL 92), what Stevens names "the essential shadow,/ Moving and being, the image at its source" (CP 223); where the creative force produces

hymns . . . like a stubborn brightness
Approaching in the dark approaches
Of time and place, becoming certain,
The organic centre of responses . . .

The highest man with nothing higher
Than himself, his self, the self embraces
The self of the hero, the solar single

. . . the solitary figure.

(CP 279, 280, 281)

"To be alone creates a third world without knowledge," Stevens claims (CP 323). Lawrence similarly notes: "I will stay alone, just alone. Alone, and give myself to the unseen presences, serve only the other, unseen presences" (SM 139). Such endeavor allows one to perceive "the God that is hidden in everything . . . the hidden mystery -- the hidden cause. All: what you see when you see in full . . . if your third eye is open" (SM 55). Entering this third-term world allows for an intensification of aesthetic apprehension, a process utilized by Van Gogh, of whom Lawrence observes "the vision on the canvas is a third thing, utterly intangible and inexplicable" (PH 527). Achievement of third-term vision finds reward in, according to Stevens,

The organic consolation, the complete
Society of the spirit when it is
Alone (CP 309)

T. S. Eliot derides this form of creative pursuit in *After Strange Gods* by placing solitary artists like Lawrence among those “interesting heretics” who “have an exceptionally acute perception, or profound insight, of some part of the truth; an insight more important often than the inferences of those who are aware of more.”⁷ Such insight remains meaningless, Eliot claims, until the more-aware critic can mediate, can “redress the balance, effect the compensation”⁸ of the insight to the whole truth. Van Gogh, another heretic who worked in creative isolation, remarks that “as for the artist’s madness . . . I do not say that I especially am not infected through and through, but I say and will maintain that our antidotes and consolations may, with a little good will, be considered ample compensation.”⁹ Determining who benefits from the art of how artists and critics “effect compensations” will provide another dialectical motif for this study as notions of isolation, alienation, community, and the function of criticism are discussed.

The idea of ‘unmediated’ experience -- of feeling the world -- will be presented by examining themes it configures in Lawrence and Stevens: ‘nobleness’ of refined sensate perception, the need for ‘newness’, belief in art as a redemptive power, and the aestheticising of creative isolation while effecting a nomenclature for spirits of mind and place. These themes will be charted in conjunction with Lawrence’s flight from England and Stevens’s withdrawal into imagined landscapes. How a homeless English literalist and a home-bound American abstract realist come to establish similar conceptions of the primordial creative force, how feeling manifests itself in their use of descriptive language, and, how thought, as the very act of description itself, determines relations with the creative force (life) are questions this paper will work through to suggest how Stevens and Lawrence arrive at congruent conclusions about what is at the center of their literary pursuits: “The all-commanding subject matter of poetry is life. It is life that we are trying to get at in poetry. Thought is life” (NA 28, OP 185,

⁷ T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1934) 26.

⁸ Eliot, *After* 26.

⁹ Vincent Van Gogh, *The Complete Letters* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1991) 132.

198); "Nothing is important except life. . . . What we want is life, and life-energy inside us. Where it comes from, or what it is, we don't know, and never shall. It is the capital X of all our knowledge" (PH 535, PHII 428).

As these themes advance they will be visited by critical theorists who also develop recuperative third-term systems as a means to mediate relations within the literary world. Connecting to 'life' will remain a focal point. "Criticism needs to admit its role as a mediator between life and literature,"¹⁰ Siebers declares in *The Ethics of Criticism*. Said emphasizes this claim in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, "I shall be explicit -- criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing."¹¹ Todorov completes the exclamation: "It is time to come back to the self-evident facts that we should never have forgotten: literature has to do with human existence, it would be nothing at all if it did not allow us to reach a better understanding of life."¹² The problem of bringing life to bear as a relevant marker in the world of letters will be investigated as a correlative of defining what constitutes subjective agency. From this definition a rough hypothesis will emerge: the telos/mythos of all constructive/creative energy is the demarcation of a site where consciousness *feels* at home. Also fed into the fray will be contemporary science, a field where cosmology is newly resurgent in the writings of Roger Penrose, Menas Kafatos, Robert Nadeau, Rupert Sheldrake, and, Wolfgang Pauli, who, in *Quantum Questions*, observes: "I consider the ambition of overcoming opposites, including also a synthesis embracing both rational understanding and the mystical experience of unity, to be the mythos, spoken and unspoken, of our present day and age."¹³

It is not remarkable that feeling has not been the featured thetic principle of any major strain of modern criticism as it still suffers from a lack of empirical applicability, a problem noted by R. P. Blackmur in *A Critic's Job of Work* [his italics]: "As no

¹⁰ Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 42.

¹¹ Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 29.

¹² Todorov, *Theorists* 164.

¹³ Wolfgang Pauli, *Quantum Questions*, ed. Ken Wilbur (Boulder: New Science Library, 1984) 163.

amount of physics and physiology can explain the *feeling* of things seen as green or even certify their existence, so no amount of linguistic analysis can explain the *feeling* or existence of a poem." Yet he simultaneously maintains that the "reality in literature is an object of contemplation and of feeling . . . not a route of speculation."¹⁴ Frye equates this feeling with the "direct experience which is central to criticism yet forever excluded from it."¹⁵ Perhaps criticism will never advance upon the efficacy of Emily Dickinson's dictum that it's poetry if you "feel physically" as if the top of your head were taken off. How to approach the direct experience of feeling through which literature signifies life is the descriptive problem which, regardless of charges of it having been mooted by post-structuralist theory, remains central to any analysis of texts by authors whose stated intention is to hold "life" up as their directional grail. Suzanne Langer observes that "direct perception of artistic import is not systematic and cannot be manipulated according to any rule. It is intuitive, immediate, and its deliverances are ineffable. That is why no amount of artistic perceptiveness ever leads to scientific knowledge of the reality expressed, which is the life of feeling. What it gives us is always and only an image."¹⁶ The life of feeling according to Lawrence and Stevens is the active experience of the creative force, with such experiences registered through description producing a book of images tautologically entitled life and formally called art. "What makes a work important," Langer remarks further, "is not the category of its expressed feeling, which may be obvious or, on the contrary, impossible to name, but the articulation of the experiential form."¹⁷ Langer's analytical differentiation between "category" and "articulation" agrees with Lawrence's view that "the human sciences -- philosophy, ethics, politics -- can never be sciences at all. There can never be an exact science dealing with individual life" (KG 330), because, he continues,

¹⁴ R. P. Blackmur, *A Critic's Job of Work*, in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1986) 901, 902.

¹⁵ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 27.

¹⁶ Suzanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982) 29.

¹⁷ Langer, *Mind* 29.

There is always the unstable *creative* element present in life, and this science can never tackle. Science is cause-and-effect. Before we can begin any of the so-called humane sciences we must take on trust a purely unscientific fact: namely, that every living creature has an individual soul, however trivial or rudimentary, which connects it individually with the source of all life, as man, in the religious terminology, is connected with God . . . To call this connection the will-to-live is not quite sufficient. It is more than a will-to-persist. It is a will-to-live in the further sense, a will-to-change, a will-to-evolve, a will towards further creation of the self. The urge towards evolution if you like. But it is more than evolution. There is no simple cause-and-effect sequence. The change from caterpillar to butterfly is not cause and effect. It is a new gesture in creation. Science can wriggle as hard as it likes, but the change from caterpillar to butterfly is utterly unscientific, illogical, and *unnatural*, if we take science's definition of nature. It is an answer to the strange creative urge, the God-whisper, which is the one and only everlasting motive for everything. (KG 331)

As the study draws towards conclusion, the dialectical main themes of critical recuperation and artistic individuation/isolation will be linked to a prophecy made by Nietzsche concerning technology and the rise of cultural mediocrity and will provide an integrative model for Lawrence's similar role as prophet against the decline of the West. The primacy of the individual as self-creating agent, which Lawrence and Nietzsche hold out in varying degrees, and for which Stevens makes eloquent claims, is a theme that will be presented by casting Lawrence and Stevens as Romantics who cannot accept the emergence of the ironic priesthoods of fallen culture (high bishop Eliot) and Modernism's new champion of human agency: the anti-hero. Lawrence and Stevens counter the eradication of the heroic element of subjective agency with forms of 'noble' intentionality. "Nothing matters," Lawrence states, "but that strange flame of inborn nobility" fed by "the aristocracy of the invisible powers, the greater influences" (SM 75, 119). Stevens remarks, "There is no element more conspicuously absent from contemporary poetry than nobility. . . For the sensitive poet nothing is more difficult than the affirmations of nobility and yet there is nothing he requires of himself more persistently" (NA 35). And yet, Stevens admits, "It is hard to think of a

thing more out of time than nobility" (NA 35). Nietzsche's forecasting of the death of the noble subject is anticipatory not only of the rise of modernism's anti-hero but of the complete rout of authorial ideality as post-structurally executed by Foucault, Derrida, and Baudrillard (three among many). The nobility Nietzsche identifies as being degraded by the contingencies of cultural order is left to fend for itself in the conceptualizations of artists who, like Lawrence and Stevens, emphasize the specific role of individual creativity and its ability to fashion, however isolated, a "universe that supplements the manqué" (CP 309) -- the 'missing' third term supplied by aesthetic constructivism of art. Stevens and Lawrence's desire to establish direct creative relations with the world -- the world not as historically constructed but as personally experienced -- is Romantic insofar as it adheres to an organicism modeled on 'natural' force. "Life, not the artist," Stevens notes, "creates or reveals reality" (NA 99), and, for linguistically-bound humans, for "Men Made Out Of Words", he elaborates that

Life consists
Of propositions about life. The human

Revery is a solitude in which
We compose these propositions

The whole race is a poet that writes down
The eccentric propositions of its fate.
(CP 355-56)

Light/dark, mind/body, subject/object, reason/imagination, community/isolation, recuperation/alienation, closure/disrupture, meaning/indeterminacy, Enlightenment-bred clarity/glib opaque immanence of Baudrillardian simulacra -- these oppositions are themes this dissertation will plot against the breadth of the works of Lawrence and Stevens. 'Truth' as a conceptual ethic will act as a final consolidating theme and will be factored as that life-force which centers the relationship between creativity and culture, between otherness and community, between the individual and the great

collective 'we' of philosophical moralizing. For Lawrence and Stevens the 'highest' truth is that site (sight + insight) where compositional consciousness works through the condition known as human to select points where life and home (self-affirming center) become synonymous. "The purpose of poetry is to make life complete in itself" (OP 188), Stevens writes. Lawrence adds:

It seems as if the great aim and purpose in human life were to bring all life into the human consciousness. And this is the final meaning of work: the extension of human consciousness. The lesser meaning of work is the achieving of self-preservation. From this lesser, immediate necessity man always struggles to be free. From the other, greater necessity, of extending the human consciousness, man does not struggle to be free. . .

But the bringing of life into human consciousness is not an aim in itself, it is only a necessary condition of the progress of life itself. Man is himself the vivid body of life, rolling glimmering against the void. In his fullest living he does not know what he does, his mind, his consciousness, unacquaint, hovers behind, full of extraneous gleams and glances, and altogether void of knowledge. . .

And yet, that he may go on, may proceed with his living, it is necessary that his mind, his consciousness, should extend behind him. The mind itself is one of life's later-developed habits. *To know* is a force, like any other force. Knowledge is only one of the conditions of this force, as combustion is one of the conditions of heat. *To will* is only a manifestation of the same force, as expansion may be a manifestation of heat. And this knowing is now an inevitable habit of life's, developed late; it is a force active in the immediate rear of life, and the greater its activity, the greater the forward, unknown movement ahead of it. (PH 431)

Chapter I

Absolutism and the Ethics of Reconciliation

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself -- whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach the human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end -- deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space -- or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

-- Emerson: *Nature*

All writers, all artists of any kind, insofar as they have had any philosophical or critical power, perhaps just insofar as they have been deliberate artists at all, have had some philosophy, some criticism of their art; and it has often been this philosophy, or this criticism, that has evoked their most startling inspiration, calling into outer life some portion of the divine life, of the buried reality, which could alone distinguish in the emotions what their philosophy or their criticism would extinguish in the intellect.

-- Yeats: *The Symbolism of Poetry*

It is the height of conceit to try to force one to define what is indefinable.

-- Van Gogh: *Letters*

The search for an Absolute as a central theme for philosophical inquiries on the nature of consciousness has, in its many failures, produced the famous mind/body dualism which stretches from Plato up through modern critical theory. How to categorize what the senses apprehend and how to canonize such categories into orders which guide cultural identity formation are basic issues which still beg the centuries-old

question: what can be verified as truth? The 'truth' and how best to establish a methodology to prove/disprove/ignore/bracket its predicate force remains -- regardless of any operative crisis within academia regarding the future of literature -- a central problem for critics examining writers whose work involves direct engagement with the dialectical problems of Western philosophy. Rational models of thought and imaginative constructs of art both offer verifications of reality, proofs which invariably fall back on themselves as evidence of what they are proving: that there is a demonstrable metaphysical presence (power) informing a fundamental grammar (structure) which outlines phenomenal events perceived as life. Reason vs Imagination: the conversation continues . . .

Empirical ground charted between the poles of discursive reason and the emotive arts have led to the development of theories which introduce reconciliatory third-term systems as a means to overcome subject/object aporias inherent in Western philosophical tradition. D. H. Lawrence, in an early essay, "Study of Thomas Hardy", remarks:

Most fascinating in all artists is this antinomy between Law and Love, between the Flesh and the Spirit . . . because man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory. It seems as if the history of humanity. . . has reached and proved the Two Complementary Absolutes, the Absolute of Nature, and the Absolute of Knowledge. What remains is to reconcile the two.

(PH 476, 510, 479)

Exactly how a theory might resolve the antinomial tendencies produced by linguistic attempts to define 'absolute' truth revolves around what referential system a theorist affixes as empirical basis for third-term reconciliation. Frank Kermode remarks that "this was a matter Lawrence thought about intensely throughout his career; and ultimately he solved the problem by seeing the work of art as that third force, the

reconciler of opposites."¹⁸ Wallace Stevens makes art serve a similar purpose, B. J. Leggett observes, with his "assertion that the poet must not choose between imagination and reality but must regard them as equal and inseparable . . . the reconciliation of imagination and reality follows directly from the poet's realization of his abstractive powers."¹⁹ Joseph Carroll casts this reconciliation as a poetic development which "can best be understood as a struggle to overcome the metaphysical limitations of a simple dualism and to achieve a poetic absolute."²⁰ Jacqueline Brogan states that this absolute is for Stevens "a possibility beyond the realm of language, born from the desire created by the absolute being unattainable in words."²¹ Stevens himself, noting the "difference between philosophic truth and poetic truth is the difference between logical and empirical knowledge," claims that "poetic truth is an agreement with reality" (NA 54) where "absolute fact includes everything that the imagination includes" (NA 61). This "intimidating thesis" (NA 61) weaves itself through Stevens's "fiction of an absolute" (CP 404) as

the philosopher's search

For an interior made exterior
And the poet's search for the same exterior made
Interior

(CP 481)

Stevens's third-term aesthetic, traceable to varying degrees throughout his work, is sketched out in "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" of which he comments in an unpublished letter: "The purpose of the NOTES is to suggest the possibility of a third idea: the idea of a fictive being, or state, or thing as the object of belief by way of making up for that element in humanism which is its chief defect."²² Lawrence also is

¹⁸ Frank Kermode, *D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Viking Press, 1973) 142.

¹⁹ B. J. Leggett, *Wallace Stevens and Poetic Theory* (Chapel Hill: UNCP, 1987) 36-37.

²⁰ Joseph Carroll, *Wallace Stevens' Supreme Fiction, A New Romanticism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1987) 1.

²¹ Jacqueline Brogan, *Stevens and Simile: A Theory of Language* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986) 65-66.

²² Wallace Stevens, Huntington Library, unpublished letters, 21 April 1943.

motivated to address the problem of the lack of an "object of belief" generated by dualistic negation. He comments in "The Crown":

We have known both directions. The Pagan, aristocratic, lordly, sensuous, has declared the Eternity of the Origin; the Christian, humble, spiritual, unselfish, democratic, has declared the Eternity of the Issue, the End. We have heard both declarations, we have seen each great ideal fulfilled, as far as is possible, at this time, on earth. And now we say: "There is no eternity, there is no infinite, there is no God, there is no immortality."

And all the time we know we are cutting off our nose to spite our face. Without God, without some sort of immortality, not necessarily life-everlasting, but without *something* absolute, we are nothing. Yet now, in our spitefulness of self-frustration, we would rather be nothing than listen to our own being. . .

The individual psyche divided against itself divides the world against itself, and an unthinkable progress of calamity ensues unless there be a reconciliation. (PH II 410, F 240)

Stevens's need -- "It is possible, possible, possible. It must/ Be possible" (CP 404) -- to construct a poetic intentionality which can sustain objects of belief within the fiction of an absolute is akin to Lawrence's need for "*something* absolute" in that it seeks fulfillment by working through the dialogical agon of first and third-person consciousness (self/other, presence/difference, temporality/eternity) with no telos save for the autotelic directions suggested by artistic process. "Not to impose, not to have reasoned at all," is the technique Stevens advocates, a *techne* wherein consciousness reduces itself and is "stripped of every fiction except one" (CP 404), a reduction which directs predicate creative force, the Muse, the "Angel," to "Be silent in your luminous cloud and hear the luminous melody of proper sound" (CP 404). But, Stevens queries, "What am I to believe?"

If the angel in his cloud,
Serenely gazing at the violent abyss,
Plucks on his strings to pluck abysmal glory,

Leaps downward through evening's revelations, and
 On his spreaden wings, needs nothing but deep space,
 Forgets the gold centre, the golden destiny,

Grows warm in the motionless motion of his flight,
 Am I to imagine this angel less satisfied?
 Are the wings his, the lapis-haunted air?

Is it he or is it I that experience this?
 Is it I then that keep saying there is an hour
 Filled with expressible bliss, in which I have

No need, am happy, forget need's golden hand,
 Am satisfied without solacing majesty,
 And if there is an hour there is a day,

There is a month, a year, there is a time
 In which majesty is a mirror of the self:
 I have not but I am and as I am, I am.
 (CP 404)

In the above lines Stevens positions cognitive agency between immortalizing Platonic ideality ("golden destiny") and timeless otherness ("deep space"), where the dualistic negation ("I have not but I am") is contained purposelessly ("without solacing majesty") and atemporally (hour+day+month+year=a time=anytime) to find resolution within the mirror of those forces as a majestic third-term ("I am"). Similarly Lawrence, noting that artistic empiricism springs not from ontological fixation back to the source of some "endless ancestry" nor from "the Goal far ahead . . . life everlasting" (*PHII* 410), situates self-reflective agency as a third-term phenomenon occurring between the two eternities of origin and end: "all the time the two streams keep fusing into the third reality of real creation. . . For life is really in the two, the absolute is the pure relation, which is both" (*PHII* 396, 404). Poetry "refreshes life", Stevens observes, by revealing "the first idea . . . It satisfies/ Belief in an immaculate beginning/ And sends us, winged by an unconscious will,/ To an immaculate end" (CP 382). As a poet Stevens readily admits he is "not competent to discuss reality as a philosopher" (OP 224),

nevertheless he measures the dualistic impasses bred by the 'interior/exterior' projections of Western philosophy and moves towards the construction of a linguistic site where poetry can perform "A profounder reconciling, an act,/ An affirmation free from doubt" (CP 247). Lawrence and Stevens develop intricate notions of 'betweenness' for the act of describing how consciousness operates in the construction of its own tropological mechanism, wherein, Stevens claims, one considers "Poetry as manifestation of the relationship that man creates *between* himself & reality" (OP 204).

Lawrence's conceptualization of third-term betweenness is grounded in pre-Socratic philosophy. Reading through John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, Lawrence found the fragments of Heraclitus particularly attenuated to a theory of creativity he was developing. Mara Kalnins remarks that Lawrence assimilated Heraclitus "and other pre-Socratic teachings about the duality of the soul and the metamorphosis of being, and imaginatively adapted them to his own ends which were to show how that duality can create the third thing, the physical body itself."²³ These adaptations find their most direct statement in "The Crown", a long essay Lawrence wrote early in his career for *The Signature* in 1915. Drawn by the idea of balance through oppositional strife, Lawrence recasts Heraclitus's elemental formula for the soul with a historical mixture of Pagan and Christian eternities labeled "Issue" and "End". The strife generated by this duality creates a vortex wherein Lawrence observes life coming from "the great Creator, the Beginner" while moving towards "the Comforter, the Goal" (PHIII 410). "But," Lawrence asks while calculating the temporal sensations of consciousness generated by the two eternities, "what am I between?" (PH 410). The attempt to answer this question keynotes his philosophical quest for an absolute:

The two eternities are *not* one eternity. It is only by denying the very meaning of speech itself that we can argue them into oneness. They are two relative to one another. They are only *one* in their mutual relation, which relation is timeless and absolute. The eternities are temporal and relative.

²³ Mara Kalnins, "Symbolic Seeing: Lawrence and Heraclitus," *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*, ed. Mara Kalnins (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986) 181.

But their relation is constant, absolute without mitigation. The motion of the eternities is dual: they flow together, and they flow apart, they flow forever towards union, they start back for ever in opposition. . . This utter relation is timeless, absolute and perfect. It is in the Beginning and the End, just the same. Whether it be revealed or not, it is the same. It is the Unrevealed God: what Jesus called the Holy Ghost. . .

These two halves I always am. But I am never *myself* until they are consummated into a spark of oneness... And in this spark is my immortality, my non-mortal being, that which is not swept away down either direction of time... And immortality is not a question of time, of everlasting life. It is a question of consummate being. Most men die and perish away, unconsummated, unachieved. It is not easy to achieve immortality, to win a consummate being. It is supremely difficult. It means undaunted suffering and undaunted enjoyment, both. And when a man has reached his ultimate enjoyment and his ultimate suffering, *both*, then he knows the two eternities, then he is made absolute, created out of the two... The fulfilment is dual. And having known the dual fulfilment, then within the fulfilled soul is established the divine relation. (PH II 409, 410-11)

Lawrence's conception of "consummate being" combines Biblical typology, Western philosophy and his own cosmological inscription of elemental forces and materials as he examines how presence and subjectivity are constituted. Early Greek formulas of being were mixtures of primary elements, the elements providing the differential particulars whose opposition produced the relational arcs through which presence was generated. As such there was no great subject-object schism to overcome, there was instead a sense of radical immanence for life in general. The composite sum of life's relational arcs could be calculated as the wholeness perceived as external reality, but the relationship itself -- that which is always between -- remained the "Unrevealed God", what Lawrence describes as "at the centre, the old anti-idea: the dark God, forever unrevealed. The God who is many gods to many men: all things to all men. The source of passions and strange motives. It is a frightening thought, but very liberating: Life makes no absolute statement" (KG 299). Subjectivity posited as a form of cognizant 'betweenness' is dependent upon relation, given that no "Beginning" or "End" is attainable or fixable. This dependency reduces ultimate 'Truth' to a

relativized temporal factor of the worlds produced by the material contact of elements. Such a system allows for an immediacy of involvement with the present tense of the world, where presence itself is the telos of creative thought whose object is to describe the products of the unrevealable God of third-term relation. Relation, or "equilibrium, in its very best sense -- in the sense the Greeks *originally* meant it," Lawrence states in "Him with his Tail in His Mouth", a companion essay published with "The Crown," "stands for the strange spark that flies between two creatures, two things that are equilibrated, or in living relationship. I want," he continues, "in the Greek sense,

an equilibrium between me and the rest of the universe. . . And between us there shall exist the third thing, the *connaissance*. . . In the early Greeks, the spark between man and man, stranger and stranger, man and woman, stranger and strangeress, was alive and vivid. . . If it is to be life, then it is fifty per cent me, fifty per cent thee: and the third thing, the spark, which springs out of the balance, is timeless. Jesus, who saw it a bit vaguely, called it the Holy Ghost.
(*PHII* 433-34, 435)

Lawrence's attempt to fashion a subjectivity that could accommodate a more vital connection between 'mind' and 'world' is linked to Heidegger by Anne Fernihough who notes how early Greek ontology appealed to Heidegger for the same reason it drew Lawrence in -- it privileges the phenomenological presence of reality:

Heidegger, seeking to account for a current state of affairs in which method holds sway, finds a focal point in the radical change, in the seventeenth century, in the meaning of the term 'subject'. To illustrate the change, he invokes the ancient Greek culture and one of its key terms: *hypokeimenon* ('subject', literally 'that-which-lies-before'). For the ancient Greeks this term referred to the reality that 'presenced' itself before human beings. He goes on to argue that with Descartes, *hypokeimenon* came to find its locus in the self-consciousness, in the unity of thinking and being, posited in the *ego cogito [ergo] sum*, so that humanity could now *represent* reality to itself as an *object* of thought. Heidegger sees all subsequent thinkers in the Western metaphysical tradition to be trapped in this notion of 'objectness'.²⁴

²⁴ Anne Fernihough, *D. H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 143.

Stevens also employs Heraclitean imagery to depict the relational dynamic which powers his third-term recuperative operation: "I am between two infinite states/ on the mid-line dividing, between the infinite that waits/ and the long-abiding" (OP 143). Mutability, the concept Plato resisted as the one antithetical idea, becomes the second aesthetic maxim of "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction": "*It Must Change*" (CP 389). The desire for change, for metaphoric newness, charts the quest for the "romantic intoning" (CP 387) which utilizes the "golden fury" (CP 390) of natural creativity to distill "an erotic perfume, half of the body, half/ Of an obvious acid" (CP 390) which in turn activates a perpetual "beginning, not resuming" (CP 391) whose scent attracts the "Booming and Booming of the new-come bee" (CP 391) of artistic intention:

Two things of opposite natures seem to depend
On one another, as a man depends
On a woman, day on night, the imagined

On the real. This is the origin of change.
Winter and spring, cold copulars, embrace
And forth the particulars of rapture come.

Music falls on the silence like a sense,
A passion that we feel, not understand.
(CP 392)

Oppositional strife produces the basic universal creative spark -- both nature and culture are forced to acclimate themselves to the rhythms of competing difference (difference=all phenomena) whose signifying powers are relative to and "seem to depend/ On one another" (CP 392). Stevens views this dependency as that connection which allows eternities of Beginning and End to find temporal solvency (through the golden acid of change) in the third-term guise of "an intrinsic couple" which fuse "like two lovers/ That walk away as one" (CP 392). The third-term is fired by a "passion and ever-ready love. . . / of our earthy birth and here and now/ And where we live

and everywhere we live" (CP 395) whereby the "partaker partakes of that which changes him" (CP 392). The force that produces elemental participation is subtitled as "*That Which Cannot Be Fixed*" in "Two Versions of the Same Poem" (CP 353). The first version of the poem uses water-imaged metaphor to describe the creative force as a "water-carcass never-named/ . . . beating in the centre of/ The sea, a strength that tumbles everywhere" (CP 354). The metaphor is transposed into human endeavor in version two where oppositional flux allows absolutism ("undivided whole") to be broken by the combinative interchange of elements ("sea, earth, sky/. . . And fire"):

The human ocean beats against this rock
Of earth, rises against it, tide by tide,

Continually. And old John Zellar stands
On his hill, watching the rising and falling, and says:

Of what are these creatures, what element
Or -- yes: what elements, unreconciled

Because there is no golden solvent here?
If they were creatures of the sea alone,

But singular, they would, like water, scale
The uptopping top and tip of things, borne up

By the cadaver of these caverns, half-asleep.
But if they are of sea, earth, sky -- water

And fire and air and things not discomposed
From ignorance, not an undivided whole,

It is an ocean of watery images
And shapes of fire, and wind that bears them down.
(CP 354-55)

The "question of consummate being" for Lawrence is the quest for an art which can amplify description up to the same pitch maintained by Stevens's third-term "mirror of

the self" where artistic intentionality is projected as a product of differential Heraclitean betweenness: "The arrangement contains the desire of/ The artist" (CP 296) in "the contention, the flux/ Between the thing as idea and/ The idea as thing.../ This is the final Projection, C" (CP 295). Michael Bell notes that Lawrence "radically questioned the Western philosophical tradition which gave such primacy to the problem of how the external world is known to consciousness" and that he, like Heidegger, "elaborated a cardinal shift of philosophical emphasis from epistemological to ontological concerns."²⁵ Lawrence's notion of consciousness-producing betweenness doesn't shift so much as it conflates epistemological and ontological concerns into a uniform search for an expressive approach to life which tries to avoid the subject-object trap of traditional 'knowing'. Stevens negotiates the same concerns by conscripting them to serve as perimeters of a dialectic he labels "real" and "unreal", a dialectic which spins the act of knowing into perspectival assessments of the forces generated between them. David Jarraway, detailing Heideggerian traits in Stevens, remarks that "Stevens' impatience with the mediation of "merely knowing" . . . forms the basis of a much larger effort . . . to articulate precisely the permissions of the will to absolute Being and total Self-Presence on which belief might be founded."²⁶ Lawrence's impatience with merely knowing, compounded by his dislike of the self-conscious Christian ethos of generalized love, leads him toward the elements:

Elemental

Why don't people leave off being lovable
or thinking they are lovable, or wanting to be lovable,
and be a bit elemental instead?

Since man is made up of the elements
fire, and rain, and air, and live loam
and none of these is lovable
but elemental,

²⁵ Michael Bell, *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) 6.

²⁶ David Jarraway, *Wallace Stevens and the Question of Belief: Metaphysician in the Dark* (Baton Rouge: LSUP, 1993) 97.

man is lop-sided on the side of the angels.

I wish men would get back their balance among the elements
and be a bit more fiery, as incapable of telling lies
as fire is.

I wish they'd be true to their own variation, as water is,
which goes through all the stage of steam and stream and ice
without losing its head.

I am sick of lovable people,
somehow they are a lie.

(CP 505)

The descriptive planes that Lawrence and Stevens create within their art are empirically tied to the truth of what it is to 'honestly' record the experiential phenomenon of third-term betweenness as generated by the deep-structure dualism that orders the functional relation between language (subject) and material process (object). But what -- if the eternity of the End leads to Hegel's Absolute Spirit and the eternity of Origin leads to pagan fascination with surfaces (which flowers in the post-modern age as the cyber-/hyper-Real and the chaos of the Nietzschean New) -- are Lawrence and Stevens between? To what does their third term refer? Lawrence likens the non-referability of third-term betweenness to "H₂O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one,/ but there is also a third thing, that makes it water and nobody knows what that is./ The atom locks up two energies/ but it is a third thing present which makes it an atom" (CP 515). Heidegger observes in *Poetry Language and Thought* that "in themselves and in their interrelations artist and work are each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work their names -- art."²⁷ Art as a "third thing" is similar to a notion developed by Merleau-Ponty, who, Monika Langer notes, "endeavoured precisely to overturn the traditional

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 17.

distinction between 'consciousness' and 'object' by disclosing incarnate subjectivity as a *third kind of being* which is irreducible to either consciousness or objective body . . . this third term is primordially of the world."²⁸ The "third thing" Heidegger positions as prior to artist and work, and the "third kind of being" Merleau-Ponty situates as an inherent state of awareness of the 'of-ness' of phenomenal experience, refer to the somewhat unnameable predicate, an otherness, an empirical ground commonly described in general terms as a universal creative force, what Schelling calls "eternally creating primal energy."²⁹ The emanative properties of this force in its collective sense are labeled by Stevens and Lawrence as "life" itself. Stevens claims the creative force informs "a universal poetry that is reflected in everything" and provides the foundational element of "an unascertained and fundamental aesthetic" (NA 160) where to "give a sense of the freshness or vividness of life is a valid purpose for poetry" (OP 184). "All creation contributes," says Lawrence, "towards the achieving of a vaster, vivider cycle of life. That is the goal of living" (PHII 483). Continuing, he notes that

living and having being means the relatedness between me and all things. In so far as I am I, a being who is proud and in place, I have a connection with my circumambient universe, and I know my place. When the white cock crows, I do not hear myself, or some anthropomorphic conceit, crowing. I hear the not-me, the voice of the Holy Ghost. And every time I hear him, a fountain of vitality rushes up in my body. It is life. (PHII 481)

The unqualified sureness with which Lawrence and Stevens present "life" as predicate source of being and true subject of their art leaves them holding up philosophical mirrors whose taints lack the substantive analytical weight of professional philosophy. Lawrence's intense work with Bertrand Russell and circle of Cambridge intellectuals to form an ideological platform to guide England fell apart along the lines of what it was that should be afforded basic human life. Stevens's attempts to publish

²⁸ Monika Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception* (Tallahassee: FSUP, 1989) 157-158.

²⁹ Friedrich Schelling, *Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*, trans. Michael Bullock, qtd. in Herbert Read's *The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry* (London: Faber & Faber, 1953) 325.

his philosophical writings were politely turned down on the grounds that they were amateurish and derivative of writers like Henri Focillon, who, in *The Life of Forms in Art*, concludes "the substance of art is then human life itself."³⁰ Instead of approaching ontological absolutism academically, Stevens and Lawrence patchworked together notions that rely on an intuitive sense of how the creative process carries on its work. Any vagueness the term "life" presented analytically could be edged into clarity through the emotive power of art, a medium they considered more viable to convey exact meaning than the discursive language of modern philosophy, for, as Ezra Pound abbreviated, "philosophy MAKES NO PICTURE."³¹ Contemporary philosophers like Russell, G. E. Moore, Bergson and Santayana delivered their work within academic theatres and remained bound to the university systems which fostered them. Lawrence and Stevens, operating in isolations of their own design, appeared more responsive to stage directions suggested by Nietzsche:

Science is flourishing today and her good conscience is written all over her face, while the level to which all modern philosophy has gradually sunk invites mistrust and displeasure, if not mockery and pity. Philosophy reduced to "theory of knowledge," in fact no more than a timid epochism and doctrine of abstinence -- a philosophy that never gets beyond the threshold and takes pains to *deny* itself the right to enter -- that is philosophy in its last throes . . .

But today -- shouldn't we have reached the necessity of once more resolving on a fundamental shift in values, owing to another self-examination of man, another growth in profundity? Don't we stand at the threshold of a period which [has] the suspicion that the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is *unintentional* in it. . . Its needs and capacities are so far the same as those which physiologists posit for everything that lives, grows, and multiplies. . . Its intent in all this is to incorporate new 'experiences,' to file new things in old files -- growth -- or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth. . . To translate man back into nature . . . is the task, who would deny that?³²

³⁰ Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, trans. Charles Hogan and George Kuhler (New Haven: Yale UP, 1942) 60.

³¹ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York: New Directions, 1970) 91.

³² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage) 123, 44, 160, 161.

To translate man back into nature: "Nota: man is the intelligence of his soil,/ The sovereign ghost" (CP 27), writes Stevens in *The Comedian as the Letter C* as he takes up a theme which sounds consistently throughout his work -- the linguistic relationship between man and natural process. Stevens emphasizes that "A poem should stimulate the sense of living and of being alive" (OP 201). Robert Montgomery remarks in *Beyond Philosophy and Art* that "Nietzsche and Lawrence see it as their life's task to recover the unity that the Greeks experienced, to heal the split between man and nature."³³

The suggestion that Nietzsche's aesthetics are connected to a natural organicism would be contested by Fernihough who holds that "the self-consciousness of the subject established by Descartes finds its fullest expression in the Nietzschean concept of the will-to-power" where reality is "at the service of the preservation-enhancement of the subject's will, and in its 'epistemophilia' or lust for knowledge, is . . . the most extreme manifestation of nihilism in Western philosophy."³⁴ Fernihough uses Nietzsche to highlight the worst traits of technological mastery and fascistic enterprise by claiming nature is subsumed not sustained by will-to-power. Her use of a "Nietzschean concept" to consolidate Lawrence and Heidegger's aversion to technological man typifies the ease with which Nietzsche can be 'applied' through proleptic generalizations of his thought rather than upon direct statements. However, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche clearly presents will-to-power as the underwriter of "all organic functions":

Suppose nothing else were "given" as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other "reality" besides the reality of our drives -- for thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other: is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this "given" would not be *sufficient* for also understanding on the

³³ Robert Montgomery, *The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1985) 107.

³⁴ Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 145, 146.

basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or “material”) world? I mean, not as a deception, as “mere appearance” or “idea” (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect -- as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything still lies contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process -- as a kind of instinctive life in which all organic functions are still synthetically intertwined along with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, and metabolism -- as a *pre-form* of life ...

Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will -- namely, of the will to power . . . suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment -- it is *one* problem -- then one would have gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as -- *will to power*.³⁵

Nietzsche posits will-to-power as an *a priori* so that instead of providing a final fleur-du-mal for Cartesian thought he ‘frees’ the subject from dualism by allowing it to be ontologically unified by the organic concept of a creative force, a univocal power, which wires the “pre-form” of instinctive patterns of consciousness. Such a move is right in step with Heidegger and Lawrence’s appropriation of early Greek aesthetics in that reality is granted a constitutive power greater than the objective faculties of self-consciousness as championed by Enlightenment philosophy.

Misinterpretations of the concept “will-to-power” are compounded by translation as the words “will” and “power” move from German to English with easy-to-gloss generality. “We have a confused idea, that *will* and *power* are somehow identical,” Lawrence writes in “Blessed Are the Powerful”, another companion essay to “The Crown”, however, he continues, “power is not in the least like Will. Power comes to us, we know not how, from beyond. Whereas our will is our own” (PHII 436, 437). Fernihough does not mention this essay in her fine work on Lawrence, nor does she mention Aaron’s *Rod*, where again the generalized version of will-to-power is discussed by characters Lilly and Aaron:

³⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond* 47–48.

'We've got to accept the power motive, accept it in deep responsibility, do you understand me? It is a great life motive. It was that great dark power-urge which kept Egypt so intensely living for so many centuries. It is a vast dark source of life and strength in us now, waiting either to issue into true action, or to burst into cataclysm. Power -- the power urge. The will-to-power -- but not in Nietzsche's sense. Not intellectual power. Not mental power. Not conscious will-power. Not even wisdom. But dark, living, fructifying power. Do you know what I mean?'

'I don't know,' said Aaron.

'Take what you call love, for example. In the real way of love, the positive aim is to make the other person -- or persons -- happy. It devotes itself to the other or to others. But change the mode. Let the urge be the urge of power. Then the great desire is not happiness, neither of the beloved nor of oneself. Happiness is only one of many states, and it is horrible to think of fixing us down to one state. The urge of power does not seek for happiness any more than for any other state. It urges from within, darkly, for the displacing of the old leaves, the inception of the new. It is powerful and self-central, not seeking its centre outside, in some God or some beloved, but acting indomitably from within itself.' (AR 345)

Fernihough misinterprets Nietzsche along the same lines that Lawrence does: will-to-power is equated with the hegemonic side of self-conscious subjectivity. But will-to-power, according to Nietzsche, cannot be straitjacketed within such narrow confines. "By means of the synthetic concept 'I'", he explains, "a whole series of erroneous conclusions, and consequently of false evaluations of the will itself, has become attached to the act of willing."³⁶ Nietzsche views the will as a complex set of intentionalities which combine both thinking and sensation, a combination which reflects the same totality of process that Lawrence labels "life". Nietzsche uses the same word when placing his ultimate label on will-to-power:

Schopenhauer has given us to understand that the will alone is really known to us, absolutely and completely known, without subtraction or addition. But it seems to me that Schopenhauer only did what philosophers are in the habit of doing -- he adopted a popular prejudice and exaggerated it. Willing seems to me to be above all something complicated, something that is

³⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond* 26.

a unit only as a word -- and it is precisely in this one word that the popular prejudice lurks, which has defeated the always inadequate caution of philosophers. So let us for once be more cautious, let us be "unphilosophical": let us say that in all willing there is, first, a plurality of sensations. . . Just as sensations (and indeed many kinds of sensations) are to be recognized as ingredients of the will, so, secondly, should thinking also: in every act of the will there is a ruling thought . . .

Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength -- *life itself is will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results.³⁷

By equating will-to-power with life itself, Nietzsche delivers an ontology that agrees with Lawrence's in that power is presented as the deep structure before and beyond the will. Nietzsche's "will-to-power" and Lawrence's "power" synonymously find tautological definition as the composite force which generates life process. Strict, simple definition is not possible, Lawrence warns, because "the moment you get down to the real basis of anything, it will dissolve into a thousand problematic constituents" (FU 150). Continuing in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he argues that the complexity of reality is deserving of complex description (the same argument Nietzsche uses in his critique of Schopenhauer's generalization of the will):

Mr. Einstein's Theory of Relativity does not supersede the Newtonian Law of Gravitation or of Inertia. It only says, 'Beware! The Law of Inertia is not the simple ideal proposition you would like to make of it. It is a vast complexity. Gravitation is not one elemental uncouth force. It is a strange, infinitely complex, subtle aggregate of forces.' And yet, however much it may waggle, a stone does fall to earth if you drop it.

We should like, vulgarly, to rejoice and say that the new Theory of Relativity releases us from the old obligation of centrality. It does no such thing. It only makes the old centrality much more strange, subtle, complex, and vital. It only robs us of the nice old ideal simplicity. (FU 149)

³⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond* 25, 21.

Lawrence and Nietzsche agree that the self-conscious will is dependent upon connection to power -- to life. Nietzsche stresses in *The Will to Power* that "all feeling, willing, thinking, movement" experienced by an individual is subject to the "invisible life appertaining to it" where to "gain the correct idea of the nature of our subjectivity" one should utilize "a valuation of *not-knowing*, of seeing things on a broad scale, of perspectivity."³⁸ Lawrence, describing the "invisible life" of subjectivity as "dark knowledge", illustrates the same point in *Women in Love* with dialogue between Birkin and Hermione:

'But your passion is a lie,' he went on violently. 'It isn't passion at all, it is your *will*. It's your bullying will, you want to clutch things and have them in your power. Any why? Because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality. You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to *know*. . . There's the whole difference in the world between the actual sensual being, and the vicious mental-deliberate profligacy our lot goes in for. . . You've got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being. . .'

'But how? How can you have knowledge not in your head?' she asked, quite unable to interpret his phrases.

'In the blood,' he answered; 'when the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness . . . the great dark knowledge -- the dark involuntary being. . .'

'If only we could learn how to use our will,' said Hermione, 'we could do anything. The will can cure anything, and put anything right. That I am convinced of -- if only we use the will properly, intelligibly. . . I was a very queer and nervous girl. And by learning to use my will, simply by using my will, I made myself right.'

'It is fatal to use the will like that,' cried Birkin.

(WL 92, 93, 94, 201)

Lawrence's adjectival use of the word "dark", pervasive throughout all his writings, is most commonly used to connote the precognitive realm of the creative force. The

³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968) 271.

same word is responsible for common misreadings of his conception of human intentionality, where, for example, suggestions to “drift into a sort of blood-darkness” to “truly submit to the dark majesty”, to “the dark God beyond a man” to the “non-human Gods, non-human human being” (KG 267, 196, 367, 382) are taken as evidence of his leanings toward authoritarian principles and outright support of fascism. But such claims can be defused by examining any one of many passages which repeatedly use the image of elemental ‘darkness’. In *Kangaroo*, a so-called “authoritarian leadership”³⁹ novel, principal character Richard Lovat Somers articulates one of Lawrence’s many definitions of darkness:

For he believed in the inward soul, in the profound unconscious of man. Not an ideal God. The ideal God is a proposition of the mental consciousness, all-too-limitedly human. “No,” he said to himself. “There is God. But forever dark, forever unrealisable: forever and forever. The unutterable name, because it can never have a name. The great living darkness which we represent by the glyph, God.”

There is this ever-present, living darkness inexhaustible and unknowable. It is. And it is all the God and the gods

And so it is. Life is so wonderful and complex, and *always* relative. A man’s soul is a perpetual call and answer. He can never be the call and the answer in one: *between* the dark God and the incarnate man: *between* the dark soul of woman, and the opposite dark soul of man: and finally, *between* the souls of man and man, strangers to one another, but answerers. So it is for ever, the eternal weaving of calls and answers, and the fabric of life woven and perishing again. (KG 298, 300)

Throughout his entire canon Lawrence continuously routes the conception of subjectivity back to the dark unseen fount of the creative force, oppositionally back, to

³⁹ Cornelia Nixon, *Lawrence’s Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 190-91. Nixon offers an extensive misreading of Lawrence by reducing all principle male characters in his fiction to an intentionality of hegemonic mastery based on hatred of women. Her thesis ignores the fineness of Lawrence’s appreciation of the feminine (universal and particular) in order to push the suppositional (sexist) claim that Lawrence, as a *real* man *really* hated women because he was sexually frustrated (incapable) — a claim based on frail health during his final tubercular phase of life. *The Rainbow* was written when Lawrence remained under the full sexual sway of his early affairs (Jessie Chambers, Alice Dax, Louise Burrows) and then recent elopement with Freida.

where “consciousness is two-fold at least: cerebral, intellectual, mental, spiritual” and “instinctive, intuitive, and in touch” (CP 473), to where

The blood knows in darkness, and forever dark,
in touch, by intuition, instinctively.
The blood also knows religiously,
and of this, the mind is incapable.
The mind is non-religious.

To my dark heart, gods *are*.
In my dark heart, love is and is not.
But to my white mind
gods and love alike are but an idea,
a kind of fiction.

Man is an alternating consciousness.
Man is an alternating consciousness.

Only that exists which exists in my own consciousness.
Cogito, ergo sum.
Only that exists which exists dynamically and unmentalised, in my blood.

Non cogito, ergo sum.
I am, I do not think I am.

(CP 474)

Lawrence's use of adjectival repetition evades logical argument yet effectively invokes an empirical insistence that life itself is the only marker available for measuring intention, all intention, human and non-human. “Like Nietzsche,” Robert Montgomery notes, “Lawrence wants to arrive at a single principle that will overcome all oppositions and that will account for all phenomena from the lowest to the highest.”⁴⁰

Stevens approaches this principle through the same dark glass of Lawrence by considering it as

⁴⁰ Montgomery *Visionary* 101.

. . . that ever-dark central, wherever it is,
 In the central of earth or sky or air or thought,
 There is a drop that is life's element,
 Sole, single source and minimum patriarch,
 The one thing common to all life, the human
 And inhuman same, the likeness of things unlike.
 (OP 134)

In "A Collect of Philosophy" Stevens also agrees to the principle that the will functions as an expressor of organic process. He quotes a summary of Schopenhauer for support: "The eternally striving, energizing power which is working everywhere in the universe -- in the instinct of the animal, the life process of the plant, the blind force of inorganic matter -- what is this but the will that underlies all existence? . . . Reality, then, is will."⁴¹ Stevens, however, shies away somewhat from the organic "evidence of the teeth, the throat and the bowels" (OP 276) that Lawrence utilizes directly in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* as he dismisses Freud and develops the science of his own intuitive grasp of life. Rather than attack philosophy or science, Stevens collates and applauds their poetic tendencies. This blurs his overall critique that they are "too methodological" (OP 269) and his ascendent claim that the poet is more "light-footed" (OP 277) because thought cannot charge "the level or position of the feelings" (OP 277) as can the imagination. Stevens maintains that "reason can give nothing at all/ Like the response to desire" (CP 218) because

The truth must be
 That you do not see, you experience, you feel,
 That the buxom eye brings merely its element
 To the total thing, a shapeless giant forced
 Upward.

(CP 219)

⁴¹ Rogers, *A Student's History of Philosophy*, qtd. in Stevens's *Opus Posthumous*, ed. Milton J. Bates (New York: Knopf, 1989) 274.

Nietzsche, Lawrence and Stevens share this primary concern: the need to identify 'life' as an absolute force which powers all levels of creative enterprise. Life thus situated forces any codification of ethics or aesthetics to be conditional as allowance is made for the inherent flux of life process, for "*That Which Cannot Be Fixed*" (CP 353). To face the elements honestly and as charismatically as the Greeks -- that is the challenge and immediate result of acknowledging life itself as the ultimate referent, as Nietzsche notes: "They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial -- *out of profundity*."⁴² Rather than consider the tropological charm of elemental life as culturally conditioned and therefore never to be experienced again with the wonder of primitive 'first poets', Nietzsche advances will-to-power as a way to partake of radical newness by ahistoricizing life (forgetting the past) while Lawrence seeks direct experiential contact with forms of life (constant travel) as markers for consciousness appraisal. Either way, life is constituted as transcendent referential base -- absolutely and demandingly -- because, they continually imply, secondary (idealized) measures produce secondary beings. Colin Milton remarks that Lawrence and Nietzsche "both came to see Schopenhauer's attitude as a symptom of weakness, as a pathological response to life by someone too weak to face and affirm the discomfort inseparable from living fully."⁴³ "It is life we have to live by, not machines and ideals," says Lawrence in "Cosmological", a chapter of *Fantasia* where third-term betweenness is positioned as life itself: "Existence is truly a matter of propagation between the two infinities. But it needs a third presence. . . Midway between the two cosmic infinities lies the third, which is more than infinite. This is the Holy Ghost Life, individual life... The spontaneous, living, individual soul, this is the clue, and the only clue. All the rest is derived" (FU 152, 158). Nietzsche identifies this third presence as "the fundamental *artistic* phenomenon which is called 'Life' -- the *formative* spirit, which

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman, (New York: Viking, 1968) 683.

constructs under the most unfavourable circumstances.”⁴³ Life itself, Heraclitus reminds, is ruled by the mutability of organic process, and thus the ontological ground of being for Nietzsche and Lawrence is ultimately unfixable, unknowable. “The rational mind, dealing with the known,” Stevens concurs, “expects to find it glistening in a familiar ether. What it really finds is the unknown always behind and beyond the known” (OP 232). Stevens’s “unknown” marks the same territory Lawrence refers to as “the creative unknown” (LIII 98) and constitutes what Nietzsche considers the integral predicate for self-creation available to anyone able to focus enough of it to become an artist: the creative force of life itself, the will-to-power. Lawrence describes this predicate flux as the “fathomless, infallible, inexhaustive mystery of creation” (WL 580) in which, Stevens adds, to compose art “you have somehow to know the sound that is the exact sound; and you do in fact know, without knowing how. Your knowledge is irrational. In that sense life is mysterious” (OP 231). A comment from David J. Gordon on Lawrence, when extended to include also the life-absolutist positions of Stevens and Nietzsche, offers this neat frame: “A paradox essential to Lawrence’s thought, then, and one by which he escapes total relativism as well as total absolutism, is that life is both incorruptible (thereby absolute) and vulnerable (thereby subject to perversion by the force in man that seeks fixity, finality, and changelessness).”⁴⁵

How to engage life and categorize power properly is the question which drives much of the polemical tone of Nietzsche and Lawrence in their critiques of European culture. Nietzsche is not interested in delivering a will-perfect ubermensch as antidote for a world in decline, rather, he is driven by the necessity to overcome what he feels to be the great crime of Western philosophy: inaccurate description of reality. It is this same inaccuracy that draws out the strident and comic-exasperate side of

⁴³ Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche: A Study in Influence* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1987) 9.

⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, qtd. in B. J. Leggett’s *Early Stevens: The Nietzschean Intertext* (Durham: Duke UP, 1992) 216.

⁴⁵ David J. Gordon, “Lawrence as Literary Critic,” *D. H. Lawrence: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1986) 21.

Lawrence: "Damn all absolutes. Oh damn, damn, damn all absolutes! For man, there is neither absolute nor absolution. Such things should be left to monsters like the right-angled triangle, which does only exist in the ideal consciousness" (*PH* 421). Inaccurate description is marked by Nietzsche, Lawrence and Stevens as the failure to properly translate man back into nature, into life itself. The art of translating man into an accurate (honest) relationship with the universal creative force produces absolutist aesthetics where the eloquence of art competes with the seductive containments offered by discursive reason. The ethic of accurate description forces the artist to view phenomena in an holistic sense because all phenomena appear to testify, like Blake's grain of sand, to the existence of a complete universe. That is why Nietzsche grants will-to-power the status of an absolute and why Lawrence and Stevens place life on the same plane: they want their description of reality "to 'subtilize experience', to apprehend the complexity of the world, to perceive the intricacy of appearance," because, Stevens continues, "there is nothing in the world greater than reality. In this predicament we have to accept reality itself as the only genius" (*OP* 201). Accepting reality as the only genius keeps it from being cast as the perpetual other of self-consciousness, and thereby Stevens pronounces that "Poetry is not personal" (*OP* 186) and follows with three concurrent aphorisms: "Poetry must be irrational. The purpose of poetry is to make life complete in itself. Poetry increases the feeling for reality" (*OP* 188). Poetry is not personal because self-consciousness and reality are not divided; genius is the act of revealing the unified nature of creative power. Poetry is irrational because power cannot be fixed. Poetry completes life by breaking mind-body dualism. Intensifying feeling is important because feeling becomes the principle marker of identity once dualism is discarded. As feeling becomes a primary factor in determining the accuracy of description, Stevens and Lawrence find their theories of representation aligned somewhat to Schelling's groundwork claim that "the work of art arises out of the profundity of nature"⁴⁶ and to Benedetto Croce's

⁴⁶ Schelling, *Plastic* 353.

conception of art as an a priori synthesis of feeling and intuition, where artistic "activity is a fusion of single impressions into an organic whole"⁴⁷ such that consciousness is guided by what Lawrence calls an "eye that flashes with instinct.../ and gleams on the world with the warm dark vision of intuition!" (CP 544).

Northrop Frye charts criticism as "the systematic study of the formal causes of art."⁴⁸ The formal cause of Lawrence and Stevens's art -- the "inexhaustive mystery of creation" -- resists systematic approach as their philosophy is dictated by the same predicate evidenced in their art: description of reality free from any categorical preconception save the unfixable power of the creative force. Thus Lawrence can state that "art is utterly dependent on philosophy: or if you prefer it, on a metaphysic" (FU 15) while maintaining that "there must be a certain faith . . . an ultimate reliance on that which is beyond our will" (PHIII 400), and Stevens can add that "life cannot be based on a thesis, since, by nature, it is based on instinct. A thesis, however, is usually present and living is the struggle between thesis and instinct" (OP 187). Stevens further conditions such discussion by claiming his essays "are not pages of criticism nor of philosophy. Nor are they merely literary pages. They are pages that have to do with one of the enlargements of life" (NA viii). The ambivalence of these statements hedgingly advance the question of whether the mystery of creation can ever be formalized. Ethics and aesthetics are founded (and founder) upon the question of natural creative power. The never-quite-quantifiable force courses filiatively from what Socrates calls "the natural process of creation"⁴⁹ to Cicero's "nature itself . . . a certain afflatus which is quasi-divine"⁵⁰ through the Kantian sublime and Romantic conceptions of genius up to 20th-century constructivist principles of art detailed in various manifestos of Modernism. Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, in attempts to re-connect philosophy with the 'pure' forces of phenomenological life, contextualize

⁴⁷ Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. Douglas Ainslie, qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: HBJ, 1971) 734.

⁴⁸ Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 29.

⁴⁹ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Vintage, nd) 364.

⁵⁰ Cicero, "Oration on Behalf of Archias the Poet," class handout (Engl 599C, UW, 1986) 5.

Nietzsche and Hegel respectively into modes of thought flexible enough to maintain the suggestion that philosophy transfer the center of logos from mind to body. Poststructurally, Barthes and Derrida develop their sense of Nietzschean 'freeplay' along similar lines of unfettered ontological-empirical fluidity -- Barthes arguing for a literal body poetic, Derrida tracing a subjectivism from de-idealized semiotic predicates. Yet even when championed, the creative force 'behind' consciousness typically receives little direct descriptive attention, it is bracketed or left vague and general (life, power, nature, unconscious, force, otherness) as more specific and secondary topics are pursued (grammars, histories, semiotics, politics, ethics). "Nietzsche reproaches the dialecticians for going no further than an abstract conception of universal and particular," writes Gilles Deleuze, "they were prisoners of symptoms and did not reach the forces or the will which give these sense and value."⁵¹ As philosophers wanting to go further than traditional abstract dualism, Lawrence and Stevens offer subtle and exacting descriptions of reality's expressive forces while implementing the principle of 'betweenness' as a way to theorize how life emerges as relations between these forces; the same maneuver, Deleuze claims, Nietzsche blueprints as he

creates his own method: dramatic, typological and differential. He turns philosophy into an art, the art of interpreting and evaluating. . . . The will to power is not force but the differential element which simultaneously determines the relation of forces (quantity) and the respective qualities of related forces. It is in this element of difference that affirmation manifests itself and develops itself as creative.⁵²

The highest form description can take remains contested from William Blake up through Nietzsche, Heidegger and Lawrence on the point of how description itself can serve the human individual in terms of determining identity. Science and technology strip organic connection to life, they claim, and philosophy, for the most part, numbs

⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia UP, 1983) 197.

⁵² Deleuze, *Nietzsche* 197.

intellectual connection to life by privileging ordered classification over perceptual feeling. Plato, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Kant are inaccurate describers because they are not true to the vividness of life -- their philosophy, according to Nietzsche and Lawrence, shrinks back to the cave of secondary description. But how does one make viable connection to life? "I do not know," Lawrence admits, "how it is contrived that that the individual soul in the living sways the very sun in its centrality. But it is so" (FU 152). Lawrence, as if responding to Nietzsche's call for a new breed of philosopher, charts out one experimental method in *Fantasia* whereby life itself is projected as empirical ground:

To my mind there is a great field of science which is as yet quite closed to us. I refer to the science which proceeds in *terms of life* and is established on data of living experience and of sure intuition. Call it subjective science if you like. Our objective science of modern knowledge concerns itself only with phenomena, and with phenomena as regarded in their cause-and-effect relationship. I have nothing to say against our science. It is perfect as far as it goes. But to regard it as exhausting the whole scope of human possibility in knowledge seems to me just puerile. Our science is a science of the dead world. Even biology never considers life, but only mechanistic functioning and apparatus of life . . .

Men live and see according to some gradually developing and gradually withering vision. This vision exists also as a dynamic idea or metaphysics -- exists first as such. Then it is unfolded into life and art. Our vision, our belief, our metaphysic is wearing woefully thin, and the art is wearing absolutely threadbare. We have no future; neither for our hopes nor our aims nor our art. It has all gone grey and opaque.

We've got to rip the old veil of a vision across, and find what the heart really believes in after all: and what the heart really wants, for the next future. And we've got to put it down in terms of belief and of knowledge. And then go forward again, to the fulfilment in life and art. (FU 12, 15-16)

Lawrence's equation for life -- "living=relatedness between me and all things" -- was penned around the same time Einstein was laboring to make seamless his new general theory of relativity, which, according to Nobel Prize physicist Steven Weinberg in

Dreams of a Final Theory, “assumed as was usual at that time that the universe is static.”⁵³ Weinberg relates how Einstein “soon found that his gravitational field equations in their original form when applied to the whole universe did not have any static solutions” and how he then worked out a reconciliatory term “that could thus balance the attractive force of gravitation”, a term which “became known as the cosmological constant.”⁵⁴ Weinberg goes on to present current problems faced by contemporary physicists laboring to uncover a final theory of how reality allows itself to be perceived. “Can philosophy give us any guidance toward a final theory?”⁵⁵ he asks in a chapter entitled “Against Philosophy” while advancing the claim that physical theory is on the conceptual threshold of being able to explain *everything* in the universe by means of the latest string theories. “Unfortunately,” Weinberg admits, “no one has yet found a specific string theory that exactly matches the space-time and internal symmetries that we see in nature.”⁵⁶ Declaring philosophy to be “a pleasing gloss” and that one “should not expect it to provide today’s scientists with useful guidance about how to go about their work or about what they are likely to find,”⁵⁷ Weinberg presses on with an uneven mixture of arrogance and theoretical dependency on the anthropic principles of philosophical method he earlier had discounted:

Matters are even worse than this. Even if we did know how to deal mathematically with these string theories, and even if we could identify one of them that corresponds to what we see in nature, at present we have no criterion that would allow us to tell *why* that string theory is the one that applies to the real world. Once again I repeat: the aim of physics at its most fundamental level is not just to describe the world but to explain why it is the way it is. In searching for a criterion that would allow us to choose the true string theory, we may be forced to invoke a principle with a dubious status in physics, known as the *anthropic principle*, which states that the laws of nature should allow the existence of intelligent beings that can ask about the laws of nature. . . . Physicists will certainly keep trying to explain the constants of

⁵³ Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory* (New York: Pantheon Books) 223.

⁵⁴ Weinberg, *Dreams* 223.

⁵⁵ Weinberg, *Dreams* 166.

⁵⁶ Weinberg, *Dreams* 219.

⁵⁷ Weinberg, *Dreams* 167.

nature without resort to anthropic arguments. My own best guess is what we are going to find that in fact all of the constants of nature (with one possible exception) are fixed by symmetry principles... The one constant of nature that may have to be explained by some sort of anthropic principle is the one known as the *cosmological constant*.⁵⁸

So in effect Weinberg cannot advance beyond Einstein's glass ceiling of not being able posit a static formula for the heaving ocean of phenomena known as life. An unknowable X-factor has to be factored in -- a cosmological constant -- which allows for the fact of awareness itself. Lawrence, in a diatribe of his own against philosophy, states:

If he can't draw a ring round creation, and fasten the serpent's tail into its mouth with the padlock of one final clinching idea, then creation can to to hell, as far as man is concerned. There is such a thing as life, or life-energy. This is I think is incontestable... Where it comes from, or what it is, we don't know, and never shall. It is the capital X of all our knowledge. But we want it, we must have it. It is the all in all. This we know, now, for good and all: that which is good, and moral, is that which brings into us a stronger, deeper flow of life and life-energy: evil is that which impairs the life-flow.

(PHII 428)

Lawrence's complaint against philosophy concerns the presumption that creation can be fully explained -- the very presumption held forth scientifically by Weinberg: "the aim of physics is not just to describe the world but to explain why it is the way it is."⁵⁹ Weinberg's statement of purpose for physicists, however, finds little consolidation among his peers regarding the fundamental why of how energy manifests itself. Nobel laureate Richard Feynman remarks in *Six Easy Pieces* that "it is important to realize that in physics today, we have no knowledge of what energy is."⁶⁰ British biochemist Andrew Scott, in *Vital Principles*, examines the basic forces of life and concurs that

⁵⁸ Weinberg, *Dreams* 219-20, 223.

⁵⁹ Weinberg, *Dreams* 219.

⁶⁰ Richard P. Feynman, *Six Easy Pieces: Essentials of Physics Explained by Its Most Brilliant Teacher* (New York: Helix Books, 1995) 71.

"nobody really knows why either the charges or the forces should exist. Objects which 'feel' or 'respond to' the electromagnetic force are said to carry electric 'charge', but that is simply a form of words used to describe what is ultimately a mysterious phenomenon which we can describe, but not really explain."⁶¹ The conclusion that all one can do is "describe but not really explain" is significant because it forces absolutist claims regarding referents (material, literal, linguistic, symbolic, etc.) to operate under the concession that referentiality itself can never contain, transcend or determine 'power', it can only describe what it is to sense, to feel, to respond, to calibrate the composite set of 'mysterious' forces known as life. Lawrence states that "the First Cause is just unknowable to us. . . . The first business of every faith is to declare its ignorance" (FU 20). Stevens declares: "That the unknown as the source of knowledge, as the object of thought, is part of the dynamics of the known does not permit denial" (OP 232-33). Unknowability permutates itself within Stevens's poetics by factoring sensory data as 'seemings' -- "actual seemings that we see,/ Hear, feel and know" (CP 340), where "seeming is description without place. It is a sense/ To which we refer experience, a knowledge/ Incognito" (CP 343). "Thus," Stevens concludes, with the same fundamental acknowledgment upon which Scott begins his scientific work, "the theory of description matters most" (CP 345).

To know (or deny) that something is 'there' that can never be known, that some *a priori* force is behind everything, that some unnamable predicate governs all referential systems which take its measure, is a concession made mandatory by the referential limitations of language. "The mere capacity of thinking evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense," Immanuel Kant notes in *Critique of Judgment* as he also constructs a version of the cosmological constant in order to frame a referential base for the ends of philosophy: "Wherefore is man himself, whom we must regard as the ultimate purpose of nature, thinkable by us? Wherefore is this collective nature

⁶¹ Andrew Scott, *Vital Principles: The Molecular Mechanism of Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 23.

here, and what is the final purpose of such great and manifold art?"⁶² Kant fixes the point of establishing man's final purpose within what he considers the moral realm of awareness, an awareness that cannot be rationally indicated but only *felt*, something "which every man feels inwardly" as that "which dwells in every man and influences secretly":

Hence that the physicotheological proof convinces, just as if it were a theological proof, does not arise from our availing ourselves of the ideas of purposes of nature as so many empirical grounds of proof of a *highest* understanding. But it mingles itself unnoticed with that moral ground of proof, which dwells in every man and influences him secretly, in the conclusion by which we ascribe to the Being which manifests itself with such incomprehensible art in the purposes of nature a final purpose and consequently wisdom (without however being justified in doing so by the perception of the former), and by which therefore we arbitrarily fill up the lacunas of the [design] argument. In fact, it is only the moral ground of proof which produces conviction, and that only in a moral reference with which every man feels inwardly his agreement. But the physicotheological proof has only the merit of leading the mind in its consideration of the world by the way of purposes and through them to an intelligent author of the world, for the moral reference to purposes and the idea of a moral legislator and Author of the world, as a theological concept, seem to be developed of themselves out of that ground of proof, although they are in truth pure additions.⁶³

Kant's "moral ground of proof" is grounded in an intuitive sense of feeling "which manifests itself with such incomprehensible art" to where any final evaluation of awareness as manufactured by thought cannot be considered solely derived from the "physicotheological proof" of experiential life. There must be a third term for awareness factored in to handle what Kant calls the "unfathomable intelligence"⁶⁴ of intuitive process. The empirical loophole offered by the idea of an "incomprehensible art" as partial predicate of Being affords Kant a way to incorporate an unknowability

⁶² Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951) 330.

⁶³ Kant, *Judgment* 330-31.

⁶⁴ Kant, *Judgment* 330.

quotient into his ontology. A nod to unknowability as integral in the referential setup of descriptive systems (physics, poetry, philosophy) shows up as the cosmological constant and common denominator in any theory which attempts to pronounce final theories of life. Kant's alignment of unknowability with feeling is important because it allows moral judgment to interiorize itself in an individual manner which, in one strain, came to be labeled Romantic, and in a parallel strain, enabled the advancement of an ethical dispensation subtle enough to insure a locus for aesthetics with literary ethics becoming synonymous with the act of describing where that locus might be. Feeling, empirically, is fundamental to artistic process due to its ability to operate in the non-referential realm of causative force, of unfathomable energy. Feeling, ultimately, is awareness, the ability to translate awareness into description is art. "The attempt by Coleridge's great hero, Kant, to formulate that principle of internal coherence," Charles Rzepka remarks in *The Self as Mind*, "marked the beginning of a modern metaphysics of personal identity. The self was to be identified as the power, not the object, of perception."⁶⁵

Harold Bloom remarks in *The Ringers in the Tower* that "the internalization of romance brought the concept of nature, and poetic consciousness itself, into a relationship they had never had before."⁶⁶ In *A Study of English Romanticism* Northrop Frye observes that a "central element of this new mythological construction is a recovery of projection,"⁶⁷ wherein one's relationship to "life then becomes a participating relationship, an identity of process rather than a separation of subjective and objective creatures or products."⁶⁸ M. H. Abrams, commenting on Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, notes how the antithesis between 'subject' and 'object'

⁶⁵ Charles Rzepka, *The Self as Mind: Vision and Identity in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986) 11.

⁶⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Ringers in the Tower* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 21.

⁶⁷ Northrop Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968) 14.

⁶⁸ Frye, *Romanticism* 12.

needs a concept which will close the dialectical circle and resolve the initial opposition by combining both intelligence and nature, conscious and unconscious, reflective freedom and blind necessity. Such a concept Schelling discovers in the activity of genius in producing a work of art; hence he is able to make the triumphant claim that the creative process of imagination is 'the general organon of philosophy, and the keystone of its arch.'⁶⁹

Schelling's idea of art as a third-term reconciler of dualistic impasses was echoed by Coleridge -- "Art is the mediatress between, the reconciler of, nature and man"⁷⁰ -- and is constitutively the same notion later implemented in the philosophy of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and the writings of Lawrence and of Stevens, who intones, "The poet is the intermediary between people and the world in which they live and, also, between themselves" (OP 189). Important to both Romantic and Modern theories of reconciliation is the definition of what it is that art connects one to and how the relation between nature, language and material progress (history) factors the variables of human identity. Romantic theory proposes that art connect man to nature by revealing how the unquantifiable power of creativity -- what Shelley called "the secret strength of things/ Which governs thought"⁷¹ -- is the same force that drives the laws of organic form which in turn informs the internal predicates of artistic process. Schelling contends that if the intricacies of plant and animal life provoke interest, "how much more would it have to entice us to perceive the same intricacies and relationships in the still more highly organized and intertwined plant we call a work of art."⁷² One should not impose forms arbitrarily, one should find the organic X-constant because, Coleridge claims, "there is a difference between form proceeding, and shape as superinduced; -- the latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the

⁶⁹ M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Condition* (New York: Oxford UP, 1953) 209.

⁷⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, qtd. in Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: Norton, 1973) 316.

⁷¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Mount Blanc," *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald Reiman (New York: Norton, 1977) 93.

⁷² Schelling, qtd. in Thomas McFarland's *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin* (Princeton: PUP, 1981) 38.

thing; -- the former is its self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency."⁷³ The implementation of organic metaphors in theories of the symbol (multeity in unity, universal via the particular, etc.) offered an aesthetic mode with which to chart poetic energy -- quests for truth (interior or otherwise) becoming ultimately bound by the desire of wanting the particularness of language to reflect the 'wholeness' of reality. Such reflections were to be made radiant by poetry tropologically trued to the organic bias of natural process. Symbolic predication alone could effect this truing process, any other form of representation would invariably end up in the land of allegory. What a symbol itself was in terms of representational exactitude remained cloaked in the mystery of how reconciliatory third-terms (art) managed to absorb the weight of binary oppositions as they produced the crown, the arch, the site where awareness could X itself in as the cosmological constant in the machine of sensuous perception. "This is art," Lawrence claims, "the revelation of a pure, an absolute relation between the two eternities" (*PHII* 412), where

Matter is a slow, big wave flowing back to the Origin. And Spirit is a slow, infinite wave flowing back to the Goal, the ultimate Future. On the slow wave of matter and spirit, on marble or bronze or colour or air, and on the consciousness, we imprint a perfect revelation, and this is art: whether it reveal the relation in creation or in corruption, it is the same, it is a revelation of God My source and issue is in two eternities, I am founded in the two infinities. But absolute is the rainbow that goes between; the iris of my very being. (*PHII* 412, 378)

Lawrence's conflation of art and the 'Holy Ghost' as an absolute third-term perpetuated by Heraclitean opposites is similar to a referential mode used by Karl Jaspers where his "cypher-script of being" offers the Christ myth as reconciler of dualistic impasses. In *Truth and Symbol* and *Philosophy of Existence* Jaspers ties third term awareness to a suprasensuousness which connects the artist to an empirical reality of "actual human life":

⁷³ Schelling, qtd. in MacFarland's *Ruin* 36.

The fact that all modes of the meaning of truth *come together* in actual human life, and that man thus exists within all the sources of all the modes, urges us on to the *one* truth in which no mode of the encompassing is lost. . . .

This religious corporeality -- if one compares it with being bound to transparentless realities -- causes an upswing into the suprasensuous. . . . Not the transparency of sensuousness but the concreteness of Transcendence in a particular empirical reality of the world is the result. . . . Interpreting is not a form of cognition of the meaning of the cypher, but is itself a metaphorical act. To interpret is impossible; Being itself, Transcendence, is present. It is nameless. If we speak of it, then we must use an infinite number of names.⁷⁴

Working from the same quotes in *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic*, Hazard Adams argues that Jaspers "valorizes a state similar to the condition of Hegel's romantic art -- a halfway state that . . . in the end it puts all human activity at the behest of a fundamentally religious view that allows no other forms of human truth to emerge as a contrary."⁷⁵ Jaspers' conception of the religious is faulted by Adams on the grounds that it presumes a presence that cannot be fully accounted for and thereby encumbers the referential role of the symbol, a "miraculous symbol, where though all is declared to be present in the cypher, yet the cypher also draws being into itself from elsewhere."⁷⁶ In *Interpretation Theory* Paul Ricoeur, also employing a betweenness trope, locates the power source of the symbol as occurring "on the dividing line between *bios* and *logos*. It testifies to the primordial rootedness of Discourse in Life. It is born when force and form coincide."⁷⁷ Adams, wanting to isolate his own sense of referential 'whereness' for literary symbolic activity, faults Ricoeur "on the idea of a "miraculous" incarnation, which is treated in terms of a secondary meaning coming to inhabit the primary or so-called literal."⁷⁸ Adams claims that in myth "we have the

⁷⁴ Karl Jaspers, *The Philosophy of Existence*, trans. R. F. Graban (Philadelphia: UPP, 1972) 42; and *Truth and Symbol* (New Haven: College and University Press, 1959) 46, 42.

⁷⁵ Hazard Adams, *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic* (Tallahassee: UPF, 1983) 369, 371.

⁷⁶ Adams, *Symbolic* 371.

⁷⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian UP, 1976) 59.

⁷⁸ Adams, *Symbolic* 376.

contrary to the duality of subject/object. The world is part of us, but we are also extended into the world."⁷⁹ But myth, he argues, occupies "a 'miraculous' though unachievable space . . . a fictive limit we never reach. The limit we can reach at this end of the continuum is art."⁸⁰ Art here is posited as an extension of third-term mythic energy which allows identity to be fashioned within the confines of cultural progression but without the ability to achieve the religious finality of ultimate transcendence or the reactionary necessity of "constant deconstruction back to an absolute nothing."⁸¹ While Jaspers and Ricoeur are charged with the religious feint of "going beneath or past *bios* to the sacred,"⁸² phenomenologists such as Heidegger are accused of believing that "in the end that there is nothing *there*" that "behind the phenomenological disclosure of being there gapes forth an existential nothingness that takes precedence over culture. Nature's blankness triumphs."⁸³ As an alternative to the religious/deconstruction polarity, Adams presents the 'secular' symbol which

offers a concept of artful creativity which regards language as a liberation and yet presumes not the task of disclosure of being but the task of conservation of value and improvement of culture. The task for art is not the mystical one of knowing an other, of seeking before making. Rather, it is the constant development of a cultural reality from the potentiality of experience through particular linguistic acts and what is built from them.⁸⁴

Adams' argument is basically unassailable when summarizing the classic negations he seeks to avoid in setting up the dimensions of his secular symbolic. By situating language as the foundational envelope of culture the 'where' of referentiality can be centered within human consciousness (cognition being metered by linguistic acts which determine the various qualities of thought itself). "Nature itself is a cultural creation,"⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Adams, *Symbolic* 335.

⁸⁰ Adams, *Symbolic* 376.

⁸¹ Adams, *Symbolic* 392.

⁸² Adams, *Symbolic* 387.

⁸³ Adams, *Symbolic* 391.

⁸⁴ Adams, *Symbolic* 392.

⁸⁵ Adams, *Symbolic* 390.

Adams declares in momentary alignment with Blake and Wilde as he works to outline a stewardship role for critical thought and its managerial relationship to art. To conceptualize the processes of power labeled "nature" as a construction limited to cognitive dimensions of human language, however, does not necessarily free the artist from ontological dreams of wanting to experience and disclose the unreachable mythic source, the mystery of life itself. Artists as artists testify that such dreaming is art -- purpose-free -- any 'task' drawn up for art should be placed on the secondary shoulders of the recuperative critic. But such dreams lead to the realm of the religious where claims of presence and closure are inhibitory as objected to by Adams. Critics as artists, like Wilde, argue that "criticism can do for us what can be done neither by physics nor metaphysics. It can give us the exact science of mind in the process of becoming."⁸⁶ The question of how to determine an "exact science of mind" remains problematical given that any function relating to mental "process" invites categorical structuralism (semiotics, hermeneutics, deconstruction, gender/race/political issues, physiology) while conjecture on what constitutes "becoming" drums up the many-murdered ghost of ontological absolutism. Mind-body dualism still persists -- any exactness available to criticism remains bound by its skill in offering third-term reconciliations. The effectiveness or even actual possibility of reconciliation remains secondary to the apparent necessity of the human subject's desire for the miracle of symbolic intervention. The task of art is to offer a subject/object theatre where such intervention can occur. "Mental experience," according to Frye, "is a union of a perceiving subject and a perceived object; it is something in which the barrier between 'inside' and 'outside' dissolves. But the power to unite comes from the subject. The work of art is the product of this creative perception, hence it is not an escape from reality but a systematic training in comprehending it."⁸⁷ Art as a product of "creative perception" symbolizes the union of subject and object. Artist and critic are both

⁸⁶ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist* in *Essays by Oscar Wilde*, ed. Hesketh Pearson (London: Methuen, 1950) 183.

⁸⁷ Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947) 85.

tasked to define the power base of the symbol. Adams secularizes symbolic process by placing language as the referential bedrock and warns against allegory (religious or phenomenological). Lawrence also holds that it is “necessary for us to realize very definitely the difference between allegory and symbol” when outlining his notion of the symbolic [his italics]:

Allegory is narrative description using, as a rule, images to express certain definite qualities. Each image means something, and is a term in the argument and nearly always for a moral or didactic purpose. Myth likewise is descriptive narrative using images. But myth is never an argument, it never has a didactic nor a moral purpose, you can draw no conclusion from it. Myth is an attempt to narrate a whole human experience, of which the purpose is too deep, going too deep in the blood and soul, for mental explanation or description. . . . And the images of myth are symbols. They don't “mean something.” They stand for units of human *feeling*, human experience. A complex of emotional experience is a symbol. And the power of the symbol is to arouse the deep emotional self, and the dynamic self, beyond comprehension. . . .
(PH 295-96)

The symbol for Lawrence is not a container of meaning but rather an elicitor of feeling. Feelings compose a dynamic field of relations between subjective and objective forces. The methodology of how symbols maintain viability is beyond “mental explanation” according to Lawrence, who implies the foundational source of symbolic transmission not to be solely situated within language but rather caught up in “units of human feeling” which are linked to experience within the cross-reference of mind and body. “What we want is *complete* imaginative experience, which goes through the whole soul and body,” Lawrence emphasizes, “even at the expense of reason, we want imaginative experience. For reason is certainly not the final judge of life” (PH 297). Lawrence's notion of a ‘complete’ experience leads him to the edge of an aesthetic that borders on the religious, a term he himself uses to describe intentionality: “The essentially religious or creative motive is the first motive for all human activity” (FU 18). The word “religious” as conceptualized by Lawrence is not concerned with closure

and assumptions of presence (allegorical or mystical) but rather with third-term dynamics through which life exhibits awareness. The relational modes linking reason, imagination and feeling as they work to symbolically ground the creative force (life itself) are expressed as factors of 'betweenness' in the philosophies of Lawrence and Stevens, which, when delivered up through acts of *complete* description, produce the holy stuff culture mirrors itself in: art.

"The highest problem of philosophy, and not part of its nomenclature," Coleridge notes in *The Statesman's Manual*, "is whether ideas are regulative only, according to Aristotle and Kant; or likewise constitutive, and one with the power and life of nature, according to Plato and Plotinus."⁸⁸ The constitutive power of ideas, ideas bound by the linguistic acts which vehicle them -- what is their referential source? "Poetry," says Stevens, "has to be something more than a conception of the mind. It has to be a revelation of nature. Conceptions are artificial. Perceptions are essential" (OP 191). Nietzsche states that the "philosopher is a self-revelation of nature's workshop; the philosopher and the artist tell the trade secrets of nature."⁸⁹ Lawrence would condition that nature is not *the* demiurge but rather just another product of the dark and unknowable creative force. Nature and culture are subsets of the same constitutive power; culture feeds the mind, nature the body, and spirit (life itself) is determined in the interlocking of the two. Spirit is measured by the awareness of life process which creates a perpetual margin of otherness such that "the ultimate source of all vitality is in that other dimension, or region, where the dandelion blooms, and which men have called heaven . . . which is only a way of saying that it is not to be reckoned in terms of space and time" (PHII 456). Schelling reckons similarly by considering the creative force a "single essence" which assumes dimension in the oppositional strife between nature and soul: "the spirit of nature is only apparently opposed to the soul; *per se*,

⁸⁸ Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*, qtd. in B. J. Leggett's *Wallace Stevens and Poetic Theory* (Chapel Hill: UNCP, 1987) 33.

⁸⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1979) 6.

however, the instrument of its revelation: it indeed effects the antithesis of things, but only in order that the single essence, as the highest clemency and reconciliation of all forces, may come forth."⁹⁰ Coleridge also formulates a third-term equation in "Theory of Life" whereby Nature bows to a Supreme Intelligence while the creative element in nature ("its *productive power*") constantly provides an unknowable factor ("incompatibility with mathematical calculus") as dualistic natural process provides a Heracleitan stage ("two counter-powers") for identity establishment:

. . . her ultimate production of the highest and most comprehensive individuality. This must be the one great end of Nature, her ultimate object, or by whatever other word we may designate that something which bears to a final cause the same relation that Nature herself bears to the Supreme Intelligence. . . . The tendency having been ascertained, what is its most general law? I answer -- *polarity*, or the essential dualism of Nature, arising out of its productive unity, and still tending to reaffirm it, either as equilibrium, indifference, or identity. In its *productive power*, of which the product is the only measure, consists its incompatibility with mathematical calculus. For the full applicability of an abstract science ceases, the moment reality begins. Life, then, we consider the copula, or the unity of thesis and antithesis, position and counterposition, -- Life itself being the positive of both. . . . Thus, in the identity of the two counter-powers Life *subsists*; in their strife it *consists*: and in their reconciliation it at once dies and is born again into a new form, either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation.⁹¹

The theme of the creative force's highest purposes being made manifest in the production of individuality is treated extensively throughout the work of Lawrence, particularly in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* and the essays in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*. While devoting much energy to sorting out the effects of creative power, Lawrence never attempts to develop a formal theory of the organic because he believes such formalizing hobbles life rather than pilots its advancement:

⁹⁰ Schelling, "Plastic," qtd. in Read's *Feeling* 332.

⁹¹ Coleridge, "Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life," *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge*, ed. Donald Stauffer (USA: Random House, 1951) 578-79, 580.

Be Thyself! is the grand cry of individualism. But individualism makes the mistake of considering an individual as a fixed entity: a little windmill that spins without shifting ground or changing its own nature. And this is nonsense. When power enters us, it does not just move us mechanically. It changes us. . . . *Be Thyself!* does not mean: *Assert thy ego!* It means, be true to your own integrity, as man, as woman: let your heart stay open, to receive the mysterious inflow of power from the unknown: know that the power comes to you from beyond, it is not generated by your own free will: therefore all the time, be watchful, and reverential towards the mysterious coming of power into you. . . . The central Mystery is no generalized abstraction. It is each man's primal original soul or self.

(RDP 184, 185; PH 714)

Theories of the organic and individualism, on the deconstructive decline for decades, have fallen further out of fashion with the de Man and Heidegger collaboration controversies. This has resulted in, Fernihough reports, much energy being "spent alerting critics to the dangers inherent in that branch of post-Romantic aesthetic ideology that draws analogies between literary language or art on the one hand, and natural growth on the other," because "organicism is seen to betray a certain *idealism*, either overt or covert."⁹² Fernihough therefore carefully introduces a "fractured organic" which places Lawrence's organicism one remove away from the volkisch German varieties by means of "semantic complexity" based on his "belief that language and the external/material world are disjunct, and that one should not be allowed to appropriate the other."⁹³ Michael Bell, in his detailing of Lawrence's ontological power base, sidesteps the organic and uses Cassirer to link Lawrence to mythic form of animism where there is "no sharp division between an inner world of feeling and an external world of nature" such that the "peculiar interrelation of self-conscious intelligence and creative intuition" in Lawrence's "struggle with language" explores "the nature of the primitive in modern culture."⁹⁴ Robert Montgomery uses nomenclature

⁹² Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 6.

⁹³ Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 10.

⁹⁴ Bell, *Being* 3, 5, 4.

developed by Coleridge to place Lawrence in the "visionary" tradition of "ideal realism" and affiliates him with Heraclitus, Boehme and Nietzsche whose works "are products of the imagination as Coleridge defines it, the imagination that is indistinguishable from reason and is alone able to apprehend and communicate the idea of polarity. In none of these figures can we separate the philosopher from the poet."⁹⁵ While differing in their approach, the three critics elaborate a common and important assessment of Lawrence's ontological beliefs by showing how he rejects any idealistic or categorical form of static being. Lawrence insists that power is unknowable; unknowability translates itself into a perpetual otherness which limits receivable forms of idealism (including traditional religious symbols and Romantic organicism) as creative power works always to produce a vital sense of new third-term relation between the individual subject and the phenomenological cosmos. "As a matter of fact," Lawrence declares,

we have worked the ideal bit of our nature to death, and we shall go crazy if we can't start working from some other bit. Idealism now is a sick nerve, and the more you rub on it the worse you feel afterwards. . . I like Emerson's real courage. I like his wild and genuine belief in the Over-Soul and the inrushes he got from it. But it is a museum-interest. Or else it is a taste of the old drug to the old spiritual drug-fiend in me.

We've got to have a different sort of sardonic courage. And the sort of credentials we are due to receive from the god in the shadow would have been real bones out of hell-broth to Ralph Waldo. *Sic transuent Dei hominorum.*

(PH 317, 318)

Emerson would have been the first to accept the inapplicability of his aesthetic for a future century. He prefaces *Nature* by claiming his own age to be too retrospective (biographies, histories, criticism) and asks, long before Nietzsche, "Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of . . . foregoing generations. . . There are new

⁹⁵ Montgomery, *Visionary* 41.

lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?"⁹⁶ Emerson's conception of nature, however mocked or dismissed it may be with comical intonations of the words "transparent eyeball", holds it mid-nineteenth century ground quite well and links both Lawrence and Stevens to versions set forth by Schelling and Coleridge. Emerson's description of nature becomes a treatise on how creative power manifests itself -- "spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present" -- with nature itself becoming a product not progenitor of creative force: "spirit does not build up nature around us but puts it forth through us."⁹⁷ Ontologically this places the individual as the initializing expositor of creative force -- the same position Nietzsche and Lawrence maintain in their holding art up as the highest form through which power resolves itself. Therefore it is the artist who shapes the archetypal landscapes of cultural identity; all other laborers compose the commerce of the quotidian. Lawrence's essay "The Crown" matches Emerson's *Nature* in its attempt to cosmologically position the individual in utter relation, not to nature or culture, but to the "Holy Ghost" or "Spirit", their third-term names for the creative force. Both essays are free of historical specificity and work instead from rationales that rely on a general assumption that the reader need only glance at the earth or heavens for empirical assurance as the authors advance their arguments. Stevens, early in his career, used Emerson to cue himself past the imagination-reality conflict as presented by Santayana as he disagreed with his championing of the imagination (ideal) over reality (fact). Stevens felt neither term should be privileged as they are both dualistically bound to a 'background' power, to an absolute creative force. George Lensing remarks that "the union of fact and ideal placed Stevens firmly on the Emersonian track."⁹⁸ A journal entry of Stevens from the same period attests: "I'm completely satisfied that behind every physical fact there is a divine force" (SP 54).

⁹⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature, Addresses and Lectures* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884) 9.

⁹⁷ Emerson, *Nature* 67-68.

⁹⁸ George S. Lensing, *Wallace Stevens: A Poet's Growth* (Baton Rouge: LSUP, 1986) 26.

Is nature constructed or constructive? Adams, careful to condition the predicate conception of nature, claims "a world prior to human culture, which is always proceeding from myth, lacks full reality or is mere potentiality. It is always only subsidiary and unspecifiable because not here yet."⁹⁹ Instead of being posited as unknowable mystery, the power and life of natural process is considered a constant "realm of the potential to be worked up into the symbolic."¹⁰⁰ The 'thereness' of reality for Adams is located in the linguistic or 'working up' activity necessary to implement symbolic expression and is Derridean in that creative power is defined as an "unspecifiability of intuition *outside* of expression" thereby mooting any religious notion of presence by claiming "meaning to be generated out of unspecifiable experience."¹⁰¹ To rework the root equation of creativity by replacing the x of "unknowable mystery" with "unspecifiable experience" is indeed a fine way to mitigate the heresy of religious impulse and formalize the conception that tropological activity at the level of a Vichian first-poet is no longer possible in modern culture. For Lawrence and Stevens, however, the problem of referential quantification remains constant regardless of any third-term process brought to bear on dialectical process/telos/ethos problems. The ontological absolutism of their aesthetic vision does reverberate with religious overtones and cannot be remedied by 'solving' epistemological and hermeneutical problems inherent in the performative landscapes of linguistic/artistic endeavor or by accepting the determinations offered by historicist constructionism. They are philosophical heretics who attempt to operate from the 'inside' of "*complete* imaginative experience" (PH 297). This is evidenced in Stevens' desire to get "beyond the symbols/ To that which they symbolized, away/ From the rumors of the speech-full domes" by means of "something illogically received,/ A divination" (OP 128) because, he claims,

⁹⁹ Adams, *Symbolic* 342.

¹⁰⁰ Adams, *Symbolic* 343.

¹⁰¹ Adams, *Symbolic* 343, 356.

A longer, deeper breath sustains
 The eloquence of right, since knowing
 And being are one: the right to know
 And the right to be are one. We come
 To knowledge when we come to life.
 Yet always there is another life,
 A life beyond this present knowing,
 A life lighter than this present splendor,
 Brighter, perfected and distant away,
 Not to be reached but to be known,
 Not an attainment of the will
 But something illogically received,
 A divination, a letting down
 From loftiness, misgivings dazzlingly
 Resolved in dazzling discovery.
 There is no map of paradise.
 The great Omnium descends on us
 As a free race. We know it, one
 By one, in the right of all. Each man
 Is an approach to the vigilance
 In which the litter of truths becomes
 A whole, the day on which the last star
 Has been counted, the genealogy
 Of gods and men destroyed, the right
 To know established as the right to be.
 The ancient symbols will be nothing then.
 We shall have gone beyond the symbols
 To that which they symbolized, away
 From the rumors of the speech-full domes,
 To the chatter that is then the true legend,
 Like glitter ascended into fire.

(OP 128)

The realm of what lies beyond symbols (bios, Essence, unknowable power, flux, Absolute Spirit, life itself, ether, the stuff dreams are made of, etc.) invariably breaks down as being definable as the mysterious creative force which leads to the trapdoor of religious feeling. Aesthetic theories which incorporate religious metaphor are frequently targeted by critics on the lookout for tautological allegory, escapism via

ecstasy of the symbol, or just plain 'religious' as a term denoting ideological softness (e.g., Lentricchia and Eagleton's attacks against Frye). The word "religious" itself is typically left definitionally vague when used to cast negative connotations. "The great desire today is to deny the religious impulse altogether," says Lawrence, "the scientist wants to discover a cause for everything. And there is no cause

for the religious impulse. We refuse any *Cause*, whether it be Sex or Libido or Elan Vital or ether or unit of force or *perpetuum mobile* or anything else. But we also feel that we cannot, like Moses, perish on the top of our present ideal Pisgah, or take the next step into thin air. There we are, at the top of our Pisgah of ideals, crying *Excelsior* and trying to clamber up into the clouds: that is, if we are idealists with the religious impulse rampant in our breasts. If we are scientists we practice aeroplane flying or eugenics or disarmament or something equally absurd.

The promised land, if it be anywhere, lies away beneath our feet. No more prancing upwards. . . We are all very pleased with Mr. Einstein for knocking that eternal axis out of the universe. The universe isn't a spinning wheel. It is a cloud of bees flying and veering round. . . We have no one law that governs us. For me there is only one law: *I am I* . . . I am I, but also you are you, and we are in sad need of a theory of human relativity. We need it much more than the universe does. (FU 19, 25)

Lawrence's sense of the religious parallels Blake's in that both believed themselves equipped with the genius necessary to produce 'visionary' art. According to them, art should not curtsy in line with traditional allegorists or mechanical reductionists of the day, it should define the relation between universal emanation and individual agency, it should serve the "sad need of a theory of human relativity." Dominant themes common to *Jerusalem*, *The Four Zoas* and *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* (the celestial and psychical bound by the historical and sexual informed by a Biblical sense of alienation and redemption) work to emblemize human subjectivity in terms of perspectival *relation*. Causative absolutes produce the dead-ends of Urizen or Gerald Crich; reconciliation with the knowledge that the individual cannot willfully impound creative energy opens and informs the relative connections between Los and

Enitharmon, whose love tinctures "the walls of shining heaven,"¹⁰² and Birkin and Ursula, "two single beings constellated together like two stars" (WL 271). Blake and Lawrence were never prophets of redemption, only of relation. "We *must* get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe," writes Lawrence in "A Propos of Lady Chatterly's Lover," because, he continues:

We are cut off from the great sources of our inward nourishment and renewal, sources which flow eternally in the universe. . . We must plant ourselves again. . . It means a return to ancient forms. But we shall have to create these forms again, and it is more difficult than the preaching of an evangel. The Gospel came to tell us we were all saved. We look at the world today and realize that humanity, alas, instead of being saved from sin, whatever that may be, is almost completely lost, lost to life, and near to nullity and extermination. We have to go back, a long way, before the idealist conceptions began, before Plato, before the tragic idea of life arose, to get on to our feet again. For the gospel of salvation through the Ideals and escape from the body coincided with the tragic conception of human life. Salvation and tragedy are the same thing, and they are now both beside the point.

(PHII 510-11)

In "Lawrence's True Philosophy" Phillip Rieff writes that Lawrence argues "against both the established liberal concentration of the self and any revival of a church-centered culture based on the ascetic type of personality," and identifies his religiosity as "the freer expression of man's basically erotic character" in which "the divine is realized characteristically in the sexual relation between a man and a woman."¹⁰³ "There has got to be the leap to polarised adjustment with the woman," Lawrence emphasizes in *Mr. Noon*, "You have to release from mental control the deep springs of passion. And these two things are deep mysteries" (MN 241). Drawing passional inspiration from the mystery of creative power and connecting with a sexual counterpart are what drive Lawrence's referential connection to "life itself" and

¹⁰² William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David Erdman (New York: Anchor Books, 1982) 370.

¹⁰³ Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 212, 213.

specifically demarcates his religious sensibility from Eliot's, the ascetic, who intones in "Gerontion": "I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch:/ How should I use them for your closer contact?"¹⁰⁴ Stevens, confessing that "the major poetic idea in the world is and always has been the idea of God" (L 378), also celestially inscribes a sexual relativity into his sense of 'divine' feminine creativity as he importunes "Sister and mother and diviner love" (CP 87) to "Use dusky words and dusky images. . ./ Conceiving words" as he sleeps "with one eye watching the stars fall" (CP 86) because "It is she that he wants, to look at directly,/ Someone before him to see and to know" (CP 232) knowing "She will leap back from the swift constellations,/ As they enter the place of their western/ Seclusion" (OP 30).

One problem of referentiality in a 'religious' aesthetic turns critically on what could be classified as the difference between faith and vision. Ricoeur and Jaspers are dependent upon rationalized faith (philosophy) which leaps to conclude that symbols transcend their vehicles (language/art) and permits one to connect to the god-force of life; Blake and Lawrence create their own symbols by means of vision -- a process wherein the dictates of the creative force produce their own immanent rationale in the form of individual-based art. Faith assumes something must be already there, vision trusts something will appear as soon as it is created. Faith interprets signs, vision translates nature into spirit. The assumptive or faith-like quality of the religious mode is what Edward Said objects to in Bloom, Frye and Kermode as he warns against certain totalizing elements in criticism.¹⁰⁵ Said calls for a secular outlook with transformative political principles to guide criticism -- critics left holding works of art too high are to be regarded as priests that "stress the private and hermetic over the public and social" who express a "preference for the secure protection of systems of belief and not for critical activity or consciousness."¹⁰⁶ Said's complaint about the supposed intellectual atrophy brought on by 'theological' criticism parallels his faulting

¹⁰⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934) 21.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Said, *Criticism in Society*, ed. Imre Salusinszky (New York: Methuen) 140-41.

¹⁰⁶ Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 292.

of Foucault for casting human fate as a function of materialistic incarceration: both systems fail to properly situate the secular human as the productive center of intention and meaning which informs the actuality of the world experience. Yet there seems to be a suspicious totalizing element at work in Said's search for a way "discourse can once again *collectively* become a truly secular enterprise,"¹⁰⁷ in that he wants, like Frye and Foucault, to include all structural forms of global activity (worldliness) as necessary informants of the forces which feed a properly centered critical consciousness. The issue of what occupies the center of value production -- the human subject vs the usual suspect forces -- should be approached by looking at where human values are stated in their 'highest' form: art. Said never directly tackles the function or modes of art as does Frye who clearly positions human intentionality as central to any critical cosmology because it is central to the qualities which define literature -- a product he believes actually exists (a belief that has raised much more suspicion than any of his religious views). The classification of art according to human intention leads to the problem of purposiveness: to what ends should art and literature be held? As an end unto itself, art drifts up autotelically into circles of closure dependent on projective acts of belief and thereby ultimately functions in somewhat of a religious mode. Such assumptive properties of belief are too cosy for Said who opts for "remaining skeptical and critical, succumbing neither to dogmatism nor to sulky gloom"¹⁰⁸ as he seeks to politicize the ends of art. Frye would object that such politicization reduces literature to ideology and ignores the critical job of defining what literature is. "Criticism," states Adams, "would seem to be a struggle of radical creation with descriptive analysis, in which neither can be allowed full sway."¹⁰⁹ On the radical creation side of things, "religious" remains a term problematically appearing whenever the 'science' of criticism has trouble quantifying the vague ontological qualities of what Frye calls "some

¹⁰⁷ Said, *World* 292.

¹⁰⁸ Said, *World* 230.

¹⁰⁹ Adams, *Symbolic* 345.

informing power from an ineffable mystery at the heart of being"¹¹⁰ from which literature might be derived. Charles Altieri points how

The logic of religion reigns, at least to the degree that art must seek permanent relational principles and identify with states of consciousness that do not easily connect with demands for practical action. But because it can render direct images for its own most fundamental powers, the art can treat religion as essentially a source of metaphors for what it manages to display in secular terms. Abstraction opens the way to a paradise so far within that it correlates the will's deepest energies with elemental dynamic forces in nature.¹¹¹

Altieri's suggestion of a paradise residing in the realms constructed by the abstractive power of description rests on the same principle with which Lawrence and Stevens formulate their religions: the ability to "correlate" human intentionality "with elemental dynamic forces" -- an ability that enables them to take up the Nietzschean challenge of translating man back into nature.

The difficulty of squaring theoretical stringency with religious feeling in terms of establishing relations with "the manifold purposes of nature" is an ontological problem measured by Kant in a footnote on his own extensive commentary on the subject:

The admiration for beauty and also the emotion aroused by the manifold purposes of nature, which a reflective mind is able to feel even prior to a clear representation of a rational author of the world, have something in themselves like *religious* feeling. They seem, in the first place, by a method of judging analogous to moral to produce an effect upon the moral feeling (gratitude to and veneration for the unknown cause) and thus, by exciting moral ideas, to produce an effect upon the mind, when they inspire that admiration which is bound up with far more interest than mere theoretical observation can bring about.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Frye, *Anatomy* 11.

¹¹¹ Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989) 366-67.

¹¹² Kant, *Judgment* 335, note 40.

In one sense Lawrence's entire aesthetic can be summed up by what Kant above parenthetically refers to as "gratitude to and veneration for the unknown cause." Kant's intimation of how nature's unquantifiable capacity to produce supra-moral emotions inspires "far more interest than mere theoretical observation" is indicative of the reason why Lawrence and Stevens find themselves drawn to investigating the possibility of establishing a science of feeling rather than one of pure theory: they want their metaphoric universe (description) to elicit an emotional arousal correspondent to the forces which inspire their compositional efforts. They want a subjective correlative of primary feeling bound translationally by one purpose: maintaining severe and honest relations with life. Honesty for them is tied to a Nietzschean sense of ancient Greek-like methodology in which the necessity of god formation (symbolic expression) is to be dictated by mutable natural phenomena (cultural as well as elemental). Feeling in such a dispensation does not result in a Wordsworthian theatre of self-definition, it acts more as a relational cohesive principle (transpersonal third-term) through which all forms of life establish identity according to their individual properties. Lawrence's objections to Wordsworth on those grounds are Blakean as he warns against the misuse of feeling:

One understands Wordsworth and the primrose and the yokel. The yokel had no relation at all with the primrose. Wordsworth gathered it into his own bosom and make it part of his own nature. . . He ousts the primrose from its own individuality. It must be identical with *his* soul. . . A primrose has its own peculiar primrosy identity, and all the oversouling in the world won't melt it into a Williamish oneness. . . Anthropomorphism, that allows nothing to call its soul its own. . .

Poetry can tell alluring lies, when we let our feelings, or our ego, run away with us. And we must always beware of romance: of people who love nature, or flowers, or dogs, or babies, or pure adventure. It means they are getting into a love-swing where everything is easy and nothing opposes their own egoism.

(*PHI* 447, 449)

Lawrence considers feeling an *exterior* agency of life which all creatures emanate, and thus, by virtue and quality of each particular emanation, contends identity to be established through the oppositional flux of competing and complementing agents. Purposiveness thereby remains tautologically bound to life itself as abstraction in the form of art attempts to charter systems of meaning. The question of purpose when reduced to art has never cleared the Kantian hurdle of non-purposiveness and when reduced to a religious ethic invites charges of non-critical hermetic ideality. The purpose of Ricoeur's religiousness is the drive for immediacy and life connection, a 'sacred' connection that willingly allows interpretation to escape a fate of non-closure by declaring the symbol to be a direct conduit to *bios*. But this connection "is no triumphant ontology," according to Adams who states that endless "interpretation is a risk that must be taken."¹¹³ Lawrence's religious sense is also rooted in an awareness of life process, what he labels "wonder", a wonder that generates endless description. Description for Lawrence becomes an endless interpretation or translation of what it is to specifically experience -- not transcend -- life itself:

The one universal element in consciousness which is fundamental to life is the element of wonder. You cannot help feeling it in a bean as it starts to grow and pulls itself out of its jacket. . . You recognize it, willy-nilly, in an ant busily tugging at a straw; in a rook, as it walks the frosty grass.

They all have their own obstinate will. But also they all live with a sense of wonder. Plant consciousness, insect consciousness, fish consciousness, all are related by one permanent element, which we may call the religious element inherent in all life, even in a flea: the sense of wonder. That is our sixth sense. And it is the *natural* religious sense.

Somebody says that mystery is nothing, because mystery is something you don't know, and what you don't know is nothing to you. But there is more than one way of knowing. (PHII 598-99)

¹¹³ Adams, *Symbolic* 386.

Lawrence's conception of the religious is always linked, unfracturedly, to the organic wonder of being a conduit of life-force, a purposive wonder synonymous with reverence: "If we had reverence for our life, our life would take at once religious form" (PH 510). In an essay entitled "Hymns in a Man's Life," Lawrence, reflecting on how by age sixteen he had "criticized and got over the Christian dogma" and yet how "the wonder [of the hymns] penetrated very deep," remarks:

Science in its true condition of wonder is as religious as any religion. But didactic science is as dead and boring as dogmatic religion. Both are wonderless and productive of boredom, endless boredom. Now we come back to the hymns. They live and glisten in the depths of man's consciousness in undimmed wonder, because they have not been subjected to any criticism or analysis. (PHII 599)

Reverence derived from acknowledging the priority of the life force is also transcribed by Stevens with religious imagery, hymns in particular: "to live/ In a physical world, to feel. . ./ This is the thesis scrivener in delight,/ The reverberating psalm, the right chorale" (CP 325, 326). The religious impulse in Stevens projects itself as an energy working to achieve -- in the face of dead gods and dying cultures -- a site where the fundamental need to believe in something can be expressed as "hymns, through iridescent changes" (CP 279) to the semiotic process which enables thought "to include the things/ That in each other are included, the whole,/ The complicate, the amassing harmony" (CP 403) as it produces "The description that makes it divinity" (CP 475). Jarraway states that in following Stevens "we catch the structuralism of modernism on its way to a *third* idea . . . that turns the poet's objective quest for faith not into subjective art but rather into the eventful question of belief and traces a continuous pattern of spiritual rebirth spiraling through his . . . verse."¹¹⁴

The search for a method with which to reconcile (objectify) interior subjectivity with the absolute of unknowable creative power directs Lawrence and Stevens into a

¹¹⁴ Jarraway, *Belief* 13.

vague third-term science of feeling which they come to consider as a religion of life. In this they approach an intentional site similar to the one Hegel outlines for romantic art in *The Philosophy of Fine Art*:

Reconciliation with the absolute is an act of the inner life. It has an ideal element which, in its purity, transcends the possibility of expression in art, for its truth is operative on a level much higher than the appearance of beauty. If art is to deal with it at all, it must be not on the level of its truth, which belongs to faith and inner conviction, but on the level of feeling. Art, in other words, must itself as art assume the form of feeling of the subjective inwardness which is its content; as art, it too must surrender its appearance to everyone without ceasing thereby to remain in unity with itself. Thus, depth of feeling alone, as both the form and content of romantic art, fulfills the double demand that is made upon it, which is that its content be essentially spiritual, on the one hand, and entirely intelligible and portrayable by art, on the other.¹¹⁵

Adams's charge of hermeticism against Jaspers for valorizing a Hegelian notion of romantic art could be applied to Lawrence and Stevens in their placement of feeling as an ascendant power to theoretical praxis. But they differ (Lawrence more strongly than Stevens) from Hegel's detailing of the function of feeling in romantic art in one important aspect -- they do not defer the role the physical body plays in determining "the unity of the human and divine nature"¹¹⁶ to the subjective inwardness of mind; they do not quite agree that "the genuine medium . . . is no longer the sensuous and immediate existence of what is spiritual, that is, the physical body of man, but [is now] the self-aware inner life of soul itself."¹¹⁷ Lawrence considers Hegel's conception of Mind ("the infinite subjectivity of the idea . . . absolute inwardness")¹¹⁸ unethical because it separates the divine human (spirit) from its immediate referential home of life itself (physical body). "Man is immoral," Lawrence writes, "because

¹¹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, class handout (Eng549, UW, 1988) 41.

¹¹⁶ Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: HBJ, 1971) 524.

¹¹⁷ Hegel, *CTSP* 524-25.

¹¹⁸ Hegel, *CTSP* 524.

Chapter II

Ontological Life-Support: Feeling and the Creative Force

The appraisalment of feelings (that is, the recognition of one or other set of feelings as more or less good, more or less necessary for the well-being of mankind) is effected by the religious perception of the age. In every period of history and in every human society there exists an understanding of the meaning of life, which represents the highest level to which men of that society have attained -- an understanding indicating the highest good at which that society aims. This understanding is the religious perception of the given time and society. And this religious perception is always clearly expressed by a few advanced men and more or less vividly perceived by members of the society generally.

~ Leo Tolstoy: *What is Art?*

It [poetry] may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world. But to say all this is only to what you know already, if you have felt poetry and thought about your feelings.

~ T. S. Eliot: *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*

The artist must not only feel the "inward meaning" of things and their moral life, he must externalize his feelings. The highest and most characteristic power of artistic imagination appears in this latter act.

~ Ernst Cassirer: *Art*

I have never been able to bring myself to use a form which came to me by some logical way, which had not arisen purely within my feelings.

~ Wassily Kandinsky: *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*

The feeling or the insight is that which quickens the words, not the other way round.

~ Wallace Stevens: *Opus Posthumous*

Feeling, seemingly, is an integral part of consciousness. "In every experience, even in science, there is feeling. No discourse can sustain itself," says John Crowe Ransom, "without interest, which is feeling. The interest, or the feeling, is like an automatic

index to the human value of the proceeding -- which would not otherwise proceed."¹¹⁹ What is feeling? William James conditions his extensive definition of feeling by declaring "the internal shadings of emotional feeling merge endlessly into each other" such that "to detect with certainty purely spiritual qualities of feeling" is "a task beyond human power."¹²⁰ *Barclay's Dictionary* of 1813 states that feeling is derived from the verb "to feel: [*felan*, Sax] to perceive by the touch" and offers this definition: "Feeling s. It is both the grossest and most extensive of all the senses, if not that which includes all the rest. Figuratively, perception; sensibility; tenderness." The 1988 OED defines feeling as a "verbal substantive 1. The action of the verb FEEL in various senses" and separates the various senses of "to feel" into two main categories: I. physical touch ("To examine or explore by touch") and II. mental perception ("To perceive, be conscious"). Also added is one small third category: III. passive judgement ("To be felt as having a specified quality; to produce a certain impression on the senses or the sensibilities; to seem"). The OED's "physical" and "mental" categorical arrangement indicates a mind/body dualism at the etymological foundation of feeling. The third category of passive judgement ("to seem") suggests an inherent schematic of third-term reconciliation given that the act of constructing "seemings" depends on the creative production of metaphor from which human meaning is derived between the "touch" of elemental life and the "mental" grip of subjective perception. In "The Theory of Feelings" Alfred North Whitehead defines feeling as a self-creative "advance into novelty" whereby the act of feeling is equated with the generative phase of the creative force:

An actual entity feels as it does feel in order to be the actual entity which it is. In this way an actual entity satisfies Spinoza's notion of substance: it is *causa sui*. The creativity is not an external agency with its own ulterior purposes. All actual entities share with God this characteristic of self-causation. For this reason every actual entity also shares with God this

¹¹⁹ John Crowe Ransom, *Poetry: A Note in Ontology*, qtd. from *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) 882.

¹²⁰ William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 1064, 1070.

characteristic of transcending all other actual entities, including God. The universe is thus a creative advance into novelty. . .¹²¹

Whitehead also claims feeling serves a reconciliatory function by labeling it “the ultimate metaphysical ground” as he repeats the “creative advance” phrase in a later chapter of *Process and Reality*:

Opposed elements stand to each other in mutual requirement. In their unity, they inhibit or contrast. God and the world stand to each other in this opposed requirement. God is the infinite ground of all mentality, the unity of vision seeking physical multiplicity. The World is the multiplicity of finites, actualities seeking a perfected unity. Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty.¹²²

Equating feeling with a notion of immanent self-causation does not necessarily enable the delivery of a unified theory of consciousness nor does it remove the mind/body problem. The relation between action and feeling and questions of how and from what thought is generated remain bound by subject/object traditions of primary sensation and secondary apprehension. Whitehead states in *Science and the Modern World* that “the occurrences of nature are in some way apprehended by minds, which are associated with living bodies. . . . But the mind in apprehending also experiences sensations which, properly speaking, are qualities of the mind alone.”¹²³ John R. Searle counters in *The Rediscovery of the Mind* that “the only obstacle to granting consciousness its status as a biological feature of organisms is the outmoded dualistic/materialistic assumption that the ‘mental’ character of consciousness makes it impossible for it to be a ‘physical’ property.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Free Press, 1979) 222.

¹²² Whitehead, *Process* 348–49.

¹²³ A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, qtd. in James's *Principles*.

¹²⁴ John R. Searle *The Rediscovery of Mind* (Cambridge: MITP, 1992) 91.

Where does feeling phenomenologically occur -- in the mind or body? What are the exact relations between feeling and thought -- are they aspects of human apprehension that can be factored and bound corelatively with an absolute or do they form oppositionally-wound spirals out of which consciousness composes but never resolves itself? Is the phenomenon of cognitive awareness to be considered any different in kind when referred to by the variable referents *thought*, *feeling*, *mind* and *body*? Can these terms be read as synonymous to the act -- both expressive and reflective -- of experience itself? Precise answers remain difficult because philosophers cannot agree on what constitutes subjective and objective categories of referentiality. This difficulty produces intuitive catch words like *chora*, *Dasein*, *logos*, *différance*, *élan vital*, *emanation*, *Spirit*, *creative force*, *Absolute Truth*, *life itself*. These terms tend to flatten time into a perpetual 'now' as they compress experiential space into the italics of *there* or *where*. The science of defining the *there* of where feeling occurs traditionally assumes some form of Platonic-Hegelian deification of Mind, where feeling as sensation is marginalized into a low-level pleasure/pain screen, and feeling as reflective seeming is charged with the high moral mission of discerning truth. In such dispensations a principle emphasis is laid on the *denotative* aspect of meaning generation. Contrarily, the art of presenting the *where* of feeling depends on engineering the effects of feeling into symbolic materials (art) to where feeling differentials between primary sensation and secondary 'seeming' become blurred within the referential interdependence that creates *connotative* forms of meaning. Objections to Plato and Hegel as voiced by Nietzsche, Lawrence, Ricoeur, and Barthes vary in degree but in kind ultimately object to the one-dimensionality imposed by strict adherence to denotative language. The denotative, they infer, does not properly honor the mysterious truth of creative power, a truth they suggest has no ontological source (unknowability) or ultimate telos (freeplay affirmation).

William James addresses the difficulty of structuring denotative/connotative *there-ness* and *where-ness* by considering feeling to be a product of relation with no fixable center [his italics]:

But from our point of view both Intellectualists and Sensationalists are wrong. If there be such things as feelings at all, *then surely as relations between objects exist in rerum natura, so surely, and more surely, do feelings exist to which these relations are known.* There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of the relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought. If we speak objectively, it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own. In either case the relations are numberless, and no existing language is capable of doing justice to all their shades.¹²⁵

At the expense of a precise definition of what constitutes an “object”, James is able to posit a theory of betweenness whereby language and feeling are considered relational aspects of the plenum manufactured by the interactions of consciousness and natural phenomena. The softness of such relativity defuses the necessity of absolutely locating where thought or feeling occur, because, as James later admits, the fact “that brains should give rise to a knowing consciousness at all, this is the one mystery which returns, no matter what sort the consciousness and of what sort the knowledge may be.”¹²⁶ But how much ontological territory should be conceded when acknowledging that the foundations of consciousness may be bound and unfolded by some unknowable mysterious power? How best to factor what Charles Altieri describes as “powers that cannot be grasped by any descriptive stance”¹²⁷ that rule “the mysterious ontological status of intentional phenomena” as they fire up “modes of intelligibility

¹²⁵ James, *Principles* 238.

¹²⁶ James, *Principles* 647.

¹²⁷ Charles Altieri, “Stevens’s Ideas of Feeling: Towards an Exponential Poetics,” *The Centennial Review* Vol. XXXVI No. 1 (Winter 1992) 157.

not dependent on the third-person representational processes we use for securing knowledge?"¹²⁸ Ernst Cassirer's unfinished fourth volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* details one approach. Discussing how the projection of pure concepts leads to theoretical antinomies he argues that ultimate ontology is unsolvable and therefore unnecessary. Instead of an 'answer', one is left with a relational field of forces, a grid of betweenness, where the grammars of myth fold into the syntax of the religious:

If we begin with the "opposition" of the unlimited and the limit, of idea and life, then it is no longer possible to make understandable how these two necessarily determine each other, how they are to become correlative to each other. Yet it is this very correlation that is the primarily certain and the primarily given while their separation is something later, a mere construction of thought. The question of how life "achieves" form, how form comes to life, is therefore, of course, unsolvable. This is not because there is an unbridgeable gulf between them, but because the hypothesis of "pure" form (as well as the hypothesis of "pure" life) already contains a contradiction within itself. No matter how deeply we enter into the realm of organic processes or how high we go into the sphere of intellectual creativity, we never find these two subjects, these two substances

Wherever specifically human existence and life is apprehended, we already find it wrapped up in the primordial forms of myth. It does not "have" these as objects; rather, it is in them. . . . The specific nature, coloration, and tone of feeling of life define the character of the mythical world of images. . . . The further back we go, the more we seem to approach the truly primordial level of myth, the more clearly this "closeness to life" becomes. But in the higher and highest forms of religion this immediate closeness to life has given way to another relationship. . . . The highest religious conceptions are able in one and the same act to enter into this bond and also to overcome it. They both destroy and create forms; they enter into the conditioned language of religious forms by internally breaking away from it and exposing its contingent nature. . . . Here we find the same rhythm, the same characteristic swing of the pendulum, but once again there is no "over here" and "over there," no reaching over from one area into another, to a completely different one wholly beyond the first, but only the mutual affection of forces upon one another. . . .¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Charles Altieri, *Subjective Agency: A Theory of First-person Expressivity and its Social Implications* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994) 34.

¹²⁹ Ernst Cassirer, *The Theory of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 4, trans. John Krois (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) 15, 19-20.

Cassirer positions ontology within the mutable confines of the creative impulse of life whose purest low/high forms are transcribed into myth and religion. Here, there is no closure or final summation, there is only the criterion of paying heed to the rhythmic valences of relational force. Altieri moves beyond myth and religion but tracks similar relations in the realm of what he labels the transpersonal as delineated in modern art and literature (this will be discussed further in Chapter Four). Ontology left on the doorstep of creative enterprise is the song sung easily by myth, religion and art. More difficult is scoring the accompanying libretto with criticism -- efforts to do so stretch from Aristotle to Baudrillard and compose the canon of philosophy. Recent science has tried to pick up the tune also, where, according to physicist Menas Kafatos, "ontology will play a primary role in the global revolution in thought which now seems to be in process . . . particularly when the modern scientific world-view gives them a new 'freedom' to do so. In our view, the majority of human beings do apprehend or intuit on the deepest levels of their subjective experience the existence of Being as a self-evident truth."¹³⁰ Regardless of exact or relative position, aesthetics and science are bound (at least when "on the deepest levels of subjective experience") by the faculty which enables intuitions of whole systems to appear. There, cosmologically, ontological enterprise proceeds somewhat mysteriously in the end by what 'feels' right. How one evaluates the act of feeling remains the rub . . .

In *The New York Review of Books* John Searle faults David Chalmers' *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* for not considering feeling to be a fundamental part of consciousness. He challenges Chalmers' artificial intelligence equation of functionalism=organization=consciousness by claiming "that would still not be an explanation of consciousness. We would still need to know: How does it work? How does the organization, which is specified purely formally and without any

¹³⁰ Mena Kafatos and Robert Nadeau, *The Conscious Universe: Part and Whole in Modern Physical Theory* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990) 186-37.

reference to specific materials, cause the feeling?"¹³¹ While complaining that Chalmers' "system has no conscious feeling whatever"¹³² Searle himself defers definition of the relation of feeling to consciousness by (over)stating "that inside our skulls there is a brain . . . and brain processes cause consciousness in all its forms" and thus "consciousness is an irreducible feature of physical reality."¹³³ Searle's limit of irreducibility does not map out any specific physiological function that might explain how/what/why the brain feels while monitoring its host's body in the universe -- a shortcoming that marks a concession to unknowability (as is evidenced by the title of his own new book *The Mystery of Consciousness*). Searle's charge against AI organization theory points out a lack of here-ness in the realm of rational there-ness, but it does little more than point. The more difficult and pertinent issue (as one dismantles the robots) would be to define feeling itself, and, further, to locate the human planes where, as Cassirer puts it, the "feeling of life define[s] the character of the mythical world of images."¹³⁴ Joseph Campbell states that such concern

makes fundamental my basic feeling that myth is a function of biology. It speaks of the energies that move the consciousness. They're determined by the organs of the body. They do not all have the same intentions so there are conflicts and dissonances. But myth has to do with the harmonization of one's consciousness in relation to the ground of being in nature, in the body, which is itself a manifestation of a mystery.

It's a big subject. As you turn to it and touch any aspect of it, it just opens out and offers new mysteries -- provided you follow it in terms of connotations instead of simply denotations. The denotations just don't work, that's all. And I simply think religious people know that they don't work and that's why they're so damned deliberate and dogmatic . . . They just don't know how to read the symbols.¹³⁵

¹³¹ John Searle, "Consciousness & the Philosophers," *New York Review of Books* 6 March 1997: 47.

¹³² Searle, "Consciousness" 46.

¹³³ Searle, *Rediscovery* 247, 116.

¹³⁴ Cassirer, *Symbolic* 19.

¹³⁵ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero's Journey: The World of Joseph Campbell*, ed. Phil Cousineau (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991) 139.

Campbell's positioning of consciousness as a vehicle for the energies of nature implicates the body as central to the function of mind, Hegel notwithstanding. Hubert Dreyfus, after spending twenty-five years working with artificial intelligence, concludes that "one of the reasons that computers can't be intelligent--*the most important reason*--is that they don't have bodies."¹³⁶ He notes how Sam Todes' *The Body as Material Subject of the World* tries "to show that our experience of space/time is based upon our bodies: the way we move forward more easily than backward turns out to be necessary to construct time as an asymmetrical succession, and our orientation of front/back, right/left turns out to be necessary for the construction of space."¹³⁷ Dreyfus underscores Searle's point against AI in his assumption that intelligence is metered by the body, which at present is the only machine capable of feeling. "Define the mind," Merleau-Ponty situates, "as the other side of the body. We have no idea of a mind that would not be doubled with a body... The body is to the greatest extent what every thing is: *a dimensional this*. It is the universal thing."¹³⁸ Modern science as well is finding the body central in its investigation into the origins of feeling. In *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994), Antonio Damasio, a leading brain neurologist, states "the essence of a feeling may not be an elusive mental quality attached to an object, but rather the direct perception of a specific landscape: that of the body."¹³⁹ Damasio's studies prompt him to conjecture that the "mind is created by the body" and that "consciousness may be nothing more than an evanescent by-product of wholly physical processes."¹⁴⁰ For philosopher and scientist both it appears that the idea of a whole system inheres itself as a principle of intelligence organization invariably along the lines of a complete human body when working within a symbolic field or directly with physiological functions. Reading symbols correctly in Campbell's

¹³⁶ Herbert Dreyfus, "The Nonreflective Rationality of Ethical Expertise," *disClosure* 5 (1996) 18.

¹³⁷ Dreyfus, "Nonreflective" 20.

¹³⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1968) 259, 260.

¹³⁹ Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994) xiv.

¹⁴⁰ Damasio interviewed by J. Madeleine Nash, "In Search of the Mind," *Time*, 17 July 1995: 47.

terms would be the art of properly naming gods intuited connotatively from feelings generated from life experience as bodily grounded in phenomenological nature. The essence of a feeling as translated through the body is akin mythically to William Blake's "all dieties reside in the human breast"¹⁴¹ where nature animates objects "with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains."¹⁴² Animate force, notes Stevens, is the "myth before the myth began/. . . From this the poem springs/. . . On a breast forever precious for that touch" (CP 383, 388). From such breastplates emerge the human forms of the Hero, Albion, and Major Man. But Blake, Adams reminds, like Vico, looks beyond the primordial energies to the refining vehicle of perception -- language -- as being the tropological center of consciousness. Yet, as Todes points out, tropes are dependent upon the body for space/time orientation models. And, as nature reminds, the body is dependent upon the forces animating the objects of its survival. The interdependence of mind and world as met in the body is a perennial theme taking various forms of expression, like painting for instance, where Lawrence notes, "Blake paints with real intuitional awareness and solid instinctive feeling. He dares handle the human body. . . And no other Englishman has even dared handle it with alive imagination" (PH 560). Continuing in "Introduction to These Paintings" Lawrence observes how in bourgeois dress codes depicted by Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough, the "coat is really more important than the man" and how

with the collapse of the feeling of physical, flesh-and-blood kinship, and the substitution of our ideal, social or political oneness, came the failing of our intuitive awareness. . . The reality of substantial bodies can only be perceived by the imagination, and the imagination is a kindled state of consciousness in which intuitive awareness predominates. The plastic arts are all imagery, and imagery is the body of our imaginative life, and our imaginative life is a great joy and fulfilment to us, for the imagination is a more powerful and more comprehensive flow of consciousness than our ordinary flow. In the flow of pure imagination we know in full, mentally and physically at once, in a

¹⁴¹ William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David Erdman (New York: Anchor Press, 1982) 38. The images accompanying the text on the plate depict human forms submerged/emerging in and out of the elements water, earth, and sky.

¹⁴² Blake, *Complete* 38.

greater, enkindled awareness. At the maximum of our imagination we are religious. And if we deny our imagination, and have no imaginative life, we are poor worms who have never lived. (PH 560, 556, 559)

To emphasize the body as intrinsic to the operation of consciousness does not, however, necessarily illuminate what feeling is. In an analysis of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Monika (not to be confused with Susanne) Langer details a level of perceptual activity where "perception is not *imposition* -- whether of an objective *datum* on a passive subject or a subjective structure on an external object -- but rather, pre-reflective communication ('dialogue') *between* the perceived world and the perceiving body-subject."¹⁴³ This third-term bio-dialogic could be read as one rough and ready definition of primary feeling at the level of prelinguistic sensuousness. The rules that govern this dialogue are where aesthetic and rational markers converge and diverge--at the gateway between primordial energy and language. In defense of phenomenology, M. Langer notes how

the primordial relationship to the world 'is not a thing which can be any further clarified by analysis'; the dynamic, internal relation between body-subject and world can only be brought to our attention. This bringing to attention is itself, however, a 'creative act' which brings truth into being by disclosing behind reflection that mysterious perceptual realm which is our very 'access to truth'.¹⁴⁴

M. Langer also cannot advance ontology beyond the "mysterious perceptual realm" of life itself. Being is definable only so far as the terrain "brought to our attention" by creative acts. Lawrence uses a comparable notion when describing the poetic act: "The essential quality of poetry is that it makes a new effort of attention, and 'discovers' a new world within the known world" (PH 255). The phenomenologist's primordial relationship to the world is similar to relations outlined in Altieri's

¹⁴³ Monika Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception* (Tallahassee: FSUP, 1989) 157-58.

¹⁴⁴ M. Langer, *Perception* xvii.

identification of Romantic lyricism, where “enthusiasm within the lyric agent also serves as testimony for some unrepresentable creative ground underlying the feeling that the energies also ‘belong’ in the world that the agent experiences.”¹⁴⁵ But, once again, how much ground should be conceded to unrepresentable mystery and how much to rational models of reality when trying to classify the forces responsible for the phenomena of perceivable life? Richard Feynman’s confession that “we have no knowledge of what energy is” indicates the relative unimportance of knowing certain fundamental givens, considering how science manages to measure and interpret the comings and goings of energy without defining it:

There is a fact, or if you wish, a *law*, governing all natural phenomena that are known to date. There is no known exception to this law -- it is exact so far as we know. The law is called the *conservation of energy*. It states that there is a certain quantity, which we call energy, that does not change in the manifold changes which nature undergoes. That is a most abstract idea, because it is a mathematical principle; it says that there is a numerical quantity which does not change when something happens. It is not a description of a mechanism, or anything concrete; it is just a strange fact that we can calculate some number and when we finish watching nature go through her tricks and calculate the number again, it is the same. . . It is an abstract thing in that it does not tell us the mechanism or the *reasons* for the various formulas. . . Why can we use mathematics to describe nature without a mechanism behind it? No one knows.¹⁴⁶

Feynman’s conditioning of the descriptive quality of mathematics as “an abstract thing” and “a strange fact” echoes Stevens and Lawrence’s descriptions of the same pool of all “phenomena known to date”: “*It Must Be Abstract*” Stevens calculates in *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* as he measures the “flor-abundant force” (CP 388); “the strange creative urge,” Lawrence surveys, “is the one and only everlasting motive for everything” (KG 331). As Romantic modernists, Stevens and Lawrence accept feeling somewhat as Feynman accepts energy -- as *the* given yet unknowable *real* subject of

¹⁴⁵ Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 63.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Feynman, *Six Easy Pieces* (New York: Helix, 1995) 69, 71-72, 107-8.

their study which, miraculously enough, appears to be expressable via the descriptive laws of an abstract symbolic code: language. "Stevens realized poetry must take on the qualities of abstract art," Altieri writes, "if it was to render the fluidity and the significance of the feelings."¹⁴⁷ Cassirer states that art's "fixation of the 'highest moments of phenomena' is neither an imitation of physical things nor a mere overflow of powerful feelings. It is an interpretation of reality -- not by concepts but by intuitions; not through the medium of thought but through that of sensuous forms."¹⁴⁸ Stevens agrees that art exercises "powers that create a truth that cannot be arrived at by the reason alone, a truth that the poet recognizes by sensation" (NA 58). Cassirer's distinction between thought and sensuous forms is the same found in the word "aesthetic" taken in its most fundamental sense: *aisthesthai* [Gk. αἰσθητα, things perceptible by the senses, things material (as opposed to νοητα, things thinkable or immaterial), also, 'perceptive, sharp in the senses'; f. vb. stem αἰσθε- 'feel, apprehend by the senses.' OED]. It is significant that the English word relating most closely to the Greek root verb stem αἰσθε- is "feel", for Lawrence and Stevens both conceptualize their aesthetics by paying strict attention to the sensations of a feeling human body. Thereby Lawrence states [his italics] "An artist *can* only create what he really religiously *feels* is truth, religious truth really *felt*, in the blood and the bones" (PH 562). And, as for abstract generalization, Lawrence continues:

These "laws" which science has invented, like conservation of energy, indestructibility of matter, gravitation, the will-to-live, survival-of-the-fittest: and even these absolute facts, like -- the earth goes round the sun, or the doubtful atoms, electrons, or ether -- they are all prison-walls, unless we realize that we don't know what they mean. We don't know what we mean, ultimately, by *conservation*, or *indestructibility*. Our atoms, electrons, ether, are caps that fit exceedingly badly. And our will-to-live contains a germ of suicide, and our survival-of-the-fittest the germ of degeneracy. As for the earth going round the sun: it goes round as the blood goes round my body, absolutely mysteriously, with the rapidity and hesitation of life.

¹⁴⁷ Altieri, *Painterly* 323.

¹⁴⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *Art*, qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato* (New York: HBJ, 1971) 999.

(PH II, 397)

Along the same blood-lines, Stevens declares "The body is the great poem" (OP 194) and while being sung "The poet feels abundantly the poetry of everything" (OP 190). He adds that the trick is "To live in the world but outside existing conceptions of it" (OP 190) as

We move between these points:
From that ever-early candor to its late plural

And the candor of them is the strong exhilaration
Of what we feel from what we think, of thought
Beating in the heart, as if blood newly came,

An elixir, an excitation, a pure power.
(CP 382)

But where are the definitions of feeling? How accurate is Lawrence's quip that we "are not even born, as far as our feelings are concerned" (PH 757) and how specious the barb that "to feel anything at all/ you'd better abandon all ideas of feeling altogether" (CP 501)?

There are two philosophers, Susanne K. Langer and Quentin Smith, who have presented book-length evaluations of feeling: *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Volumes I-III* (1966, 1972, 1982), and *The Felt Meanings of the World: A Metaphysics of Feeling* (1986), respectively. Langer works to define feeling empirically; Smith labors to redefine ontological premises of "wholeness" by introducing a philosophy that replaces traditional Western rationalism with feeling. Langer's *Mind* stems from concepts introduced in *Feeling and Form* (1953) and *Philosophy in a New Key* (1951). In these early works Adams charges "Langer goes so far as to project a 'pervasive ambivalence' back behind art to 'human feeling' itself, which is an area in her system that we ought not really to be able to talk about but only to build symbolically from."¹⁴⁹ Can it be

¹⁴⁹ Adams, *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic* (Tallahassee: FSUP, 1986) 232.

spoken about -- what *really* is 'behind' art? Langer spent the following thirty years compiling a three volume monument talking about just that: human feeling as it can be graphed from the primordial to the symbolic.

In *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, Langer places feeling in the grip of the ultimate *physical* ground: "Feeling stands, in fact, in the midst of that vast biological field which lies between the lowliest organic activities and the rise of mind."¹⁵⁰ Working to establish a definition of consciousness which avoids the constrictions of science and religion (lifelessness and faith), Langer constructs a methodology based on "a biological theory of feeling that should logically lead to an adequate concept of mind."¹⁵¹ Her laboratory models are works of art because, she claims, "their expressiveness can rise to the presentation of all aspects of mind and human personality."¹⁵² She adds that in "the artist's projection

feeling is a heightened from of life; so any work expressing felt tensions, rhythms and activities expresses their unfelt substructure of vital processes, which is the whole of life. If vitality and feeling are conceived in this way there is no sharp break, let alone metaphysical gap, between physical and mental realities, yet there are thresholds where mentality begins, and especially where human mentality transcends the animal level, and mind, *sensu stricto*, emerges. . . .

The image of feeling created by artists . . . serves to hold the reality itself for our labile and volatile memory, as a touchstone to test the scope of our intellectual constructions. . . . Under the aegis of a holistic symbol, the concept of life builds up even in entirely scientific terms very much like the vital image in art, with no break between somatic and mental events, no "addition" of feeling or consciousness to physical machinery, and especially, no difference of attitude, point of view, working notions, or "logical language" dividing physics and chemistry from biology, or physiology from psychology. No matter how far apart the beginnings of research in various fields may be, their later developments converge, and in advance stages tend to dovetail,

¹⁵⁰ Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, abridged ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988) 13.

¹⁵¹ Langer, *Mind* xiii.

¹⁵² Langer, *Mind* xiii.

and close like the perfect sutures of our skull, which become well-nigh invisible in ripe old age.¹⁵³

Langer's strategy in routing her argument of mind through a logic of biological process is necessitated by her wish to conflate the mind/body split within an absolute ground of awareness that she labels "feeling". Ontological questions are made moot or at least made equivalent to the acceptance of life process at its own face value, because, according to Langer, feeling, and "its whole relation to life, the fact that all sorts of processes may culminate in feeling with or without direct regard to each other, and that vital activity goes on at all levels continuously, make mental phenomena the most protean subject matter in the world."¹⁵⁴ Langer's approach to analyzing the processes giving rise to feeling is atypical in its interdisciplinary range (aesthetics, genetics, neurology, chemistry, etc.) as philosophy rarely applies any science harder than semiotics. Her exhaustive efforts to classify the physical links between the body and consciousness lead her to counsel, as a scientist, that "what we need for a science of mind is not so much a definitive concept of mind, as a conceptual frame in which to lodge our observations of mental phenomena."¹⁵⁵ Langer's framework permits her to catalog (impressively) more than define, and, while not delivering any breakthrough bio-psychical theory, *Mind* stands as the definitive compendium on feeling *qua* feeling to date. Feeling, through three volumes, is defined as an aspectual agency born out of the relations between phenomena, which, after giving rise -- ever mysteriously -- to the awareness of subject/object dynamics, are subsequently processed, reprocessed, and resolved into the third-term field known as consciousness. Her exact definition is no clearer than William James's, but her documentation is more rigorous and integratively presented (though she cannot match the brilliance of his marginal musings). Oddly, at book's end, she concedes the ascendancy of mathematics as the vanguard shaper of

¹⁵³ Langer, *Mind* xiii, xiv.

¹⁵⁴ Langer, *Mind* 29.

¹⁵⁵ Langer, *Mind* 5.

humanity's future, and professes that as an exponentially brave new and stripped-of-all-old-feelings machine, "Mind, still faces the mystery of all things young, the secret of vital potentiality."¹⁵⁶ More effective as a philosopher, she details the effects of the creative force with a bio-cultural cross (somewhere between Cassirer, Chomsky and Campbell) and sums up her aesthetics in a sentence: "Art is the objectification of feeling, and the subjectification of nature."¹⁵⁷

Langer's combinative methodology has been paralleled in recent scientific theory such as the jointly-authored *The Conscious Universe: Part and Whole in Modern Physical Theory* by physicist Menas Kafatos and critical theorist Robert Nadeau. Lesser combinations include the philosophical slants in the cosmological theories of 'pure' scientists like Wolfgang Pauli, Robert Damasio, Steven Hawking & Co., and Oxford mathematician Roger Penrose, who, in *Shadows of the Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness*, writes

A scientific world-view which does not profoundly come to terms with the problem of conscious minds can have no serious pretensions of completeness. Consciousness is part of our universe, so any physical theory which makes no proper place for it falls fundamentally short of providing a genuine description of the world. I would maintain that there is yet no physical, biological, or computational theory that comes very close to explaining our consciousness and consequent intelligence; but that should not deter us from striving to search for one. . . [If found], our philosophical outlook can hardly be other than profoundly altered.¹⁵⁸

Interest in "consciousness" for science is the inversely proportioned need for a theory of subjectivity born out of its accelerating pace in computational cosmology (as it outruns its parent the deconstructed man/woman shadow of Enlightenment idealism). A fundamental sticking point in defining consciousness revolves around the notion of "wholeness" and its effects on the inside/outside parameters of perception. It was this

¹⁵⁶ Langer, *Mind* 399.

¹⁵⁷ Langer, *Mind* 40.

¹⁵⁸ Roger Penrose, *Shadow of the Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness* (New York: Oxford UP, 1994) 8.

issue that drove the 'where is where' quantum argument between Einstein and Bohr which involved the determination whether position in measurement could be precisely fixed. Bohr won the argument theoretically on the shoulders of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in 1935, a principle refined in 1964 by Bell's Theorem of non-locality (which appears to be the final blow to classical one-to-one correspondence paradigms). Laboratory confirmation of Bell's Theorem came in 1982 with the Aspect experiments which left physical theory on the doorstep of non-locality, which, according to Kafatos and Nadeau, reveals a

new epistemological situation in a quantum mechanical universe -- the universe as a whole, or reality-in-itself, cannot 'in principle' be completely disclosed in physical theory. . . . Thus the ambition to develop a 'Theory of Everything' must be viewed as yet another unexamined legacy of the hidden ontology of classical epistemology. The classical assumption that the collection of parts constitutes the whole has proven invalid. We now know that the properties of parts can only be understood in terms of the dynamics of the whole, and that what we call a "part" is a pattern in the inseparable web of relations. The unity and difference between parts and whole on the most fundamental levels inevitably discloses complementary relationships. . . . Scientific world-view play a large role in conditioning our understanding of the character of self and world, non-locality as a new fact of nature could be just as revolutionary in these terms as the confirmation of Copernican hypothesis in the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁹

Kafatos dampens Penrose's ambition for a theory of everything by claiming that non-locality voids such containment. Non-locality is a term to describe the constant state of the universe as a whole which particularizes all positionality of quanta as self-immanently centered everywhere while simultaneously nowhere. Physics finally caught up to Pascal's equation for god-like immanence, "La sphère dont le centre est partout et la circonférence est nulle part."¹⁶⁰ Stevens quotes Pascal as well as Whitehead -- "Everything is everywhere at all times, for every location involves an aspect of itself in

¹⁵⁹ Kafatos and Nadeau, *Conscious* 175, 73.

¹⁶⁰ Blaise Pascal, qtd. in Stevens's *Opus Posthumous* (New York: Knopf, 1989) 275.

every other location. Thus every spatio-temporal standpoint mirrors the world¹⁶¹ -- to observe that such a viewpoint is "from a level where everything is poetic, as if the statement that every location involves an aspect of itself in every other location produced in the imagination a universal iridescence, a dithering of presences and, say, a complex of differences" (OP 273).

Non-locality as an absolute implies that there is no 'outside', no transcendent margin from which to measure reality *completely*. This is the same logic applied in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* statement, "The sense [meaning] of the world must lie outside the world"¹⁶² as he limits truth disclosure of linguistic expression to what is within the world (Derrida confines it even further). However, the linguistic domain Wittgenstein seeks to clarify with language resists the precise demarcative force his logic assumes it carries. The sense of the word "sense" [from the German "Sinn" ("Der Sinn der Welt")] itself as defined in *Cassell's German Dictionary* balloons out general as any English definition of consciousness: "sense, faculty, organ of perception, feeling; intellect, understanding, mind, wit, intelligence; consciousness, apprehension, memory; taste, inclination, disposition, tendency, direction; wish, opinion, temper; interpretation, purport, import, meaning, signification" (all this before reaching "der Welt"). But this imprecision does support Wittgenstein's functional differentiation between language as an agency of factual *disclosure* (transcendent structure) and of *description* (things as experienced on the surface). The inside/outside bifurcation of correspondence theories in physics and ethics resists its conceptual eradication within non-locality and positivism because meaning always drifts towards the dream of expressing itself wholly -- wholeness being antithetical to indeterminacy. Meaning, taken in a whole sense, incorporates through feeling a fuller range of impact than meaning taken strictly as 'value' semantically isolated by logic. Thus Wittgenstein can say "To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole -- a limited whole. Feeling the world as a

¹⁶¹ A. N. Whitehead, qtd in Stevens's OP 273.

¹⁶² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961) 6.41.

limited whole -- it is this that is mystical."¹⁶³ Altieri states "because of this sense of the mystical, we recognize the need for a model of agency that cannot be represented by any form of rational or perpectival thought."¹⁶⁴ The model of agency fitting this bill is feeling because it enables a complete apprehension of reality (seemingly) while still within the phenomenological field (life) it is describing. Feeling allows whole comprehension in a manner that fulfills the anthropic function of Einstein's cosmological constant where consciousness becomes an invariable factor of reality determination. But how is feeling calibrated in to and out of language? How does one end up where Stevens says "observing is completing and we are content,/ In a world that shrinks to an immediate whole,/ That we do not need to understand, complete/ Without secret arrangements of it in the mind" (CP 341)? Where does consciousness exist as the language of body-spun feeling? Somewhere, Lawrence says, in the wholeness of

Thought

Thought, I love thought.
 But not the jiggling and twisting of already existent ideas
 I despise that self-important game.
 Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,
 Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of the conscience,
 Thought is gazing on to the face of life, and reading what can be read,
 Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to a conclusion.
 Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,
 Thought is a man in his wholeness wholly attending.
(CP 673)

Consciousness for Lawrence comes in two varieties, "*primal*," which "is always dynamic and never, like *mental* consciousness, static" (FT 34). Thereby he qualifies thought as being "just a means to action and living" and, "say what we will about its magic powers, [thought] is instrumental only, the soul's finest instrument for the

¹⁶³ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.45.

¹⁶⁴ Altieri, *Painterly* 349.

business of living" (FT 34). Primal consciousness could be read as feeling, mental consciousness as thought, the same differentiation J. S. Mill uses to define poetry as "Feeling itself, employing Thought only as the medium of its utterance."¹⁶⁵ "Thought" for Lawrence, as denoted by the transitive verbs "welling, tasting, gazing, pondering, attending," becomes an active conflation of feeling and reflection. "To read a poem," Stevens accords, "should be an experience like experiencing an act" (OP 191). Meaning here cannot sustain transcendent value further than the expression of experience on its own terms which is made absolute by the "face of life" itself (life=whole world). Thereby Stevens can say "A poem should be part of one's sense of life" (OP 191) and "A poem need not have a meaning and like most things in nature often does not have" (OP 201), and ultimately, "The world is the only thing fit to think about" (OP 192). Criteria for establishing value in rational systems are dependent on explainability -- the abstract laws of causality and relation. The truths expressed in art, however, may not be "necessarily true, in the strict sense of the word," Lawrence states in "Art and the Individual", an essay delivered when he was still a young schoolmaster. "Not true," he continues

except that they have been felt, experienced as if they were true. They express--as well perhaps as is possible--the real *feelings* of the artist. Something more, then, must be added to our idea of Art--it is the medium through which men express their deep, real feelings. By ordinary words, common speech, we transmit thoughts, judgments, one to another. But when we express a true emotion, it is through the medium of Art . . .

This might lead you to reflect that anyone who feels deeply must be an artist. But there you must consider that not one person in a thousand can express his emotions. . . We can feel, but we cannot transmit our feelings--we can't express ourselves. When you have tried, when you have felt compelled to write to somebody, for you could not contain yourself, what sort of a letter has it appeared when written? Weak, maudlin, ridiculous--Why? You didn't feel ridiculous. But you did not understand what effect certain words have on readers. You didn't find the picture word, you didn't use a quick, spirited,

¹⁶⁵ John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry?" qtd. in *The Mirror and the Lamp* by M. H. Abrahams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) 24.

vigorous style, so your letter is *not* art, for it does *not* express anything adequately.

(PHII 224-25)

The extra-rational conflation of feeling and reflection is an undefendable yet basic act of poetry according to Stevens: "A poem is a particular of life thought of for so long that one's thought has become an inseparable part of it or a particular of life so intensely felt that the feeling has entered into it" (NA 65). The extra-rationality of experiencing 'something as if it were true' is what constitutes "non-geography", a realm important says Stevens because "we live in the center of a physical poetry, a geography that would be intolerable except for the non-geography that exists there" (NA 65). The rational drive for truth leads to dualistic correspondence models of reality that can be 'solved' only by transcending the world through laws which explain everything. Such transcendence leads to the subject/object terror Blake found in the nightmare of Newtonian seventeenth-century mechanics and Lawrence in his contempt for their material applications in the twentieth. It is along such lines that Raymond Williams places Lawrence in "direct association with forms of feeling distinct from and opposed to received forms of rationality and enlightenment, that is seen as linking him not to the social novel of the mainline tradition but back to such figures as Blake."¹⁶⁶

Quentin Smith states that the "relation of reasoning to the world is explanative. But the relationship of feeling to the world is appreciative; the world is appreciated for being important. That feelings relate to importances and not values entails that a theory of the felt meanings of the world is not an Ethics but a Metaphysics. It deals, not with how the world ought to be, but with how it actually is in its ultimate aspects."¹⁶⁷ Smith, believing feeling to have been short shrifted by rationalist philosophy, sets up his *Metaphysics of Feeling* on the argument that feeling is the

¹⁶⁶ Raymond Williams, introduction, *The Spirit of D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies*, ed. Gamini Salgado (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1988) vii.

¹⁶⁷ Quentin Smith, *The Felt Meanings of the World: A Metaphysics of Feeling* (Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1986) 20.

fundamental starting point for any philosophical enterprise attempting to “understand the precise sense in which the world is a whole.”¹⁶⁸ The two-dimensionality of mathematics, and its philosophical twin, duality, dissolve into perfect solutions and/or antinomies, where, even if consensus cannot be reached, values can be expressed in explainable terms. Explanations, at least those imposing ultimate ‘oughtness’, decenter the world because they imply a subjectless center and thereby frustrate theories of wholeness. Feeling, like energy, can never be explained, it can only be described as experience centered within a human subject (body). This centering allows visions of wholeness to appear and that is what keys Smith’s term “importance”. Self-centered description, according to Lawrence, when finding “the right picture word” and “a quick, spirited, vigorous style,” can deliver up a complete world centered by art in its “wholeness, wholly attending.” These deliveries provide, according to Stevens, “a human that can be accounted for” because “spirit comes from the body of the world” (CP 519), where “What we know in what we see, what we feel in what/ We hear, what we are, beyond mystic disputation” (CP 518) forms “the intensest rendezvous” (CP 524), a place where parts of a world are made complete by a sense of wholeness. Stevens continues:

It is in that thought that we collect ourselves,
Out of all the indifferences, into one thing:

Within a single thing, a single shawl
Wrapped tightly round us, since we are poor, a warmth,
A light, a power, the miraculous influence.

Here, now, we forget each other and ourselves.
We feel the obscurity of an order, a whole,
A knowledge, that which arranged the rendezvous.

Within its vital boundary, in the mind
We say God and the imagination are one . . .
How high that highest candle lights the dark.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, *Felt* 21.

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,
 We make a dwelling in the evening air,
 In which being there together is enough.

(CP 524)

Wholeness as an anagogic variable of perceptual relation (human and atomic) has been translated into many forms. From Plato to his many (de)constructive critics, from the Bible to Baudrillard, from Shakespeare to any point literary, there is a form of ideality continuously resisting any classification save for what might be called visionary. Frye remarks, "Blake suggests to the the student of English literature that to recognize the existence of a *total form of vision* would not be a new discovery, but a return to the essential principles that should never have been lost sight of in the first place."¹⁶⁹ Smith's concept of wholeness approaches totality by envisioning the world as self-immanently present. He differs from Heidegger in that being (Dasein) is not considered the center of consciousness from which the world is constructed/viewed but rather that feeling is an interactive component which enables the world-whole to present itself to human consciousness as a phenomenological construction of felt parts. This unification is constant -- there is no vortex of rational meaninglessness to stew in because art is there arching between subject/object, mind/body, consciousness/world, part/whole. "We have so long been used to thinking in the categories of rationalist philosophies that it is extremely difficult for us to free ourselves from them and to open ourselves to the important world-whole," says Smith, adding that

The metaphysics of feeling shares with the metaphysics of reason the desire to transcend this or that part of the world and to discover the meaning of the whole. But in this quest for meaning, the metaphysics of feeling does not transcend to the same realm to which the metaphysics of reason transcends. The metaphysics of reason transcends not only the parts of the world but the whole world itself; it aims to go *beyond* or *outside* the world to the ground (reason) of the world. Specifically, it aims to transcend "the world," in the

¹⁶⁹ Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947) 420.

sense of the whole of created being, to the Creator, and to transcend to "the world," in the sense of the whole of what is the case and of what is relatively good, to the ideal of absolute goodness, of what absolutely ought to be the case. But if these world-transcendent realms are empty of any knowable meaning, as has been argued in the metaphysics of rational meaninglessness, there still remains another locus of metaphysical meanings (meanings of the world as a whole), namely, the *wholeness* of the world itself. And this is precisely the realm to which the metaphysics of feeling are ways in which the world as a whole is important; they are the important features of the whole of all that exists.

The problem of whether or not there is an ultimate truth is not whether there are divine Ideas to which our ideas can correspond, but whether there is an important appearance of the wholeness of the world that makes possible all other important appearances. Such an important appearance would be the ultimate "felt truth."¹⁷⁰

Like Smith, Altieri also works to break out of "the error so deeply embedded in traditional philosophy" by taking up the "hardest task . . . one never achieved by French critics of the doctrine of essence, from Bergson to Sartre to Derrida -- to cease asking the old questions."¹⁷¹ Altieri uses Wittgenstein to parlay "the vision that there is no center and need not be one" and thereby ontological correspondence necessity can be replaced with "the looser one of *forms of life*, because . . . philosophy's ultimate subject [is] not language but the ways men use language."¹⁷² A vision proceeding from no particular center save patterns of life forms hearkens to the principle of non-locality where the no-outside relationship between part and whole positions life as the center that is everywhere. Thus wholeness in non-locality theory and Smith's metaphysics forces the issue of truth value to rest on the immanent quality of how the senses appreciate the phenomena surrounding them. Treading the same water, Wittgenstein's ontology of life forms implies that the way one uses language will be informed if not constituted by the immanence of natural process (an implication that

¹⁷⁰ Smith, *Felt* 21.

¹⁷¹ Charles Altieri, *Act and Quality: A Theory of Meaning and Humanistic Understanding* (Amherst: UMP, 1981) 51.

¹⁷² Altieri, *Act* 51, 52.

didn't interest him much). Cassirer remarks that the "symbolism of art must be understood in an immanent, not in a transcendent sense. . . The real subject of art is not, however, the metaphysical infinite of Schelling, nor is it the absolute of Hegel. It is to be sought in certain fundamental structural elements."¹⁷³ Certain fundamental structures are what Stevens finds in "The Bed of Old John Zeller":

The structure of ideas, these ghostly sequences
Of the mind, result only in disaster. It follows,
Casual poet, that to add your own disorder to disaster

Makes more of it. It is easy to wish for another structure
Of ideas and to say as usual that there must be
Other ghostly sequences . . .

It is more difficult to evade
That habit of wishing and to accept the structure
Of things as the structure of ideas.

(CP 326-27)

To accept the structure of things as the structure of ideas necessitates some theory of organicism never be outdated. The structure of ideas without immanent referents leads to ghostly sequences as spooked along by Plato and Hegel. To avoid this spectralization by appointing the body as immanent empirical root of feeling/thought it is unavoidable (if one is honest) not to end up with some sort of organic model -- a bio-aesthetic which runs on some type of Thoreauvian grub-to-butterfly model of life circularity and hierarchy as drives the conclusion of *Walden*: "The very Globe continually transcends and translates itself, and becomes winged in its orbit. . . There is nothing inorganic."¹⁷⁴ The interdependence of world and body is what prompts Stevens to declare "I am myself a part of what is real" (NA 62) as he acknowledges that the "imagination is not wholly his own but . . . part of a much larger, much more

¹⁷³ Cassirer, *Art*, qtd. in *CTSP* 1006.

¹⁷⁴ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906) 338, 340.

potent imagination, which it is his affair to try to get at" (NA 115). Such 'getting' demands that "an accurate theory of poetry" become an examination of "the structure of reality" (NA 71) where "men, and earth and sky, inform/ Each other by sharp informations" within "a poem of/ The whole, the essential compact of the parts,/ The roundness that pulls tight the final ring" (CP 441, 442). Such pulling produces the site where, Altieri notes in a study of Stevens, "subjects learn to appreciate their own processes of becoming nature."¹⁷⁵ Connections between subjective and natural process also underwrite Smith's organicism: "the qualitative-flows of the I's feeling-sensations are correlated with qualitative-flows that permeate the world."¹⁷⁶

Smith's assessment of the works devoted to feeling is similar to Langer's in that he finds that "feeling-tonalities have not been described in philosophical or psychological studies of feeling," but, "they have have been portrayed in literature and the arts."¹⁷⁷ That noted, Smith however doesn't use art as an exemplary field of data for his theory of feeling as does Langer. He maintains a stricter philosophical focus and attempts to fashion an original nomenclature for his sense of how feeling should be utilized to appreciate the world-whole. Smith's intentions are principally ethical, wanting no less than a radical realignment of Western rationalist tradition, which, he calmly claims, has prevented mankind from properly inhabiting the world. This realignment is contingent on bringing forth a dispensation of life based on feelings, and thus his work is tasked to manifest a theoretical definition of feelings. His methodology seems a truer form of naive induction than Frye claims he uses in *Anatomy of Criticism* in that Smith has no canon of feeling definition to work against or codify (what little there is he indexes and analyzes well). Where Frye merely wants to prove literature exists by examining its artifacts and presenting evidence of a *sui generis* structure, Smith is forced to rely on his own self-referential thought to chart a 'new' systematic definition of feeling. So he inductively proceeds feelingly to the left of Descartes's right turn into

¹⁷⁵ Altieri, *Painterly* 356.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, *Felt* 49.

¹⁷⁷ Smith, *Felt* 49.

rationality. Self-referentiality as such produces a 'personalized' organicism which places the issue of establishing criteria on planes typically occupied by artists (at least those who want world-wholes to appear). Smith executes his thesis with rational precision while relying on the evidentiary by-laws of art: truth as consensually agreed upon solely on the grounds that something feels right intuitively. Whether a theory of feeling can be presented rationally while attacking rationalism is a question Smith doesn't examine in too great of detail, a lack that could be used against him in the reverse court of deconstruction. And although Pound can summarily observe that philosophical argument "is very secondary and literary and sociological. There could be no such harangue among artists. One sees the work; one knows; or, even, one feels,"¹⁷⁸ Smith limits his haranguing and with *Metaphysics of Feeling* produces a comprehensive definition of the stuff wholes are made of: feeling. The one-sentence encapsulation of feeling by Smith: "Each concrete experience of feeling consists of a feeling-sensation and a feeling-awareness, and the correlated world-as-felt consists of a sensuously felt aspect and an important [appreciative] aspect that is apprehended in the feeling-awareness."¹⁷⁹ Feeling as a reconciliatory third-term brokering body-sensation and mind-awareness is recast in Smith's non-combative terms and integrated into a cosmology where world and body provide a frame of wholeness for mind and feeling instead of differential opposition.

Smith's metaphysical call for a new appreciation of the world as perceived/valued turns on choosing between the agency which bests discloses reality *fully*: rationalism or feeling. This choice is also at issue for Altieri in "Wallace Stevens's Ideas of Feelings":

Reason has failed to lead beyond the poverty of describing our world in all its flatness. But feelings open alternative paths because they position us towards the world in modes that we cannot fix by names, while also enabling us to characterize those events on levels deeper than rational thought can provide

¹⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York: New Directions, 1970) 101.

¹⁷⁹ Smith, *Felt* 33.

because their relational qualities constantly test who we become and what we pursue by virtue of our ways of thinking. . . . Rather than interpret emotions or seek a divinity only symbolically expressed within nature, Stevens calls for a fully immanent divinity inseparable from our own capacity to attune spirit to the actual weather defining its landscape.¹⁸⁰

Altieri's phrase "capacity to attune spirit to the actual weather" attests to the organic bias of Stevens's poetic aesthetic through which feeling approaches synonymy with the imagination. Stevens testifies in a letter, "Reality changes into the imagination (under one's very eyes) as one experiences it, by reason of one's feelings about it" (L 793). By reason of the feelings Stevens comes to the rock of his aesthetic theory: "There is a feeling as definition" (CP 278). Reality thereby becomes a relation where "Poetry is reality and thought or feeling" (OP 203). In such a reality, according to Stevens,

What

One believes is what matters. Ecstatic identities
 Between one's self and the weather and the things
 Of the weather are the belief in one's element,
 The casual reunions, the long-pondered
 Surrenders, the repeated sayings that
 There is nothing more and that it is enough
 To believe in the weather and in the things and men
 Of the weather and in one's self, as part of that
 And nothing more. (CP 258)

Belief in the elemental interaction between self and world enables the ethic/aesthetic/faith/vision that feeling will be enough of an absolute to sustain a value system for one's interactions with life. Feeling as thought exists in the third-term space of the cosmological constant of anthropic awareness -- beginning at the precise locutionary spot of Stevens's "The the" (CP 203) 'where' one first hears of the truth. Feeling as thought prompts the operative "I" of consciousness and resists having the

¹⁸⁰ Altieri, "Ideas" 161, 146.

mystery of its connection to the creative force reduced down to any final explanation: "It is not possible to attach a single, rational meaning to such things without destroying the imaginative or emotional ambiguity or uncertainty that is inherent in them and that is why poets do not like to explain" (OP 249). Belief here is not the suspended version used to enjoy the constructions of Supreme Fictions or Major Men, it is the more primary one that negotiates constructive power itself at the lower level of unknowability. Lawrence reduces this relation between belief and feeling down to a Dickinson-size poem:

Belief

Forever nameless
 Forever unknown
 Forever unconscious
 Forever unrepresented
 Yet forever felt with the soul.
 (CP 622)

Belief, irregardless of facts and other pertinent referents, operates holistically. The non-locality aspect of belief diffuses the rough semiotic probes of here/there/whereness that dictate language theory. Belief taken as a composite reaction to everything that is out 'there' produces a 'here' which, as Altieri sees in Stevens, "is not an attribute linked to place . . . but an attribute basic to a particular intimacy of feeling, an intimacy best captured by poetry when it makes the reader's acts of self-definition part of the very process of taking a place in place."¹⁸¹ Feeling at this level leaves the primordial plane of unknowability and becomes part of consciousness, as thought is the process of "taking a place in place." The subjective "I" of mental computation is, like any other signifier along the endless chain, a product of difference, or more accurately, a working third-term expositor of difference, what Derrida identifies as *différance*. But instead of choosing a name from "the jiggling and twisting of already

¹⁸¹ Altieri, "Ideas" 160.

existent ideas" which maintain the negating aspects of traditional metaphysics, this "I" for Stevens and Lawrence is left unlabeled save for the implied identity isolated continuously and wondrously by the "particular intimacy of feeling" of place which produces self and world-aware consciousness. Instead of an argument to win or lose, it appears that the poet vs philosopher vs scientist debate comes down to a choice, at least for the poet of local wholeness "with an eye that does not look/ Beyond the object" who seeks

God in the object itself, without much choice.
It is a choice of the commodious adjective
For what he sees, it comes in the end to that:

The description that makes it divinity.
(CP 475)

It is the description that is art that canonizes life into the exemplars needed to define and defend the human form from disintegration by providing a place, a site, a home where phenomena are constellated into body-felt symmetry from the center that is everywhere: the imagination. From such a place Stevens notes that "It is the mundo of the imagination in which the imaginative man delights and not the gaunt world of reason" (NA 58).

The reason vs imagination question was taken up by Lawrence early in his career in "The Crown", received running attention throughout the novels, poetry, essays, reviews, and found summation in his last work *Apocalypse*. There he argues that regardless of which method is used to describe reality, both rely on images, which when processed into un-real absolutes, become transparent -- a transparency existing *outside* of life as experienced. Rationalism and faith proceed either by question or non-question, they cannot affirm life itself. Affirmation is the goal for Lawrence as he chooses the sensuous way, a way wherein the imagination is simply and ultimately "a

flitting motion . . . between images" and is thereby bound to the temporal and thus barred from achieving any absolute:

But man has two ways of knowing the universe: religious and scientific. The religious way of knowledge means that we accept our sense-impressions, our perceptions, in the full sense of the word, complete, and we tend instinctively to link them up with other impressions, working towards a whole. The process is a process of association, linking up, binding back (*religio*) or referring back towards a centre and a wholeness. This is the way of poetic and religious consciousness, the instinctive act of synthesis. . . The only difference between poetry and religion is that the one has a specific goal or centre to which all things are to be related, namely God; whereas poetry does the magical linking-up without any specific goal or end. . .

Science is only the contrary method, the opposite working of the consciousness. Yet how strange the contraries are. The scientific instinct breaks up or analyses the direct impression: that is the first step: and then logical reason enters, and makes inferences. Religion starts from impressions accepted whole and referred back to other impressions. Science starts from questioning an impression, and comparing it, *contrasting* it with another impression. . . There we are, with two sets of truth, because we have two ways of consciousness. . . So that whether we follow the way of affirmation or the way of question, we proceed from image to image. The motion is the only thing that is different: the mind can only come to rest on an image. . . Both the religious and the scientific states of mind are at last imageless and unimaginable, to be known only by transcription. . . Both ways end in the same place, the absolute somewhere or the absolute nowhere. But the method of approach is different. There is the method of association and unison, and the method of contrast and distinction. . .

So let us leave the way of question, and try to take again the older way of affirmation. We shall find that our mind now definitely moves in images, from image to image, and no longer is there a logical process, but a curious flitting motion from image to image according to some power of attraction, some *sensuous* association between images.

(*Apoc* 161-62, 163, 164-65)

Is it heroic or hedonistic -- to flit about sensuously between images? "Man is an endless and infinitely varied repetition," writes Hazlitt in "On Reason and Imagination" while defending imaginative enterprise on the grounds that "the interest we take in our own

lives . . . and the *home* feelings that arise out of them, when well described, are the clearest and truest mirror in which we can see the image of human nature."¹⁸² Does choosing the affirming mode of imagination over skeptical reason lead straight to Hegel's halfway state of religious romanticism? For Lawrence and Stevens it is not a halfway state because they use feeling to engineer head-on collisions with the creative force in order to gather up enough momentum (intense description) to leave behind the lesser forms of absolutist abstraction and weak-eyed religion (faith). As conductors of feeling trying to be honest about what they feel they cannot avoid getting entangled in the observable and thinkable aspects of how 'reality' and 'truth' curve imagistically (concretely) towards and away from the center of the whole that is everywhere: the seeming fact that mind and body (world) are one. "We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts. . . Now all this is *literally* true" (*Apoc* 23, 24). Thus Lawrence restates the Holy Grail which centers the Romance quest from Plotinus to Christ to Percival whispering it to Arthur to the Romantics re-amplifying the whisper to Lawrence and Stevens, whose beliefs in the canon's only real tradition resulted in their being disparaged as unmodern. The Romantic interiorization of feeling is not a secondary or penultimate state of awareness, it is a conscious move to combine life that can only be known through feeling (experience/body) with thought (consciousness/mind) to where commodious adjectives work to produce immanent representations of the structure of reality: "The amorist Adjective aflame . . . / First one beam, then another, then/ A thousand are radiant in the sky./ Each is both star and orb; and day/ Is the riches of their atmosphere" (*CP* 172). Feeling doubles as both tenor and vehicle in the transmission of meaning -- it is the electron-displacing current and the filament in terms of part and whole of how images are generated and registered within human consciousness. This doubling process is made possible by a grant from the organic approach to life where oneness

¹⁸² William Hazlitt, *Selected Essays*, ed. John Nabholz (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970) 16, 15.

means just that in between the interpenetrations of awareness and phenomena in the space where "meta-men behold the idea as part/ Of the image, behold it with exactness. . . / Exacted attention with attentive force" (CP 449, 450) as

It stands a sovereign of souvenirs
 Neither remembered nor forgotten, nor old,

 Nor new, nor in the sense of memory.
 It is a symbol, a sovereign of symbols
 In its interpretations voluble,

 Embellished by the quicknesses of sight,
 When in a way of seeing seen, an extreme,
 A sovereign, a souvenir, a sign,

 Of today, of this morning, of this afternoon,
 Not yesterday, nor tomorrow, an appanage
 Of indolent summer not quite physical

 And yet of summer, the petty tones
 Its colors make, the migratory daze,
 The doubling second things, not mystical,

 The infinite of the actual perceived,
 A freedom revealed, a realization touched,
 The real made more acute by an unreal.

 Perhaps, these colors, seen in insight, assume
 In the eye a special hue of origin.
 But if they do, they cast it widely round.
(CP 451)

The interiorization of quest romance champions an individualism dependent upon genius. Genius, among many things, is the re-presentation of phenomenological experience (feeling) via the medium of symbolic codes (art, mathematics, language) that elicits responses of intense affirmation (feeling once again). Artistic internalization becomes the exteriorization of feeling that configures relations between the individual

and the world-whole, a mirroring process which produces "The central man, the human globe, responsive/ As a mirror with a voice, the man of glass,/ Who . . . sums us up" (CP 250). Genius is antithetical to faith. It champions the individual as prime expressor of the creative force, and in that respect is always revolutionary because it cannot, due to its elemental honesty, bow down to the static Ideal. Plato realized this when he banished the poets; Lawrence's realization came upon seizure of *The Rainbow*, house arrest in Cornwall, and his own effective banishment from England. The 'honesty' of genius makes it unquantifiable and is thus, according to Kant, the medium "through which nature gives the rule to art."¹⁸³ "And however poetic, realistic, striking, or interesting, a work may be," Tolstoy attaches, "it is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling (quite distinct from all other feelings) of joy and of spiritual union with another. . . The more individual the feeling transmitted the more strongly does it act on the recipient. . . It is true that this indication is an *internal* one."¹⁸⁴ The transmission of feeling as a marker for what constitutes literary experience has stretched the lines of reader-response theory into various configurations. Based on whether it "is dominated throughout by feeling," Evan Watkins conditions, "it either works as a poem or it doesn't."¹⁸⁵ In *The Critical Act*, Watkins assigns feeling several roles while developing a third-term reconciliation between the internal life of literary experience and its structural forms. Feeling is correlated with "the poem's *vis interna*" where it substantiates itself as "being", and anything "available to interpretation as an element of a poem's structure" is considered "non-being."¹⁸⁶ The two modes leave the poem understood, he continues, as "an impossibly dualistic presence: a feeling realized from the inside out and a structure to be studied at a distance."¹⁸⁷ He works through this dilemma by proposing a "dialectical reciprocity" where poet and critic converse both as "a listener, a translator, an intelligence" in an intricate acknowledgement of

¹⁸³ Kant, *Judgment* qtd. in *The Mirror and the Lamp* 207.

¹⁸⁴ Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato* 713, 714.

¹⁸⁵ Evan Watkins, *The Critical Act: Criticism and Community* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984) 216.

¹⁸⁶ Watkins, *Act* 13.

¹⁸⁷ Watkins, *Act* 14.

how the “immense force of feeling can come into existence as specific words.”¹⁸⁸ Watkins argues this dialectical process enables criticism to answer Donald Hall’s challenge to allow poems to “speak in their own language of feeling” and reveal a “general subjective life” which “corresponds to the old objective life of shared experience and knowledge.”¹⁸⁹ Criticism as conversation encourages the participatory engagement of the reader to become a validating parcel of that part of intelligence which demands the human subjective element not be subsumed by the ruling powers of objectivity. Individual subjectivity utilizes the “immense force of feeling” as a medium through which the “I” gives the rule to “we”, where the “thinker as reader reads what has been written” and “wears the words he reads to look upon/ Within his being” (CP 492). Coleridge identifies the evocative and immense feeling that is “distinct from all other feelings” as “that intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves, as one with the whole.”¹⁹⁰ Such possession is anagogic feeling which is the agency of vision. “Vision or Imagination” Blake etches, “is a Representation of what Eternally Exists, Really & Unchangeably.”¹⁹¹ The qualities of the visionary imagination are described by Coleridge in “The Meaning of Existence” as “its own predicate, self-affirmation, the one attribute in which all others are contained, not as parts, but as manifestations. It is an eternal and infinite self-rejoicing. . . . It is absolute; and the absolute is neither singly that which affirms, nor that which is affirmed; but the identity and living *copula* of both.”¹⁹² Identity is both a transcendent and incarnate form of Bios; transcendence is metered by the focused intensities (feeling-awareness) achieved on the performative planes of art while incarnation occurs simultaneously to the body hosting such experience (feeling-sensation). Watkins claims

¹⁸⁸ Watkins, *Act* 15.

¹⁸⁹ Watkins, *Act* 11.

¹⁹⁰ Coleridge, “The Meaning of Existence,” *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge*, ed. Donald Stauffer (USA: Random House, 1951) 525.

¹⁹¹ Blake, *Complete* 554.

¹⁹² Coleridge, *Selected* 525.

that “form as dialectical mediation is not confined to works of literature” when pointing out that any dialogue

becomes specifically *artistic* when the moments of its dialectic are suffused and dominated by the immediacy of feeling, where even the self-critical judgment implied in the act of thinking is less an effort of analysis than a kind of reciprocal touch, a prehensive contact which senses the terms of relationship in the most intensely felt and dramatic way.¹⁹³

The oscillatory quality of feeling’s internal/external calibration of life and art produces a domain of causality described once by a college freshman as “fuzzyland”. Derrida indicted such fuzziness for being the residue of origin in the machine of Western philosophy. But for Lawrence and Stevens there is no gauze on the camera lucida of consciousness, there are only exacting descriptions, which if intense enough, refract, between internal insight and the actual perceived, “a special hue of origin,” the colors of which do not religiously shroud but rather reveal “a realization touched” as they are cast “widely round” (CP 451) enough for an image of the whole to appear. Lawrence and Stevens employ feeling as a methodological tool to cast their versions of modern subjectivity as a phenomenon still able to maintain Romantic ideality in the “T”-flattening scope of 20th-century intellectual endeavor: “Nothing on earth will prevent us from *feeling*, and from knowing by feeling” (Apoc 163); “The imagination is the romantic” (OP 189). Objections to the Romantic legacy of individual creativity continue their way through recent critical theory, where, for example, Richard Rorty’s work is challenged by Richard Shusterman on the grounds that “the ideal of an aesthetic life as radically innovative self-creation can be criticized as excessively elitist and constrained by romantic notions of art.”¹⁹⁴ Reading itself is an elitist activity Harold Bloom replies to “The School of Resentment,” a melting pot he describes as

¹⁹³ Watkins, *Act* 186.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Shusterman, “Richard Rorty,” *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*, ed. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994) 628.

an extraordinary sort of melange of latest-model feminists, Lacanians, that whole semiotic cackle, latest-model pseudo-Marxists, so-called New Historicists, who are neither new nor historicist, and third generation deconstructors, who I believe have no relationship whatever to literary values... There is no way of dealing with these people. They have not been moved by literature... It is tiresome to be encountering myths called "The Social Responsibility of the Critic" or "The Political Responsibility of the Critic." I would much rather walk into a bookstore and find a book called "The Aesthetic Responsibilities of the Statesman," or "The Literary Responsibility of the Engineer." Criticism is not a program for social betterment, nor an engine for social change... Criticism starts--it *has* to start--with a real passion for reading... You must fall in love with what we used to call "imaginative literature."¹⁹⁵

The question of whether romantic self-creation is constraining or fulfilling depends on what sort of "I" one wants to face the world with. "Modern people," Lawrence notices, "particularly English and Americans, *cannot* feel anything with the whole imagination... The imaginative vision, which includes physical, intuitional perception, they *have not got*. Poor things, it is dead in them" (PH 557). Derrida, claiming to be enthralled with Nietzschean affirmation, presents his semiotic freeplay as that which "surrenders itself to genetic indetermination" as it "tries to pass beyond man and humanism" in order to produce "the species of the non-species" populating a "world without truth, without origin."¹⁹⁶ The force of Derrida's genetic metaphor is driven by the same force he introduces as the new species of decentered thought, simply, "active interpretation" which "affirms freeplay."¹⁹⁷ Active interpretation in Derrida's sense of freeplay is in practice more attuned to Stevens and Lawrence's descriptions of the ever-renewing creative force than to Nietzsche, who, with constant referral to History, looks back over Western civilization's shoulders with regret. Particularly for Lawrence,

¹⁹⁵ Harold Bloom, "The Art of Criticism," *Paris Review* 33 No. 118 (Spring 1991): 202, 199-200, 203, 202.

¹⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1972) 264-65.

¹⁹⁷ Derrida, "Structure" 264.

who shares with Derrida a disdain for Platonic ponderers, the question is not so much one of rationalized origin as it is one of dynamic center. For Lawrence the center is the creative force, which, for all the dark unknowability surrounding its origin, produces images of which the human is the highest. There is no passing "beyond man and humanism," instead, there is the thrill of observing the wondrous duality in the sexual and elemental polarities of natural process which produce identity, a thrill Stevens experiences as the "hawk of life" where to "meet that hawk's eye" is "to flinch/ Not at the eye but at the joy of it" (CP 178). The truer form of religion in Lawrence's sense of passion and wonder is comparable to the higher laws of Thoreau where sensuousness (as *opposed* to mere sensuality) is the intricate engine from which springs the noble rider of the senses: "The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us. . . We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them."¹⁹⁸ Stevens, sitting atop "the dump" (CP 203) of spent metaphor, needs the otherness which is not other, but is, life-force which is not miraculous in an ineffable sense, but miraculous in that it is so directly there and available for use by the imagination which is everywhere at the "heraldic centre of the world/ Of blue. . . / the place of things as they are,/ A composing of senses" (CP 172, 168). Derrida's surrender "to genetic indetermination" overdetermines the aleatory realm he claims language occupies because such surrender is itself a structural imposition. To focus severely on semiotic functions runs the risk of occluding direct links with life itself -- organicism can become subsumed by the asexual flower of coherence. Intentionality/desire reduced to semiotic froth produces no omelette (indeterminancy in gene selection is *determined* by the definite range of the two codes who sexually select themselves). "What should we be without the sexual myth,/ The human revery or poem of death?" Stevens asks when contemplating life without

¹⁹⁸ Thoreau, *Walden* 243, 245.

physical origin and end: "Castratos of moon-mash -- Life consists/ Of propositions about life" (CP 355).

Romantic notions of art spring up in the most rigorous of minds, like Derrida's, who confesses,

I've always been interested in literature. . . I've the feeling that philosophy has been a detour for me to come back to literature. . . Of course, it's a fascinating experience, because it distracts from my "own" (so to speak) "path." At the same time I'm sure I would like to dive into this tradition. I would like to live two hundred years and really enter the English literary tradition. I'm fascinated, for instance, by English Romanticism, and I know that if I had time I would be totally captured by it. But, well, it's too late now.¹⁹⁹

Derrida is fascinated with English Romanticism for the same reason he was taken by Nietzsche: liberation and creation of a consciousness so (un)self-aware that art and life become one in the breath of a philosophy that champions individualism.²⁰⁰ Although Bloom poses with bad temper and the modern French philosophes (Derrida, Barthes, Foucault, Baudrillard, etc.) are not indulged enough for their stratospheric senses of humor, their allegiance to the *writerly*, to the act of sustaining literate dialogue at the center of whatever might or might not be literary, attests to the romantic notion that intellectualism should define/refine Individualism by providing vanguard commentary on the processes of how signs/images transmit and resolve meaning into wholes (unified or otherwise) that explain the position(ality) of the human subject.

To escape the absolutism of rationalism and blind-faith forms of the religious by means of championing the body as empirical source of feeling is difficult. Feeling remains a term resisting precise definition; 'the body' adds only more turns to the

¹⁹⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Criticism in Society*, ed. Imre Salusinszky (New York: Methuen, 1987) 24.

²⁰⁰ The organicism of Nietzsche's challenge to translate man back into nature is disregarded as more semiotic applications are pursued in the name of metaphoric newness, however, one of Derrida's most repeated tropes (semination) does employ natural process imagery.

labyrinth of vagueness. John Fekete states that Raymond Williams develops the "structure of feeling" to "mark the generative border country between the lived and the fully articulated as a structured social experience" and that this structure belongs to "a family of undefinable yet operative categories, among which should be included Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus,' Derrida's *différance*, Foucault's 'procedures,' Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of consistence,' and Kristeva's *chora*."²⁰¹ "Undefinable yet operative" reminds one of the relation of energy to physics, as the terms of the French theorists bracket more than describe the ground forces of being. Wanting to remove such brackets with a precise definition of feeling, Langer and Smith find themselves relying on the rationalism they want to reconcile or integrate with feeling, however, the more drawn and exact their prose becomes the more imageless and ultimately undefining it becomes because it fails to produce, in Smith's terms, corroborative feeling-awareness in the reader. And then to claim that the body as the source of feeling should dictate the pulse of writing leads to examining whether or not it is a possible place to write from. Roland Barthes is the only major critic to ever try seriously to write from this location.

The question that drove Barthes to this locale was whether or not self-reflexive thought must lead towards formalism in order to legitimize itself as a professional form of criticism. Derrida and Foucault, though quite careful not to become entrapped by the systems they inspect, answer this question affirmatively in the development of their own complex discourses on ideological representations of power. Barthes' negative response to the question, "I don't believe in scientific *discourse*. . . If you agree to play that role . . . you're going to miss the text . . . you'll treat it as a semiological or historical document . . . you won't be in a transferential relationship of self-analysis with the text,"²⁰² explains why he is presently less influential than they are -- his non-

²⁰¹ John Fekete, "Raymond Williams," *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism*, ed. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994) 733. (Nietzsche's will to power as presented in Ch. 1 could be first on the list here.)

²⁰² Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985) 164, 165.

systematic approach did not promote appropriation. Barthes' aversion to the systematizing properties of critical thought, though camouflaged in early career by his analytic skills, is traceable throughout the entire corpus of his work. In *Camera Lucida*, he confesses that he had always suffered from

the uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semiology, and of psychoanalysis -- but that, by ultimate dissatisfaction with all of them, I was bearing witness to the only sure thing that was in me (however naive it might be): a desperate resistance to any reductive system. For each time, having resorted to any such language to whatever degree, each time I felt it hardening and thereby tending to reduction and reprimand, I would gently leave it and seek it elsewhere: I began to speak differently. It was better, once and for all, to make my protestation of singularity into a virtue -- to try making what Nietzsche called the "ego's ancient sovereignty" into an heuristic principle.²⁰³

Barthes' anti-system sentiments are aspects of his uncomfortableness with what he calls the "generality" of academic endeavor. He explains in *Roland Barthes* how misgivings with generality led him to develop a literary *espace* originating from the individual instead of the *body politique* [his italics]:

My colleagues at *Tel Quel*: their originality, their *truth* (aside from their intellectual energy, their genius for writing) insist that they must agree to speak a common, general, incorporeal language, i.e., political language; *although each of them speaks it with his own body*. -- Then why don't you do the same thing? -- Precisely, no doubt, because I do not have the same body that they do; my body cannot accommodate itself to *generality*, to the power of generality which is in language. -- Isn't that an individualistic view? Wouldn't one expect to hear it from a Christian -- a notorious anti-Hegelian -- such as Kierkegaard?

The body is the irreducible difference, and at the same time it is the principle of all structuration (since structuration is what is Unique in structure). If I managed to talk politics *with my own body*, I should make out of the most banal of (discursive) structures a structuration; with repetition, I should produce Text. The problem is to know if the political apparatus

²⁰³ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981) 8.

would recognize for very long this way of escaping the militant banality by thrusting into it -- alive, pulsing, pleasure-seeking -- my own unique body.²⁰⁴

Barthes' awareness of being caught between two languages is not a syndrome remarked upon only in late works. At the close of the early *Mythologies* he states that "there is as yet only one possible choice: to ideologize . . . or poeticize. . . I do not see yet a synthesis between ideology and poetry."²⁰⁵ Lawrence offers one extra option: "You can idealize or intellectualize. Or, on the contrary, you can let the dark soul in you see for itself. An artist usually intellectualizes on top, and his dark under-consciousness goes on contradicting him underneath" (SCAL 31). Barthes' self-positioning as a critic did not consist simply of dropping systematic thought for a more lyrically expressive format (he found the old reality vs imagination opposition weak and tepid), but rather dealt with the more involved task of fashioning a form of intellectual endeavor which could perpetuate a sense of the New: "Always remember Nietzsche: we are scientific out a lack of subtlety."²⁰⁶ Lawrence emphasizes, "You've got to find a new impulse for new things in mankind and its really fatal to find it through abstraction. No, no; philosophy and religion. They've both gone too far on the algebraical tack" (PH 520). The New is antithetical to systematic Totalization, it sets up shop in the revolutionary home of 'me': the body. Barthes, claiming that "this 'for me' is neither subjective nor existential,"²⁰⁷ details the progression towards the body:

Reactive formations: a *Doxa* (a popular opinion) is posited, intolerable; to free myself of it, I postulate a paradox; then this paradox turns bad, becomes a new concretion, itself becomes a new *Doxa*, and I must seek further for a new paradox. Let us follow the trajectory. . . The first impulse . . . is to demystify (*Mythologies*); then when the demystification is immobilized in repetition, it must be displaced; semiological *science* . . . tries to arm the mythological pose with a method; this science is encumbered in its turn with

²⁰⁴ Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) 175.

²⁰⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972) 158-59.

²⁰⁶ Barthes, *Barthes* 161.

²⁰⁷ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975) 13.

a whole repertoire of images: the goal of a semiological science is replaced by the (often very grim) science of the semiologists; hence, *one must sever oneself from that, must introduce* into this rational image-repertoire the texture of desire, *the claims of the body*: this, then, is the Text, the theory of the Text.²⁰⁸

The 'claims' of the body are quantifiable only as feeling, which for Barthes, reaches their highest pitch within the act of writing. This act is defined as a literal relation between language and the body: "What we call *writing* is the work of *the body which is prey to language*."²⁰⁹ Within this relation between language and the body lies the site wherein it is "not a question of 'form' (still less of 'formalism') but of impulse: whenever it's the *body* which writes, and not ideology, there's a chance the text will join us in our modernity."²¹⁰ Writing -- the work of the body which functions in the feeling space of language -- is "intellectual effort", and it should be "in favor of essentially reflexive discourses that initiate, imitate within themselves the infinite nature of language."²¹¹ Textuality as conceived by Barthes produces pleasure. "The pleasure is the pleasure of powers," Stevens remarks, "that create a truth that cannot be arrived at by the reason alone, a truth that the poet recognizes by sensation" (NA 58).

Barthes' maneuvering exemplifies the trouble when approaching the body: it disappears when the parole (speech) begins only to reappear as a metaphoric trace when enough language has been assembled. That is why Barthes preaches "everything is language, nothing escapes language. . . . Any attitude that consists in hiding from language behind a nonlanguage . . . is an attitude of bad faith."²¹² The body for Barthes is the plane upon which feeling powers the identity-mirror of language, nonlanguage is discourse without feeling. The body is to feeling what language is to thought: a medium for consciousness (consciousness absolutizes itself by calling itself

²⁰⁸ Barthes, *Barthes* 71.

²⁰⁹ Barthes, *Grain* 200.

²¹⁰ Barthes, *Grain* 162.

²¹¹ Barthes, *Grain* 161.

²¹² Barthes, *Grain* 162.

the ultimate measure of life itself). Barthes in the end favors the philosopher's body (sitting) and thus gives up a bit of the world -- he is too in love with language. Barthes and Bloom would make poor walking companions for Lawrence and Thoreau and would certainly shy away from their landscapes: "A world dark and still, where language never ruffled the growing leaves, and seared their edges like a bad wind . . . where each creature is alone in its own aura of silence, the mystery of power" (SM 99); "It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream."²¹³ "Yes, I love writing," Barthes admits, from his chair, "writing is the hand, and thus the body: its impulses, controlling mechanisms, rhythms, weights, glides, complications, flights -- not the soul (graphology is unimportant), but the subject with its ballast of desire and the unconscious."²¹⁴ "In poetry," Stevens complements, "you must love the words, the ideas and images and rhythms with all your capacity to love anything at all" (OP 188). Both walkers and talkers can be in love with language -- it is how description is served that matters. The body, in the study or on the trail, demands the satisfaction of imaginative newness and wholeness; the mind merely needs coherence. The body is feeling, the dark unknowable; the mind is reflection, light-derived reason. Language is where the transference between the two fuses into the third terms of identity. "Is it not possible," Adams asks, "to lodge full creativity in that complex and not before it, language in fact becoming an image *making* power, once man has evolved it?"²¹⁵ Lawrence and Stevens cannot disagree with the fact that language is a primary system which produces images, but they remain fascinated by the powers that lie on either side of language: creative force before and universal whole after. "The universal mind," Stevens states, "would be the imagination that tries to penetrate to basic images, basic emotions, and so to compose a fundamental poetry

²¹³ Henry David Thoreau, qtd. in *Henry David Thoreau: An American Landscape*, ed. Robert Rothwell (New York: Paragon House) 127.

²¹⁴ Barthes, *Grain* 193.

²¹⁵ Adams, *Symbolic* 241.

even older than the ancient world" (NA 145). Lawrence and Stevens' aesthetics of betweenness investigate how language and the body -- reason and feeling -- work to produce the third term of wonder: awareness. Feeling becomes a paramount term because of the inherited agon of philosophic rationalism. Nietzsche, Lawrence, Stevens, and Barthes are rebels with a common causality in that their individualism is powered by a romantic interiority dependent upon descriptive intuition which justifies itself as coming from the organic source of the feeling body. "A critic must be able to *feel* the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force," says Lawrence because

Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all the psuedo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon.

(PH 539)

The reasoned account of feeling delivered in this chapter has failed, of course, in any strict definitive sense. What has been suggested is that for Lawrence and Stevens, feeling is a register of awareness enabling them to validate their descriptions of the world with image-based discourse, and, thereby, to sidestep (somewhat) traditional rationalism. What draws their descriptive powers most intensely is the movement of the creative force; exactly how they mark it will be the focus of Chapter Three. More precise gradations of feeling as articulated by Langer, Smith, Altieri, Williams and other critics will accompany this procession into the works of Lawrence and Stevens. Lawrence will aim straight for the center of the creative dark, Stevens will flash a few more mirrors and proceed with dialectic caution. Ultimately, feeling as a describable commodity will remain, like energy, an unquantifiable constant. Andrew Scott's

introduction to *Vital Principles: The Molecular Mechanism of Life* is instructive on how to handle such matters:

No matter how hard you try to simplify it and illustrate its effects, energy remains an abstract phenomenon which many people find hard to understand. I should say that it remains an abstract *idea* because energy is really an idea invented by the human mind to try to make sense of the world it lives in. . . We are now venturing towards the top of the slippery slope that leads down to endless philosophical debate. The purpose of this book is not to explore the dark depths of theoretical physics, it is to see how the current ideas of physics and chemistry allow us to make sense of the phenomenon of life. So, rather than delving further into the real meaning of our concepts of matter, charge, force and energy, let us accept them for what they seem, and move on into the world of chemical reactions.²¹⁶

In similar fashion, Lawrence and Stevens can be considered walking chemical reactions noting the results of their phenomenal participation with the world in the mathematics of feeling: poetry. "For space is alive," Lawrence senses, "and it stirs like a swan/ whose feathers glisten/ silky with the oil of distilled experience" (CP 505). So

Look then
where the father of all things swims in a mist of atoms
electrons and energies, quantum and relativities
mists, wreathing mists,
like a wild swan, or a goose, whose honk goes through my bladder.

And in the dark unscientific I feel the drum-winds of his wings
and the drip of his cold, webbed feet, mud-black
brush over my face as he goes
to seek the women in the dark, our women, our weird women whom he treads
with dreams and thrusts that make them cry in their sleep.

(CP 438)

²¹⁶ Andrew Scott, *Vital Principles: The Molecular Mechanism of Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 27.

Chapter III

Giving Power a Name: Metempiric Darkness and the "eloquences of light's faculties"

Socrates: But if that which knows and that which is known exist ever, and the beautiful and the good and every other thing also exist, then I do not think that they can resemble a process or flux, as we were just now supposing. Whether there is this eternal nature in things, or whether the truth is what Heraclitus and his followers and many others say, is a question hard to determine, and no man of sense will trust names or the givers of names as to be confident in any knowledge which condemns himself and other existences to an unhealthy state of unreality. . .

Επιστημη (knowledge) is akin to this, and indicates that the soul which is good for anything follows επεται (the motion of things), neither anticipating them nor falling behind them. Συνεσις (understanding) may be regarded as a kind of conclusion; the word is derived from συνιεναι (to go along with), and, like επιστασθαι (to know), implies the progression of the soul in company with the nature of things. Σοφια (wisdom) is very dark, the meaning is touching the motion or stream of things.

-- Plato: *Cratylus*

Life is the river, darkly sparkling, that enters into us from behind, when we set our faces towards the unknown. The faster we go ahead, the stronger the river rushes into us. The moment we turn round to embrace the river of life, it ebbs away, and we see nothing but a stony fiumara. We must go ahead. But which way is ahead? We don't know. We only know that continuing in the way we are going, the river of life flows feebler and feebler in us, and we lose all sense of vital direction. We begin to talk about vitamins. We become idiotic. We cunningly prepare our own suicide. This is the philosophic problem: to find the way ahead. Plato said that ahead was the perfect Idea, gleaming in the brow of the dragon. We have pretty well caught up with the perfect Idea, and we find it a sort of vast, white, polished tomb-stone.

-- D. H. Lawrence: *Phoenix II*

The intellect of man if forced to choose
Perfection of the life, or of the work,
And if it take the second must refuse
A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.

-- Yeats: "The Choice"

Valor in the dark
is my Maker's code.

-- Emily Dickinson

Feeling, for Lawrence and Stevens, acts as guide for their interiorization of the romantic quest. Interiority here is aesthetical, in the Greek perceptual sense, and in Kant's: "The judgement is called aesthetical just because its determining ground is not a concept, but the feeling (of internal sense) of that harmony in the play of the mental powers, so far as it can be felt in sensation."²¹⁷ This harmonic interplay leads Lawrence and Stevens to the dark center of the creative force where one faces "the one absolute: man alone by himself, alone with his own soul, alone with his eye on the darkness which is the dark god of life" (KG 316). Darkness functions as an adjectival coefficient for creative power -- always other and always immediately *there* "in the dark,/ . . . speaking the speech/ Of absolutes" (CP 188). Power so perceived resembles the "mighty darkness" of Shelley's Demogorgon, signifying, Abrams notes, "the principle, or power, behind all process."²¹⁸ Frye remarks:

In Romanticism the main direction of the quest of identity tends increasingly to be downward and inward, toward a hidden basis or ground of identity between man and nature. . . The word "dark" is thematically very important . . . it usually refers to the seeping of an identity with nature into the hidden and inner parts of the mind."²¹⁹

Lawrence typologizes darkness as an absolute manifold of creative power: "ever-present, living darkness inexhaustible and unknowable. It is" (KG 298). Stevens, as a "scholar of darkness" (CP 48), initializes a career-long description of the creative force with a feminine metaphor, "Donna, donna, dark,/ Stooping in indigo gown" (CP 48), while seeking an explanation for "the essential shadow,/ Moving and being, the image at its source/ The abstract, the archaic queen" (CP 223). Both refine Romantic darkness from a brooding confrontation with natural process (staged or literal) to an

²¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: HBJ, 1971) 387.

²¹⁸ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1973) 302.

²¹⁹ Northrop Frye, *A Study in English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968) 33.

intricate form of reconciliation, or facilitation, where dark creative otherness becomes an ontological ally in the production of identity. Thereby Lawrence connects to "the greater mystery of the dark God beyond a man . . . the dark, passionate religiousness and inward sense of an inwelling magnificence . . . the dark, unexplained blood-tenderness that is deeper than love, but so much more obscure, impersonal" (KG 367). "As part of nature," Stevens correlates, the poet helps "reconcile us to our selves in those/ True reconcilings, dark, pacific words" (CP 144). "Be the voice of night," Stevens adds, "Use dusky words and dusky images./ Darken your speech" (CP 86) because

It is difficult to read. The page is dark

The page is blank or a frame without a glass
Or a glass that is empty when he looks.

The greenness of night lies on the page and goes
Down deeply in the empty glass . . .

Look, realist, not knowing what you expect.
The green falls on you as you look,

Falls on and makes and gives, even a speech.
And you think that that is what you expect,

That elemental parent, the green night,
Teaching a fussy alphabet.

(CP 267)

Lawrence and Stevens redirect Romantic staging of the intentional "I" to the play of modern virtual spatiality -- allegory (self as pose) is replaced by the symbolic (self as feeling site). Feeling is aligned with darkness because of its unquantifiability. The creative dark of Stevens and Lawrence is not one of the nihilistic varieties developed by Symbolists, Futurists, Dadaists, Surrealists, Existentialists, etc., whose self-conscious iconoclasm paraded the "I" through modernist allegories ranging from themeless

monumentality/minimalism to the macabre.²²⁰ Stevens remarks, "The essential fault of surrealism is that it invents without discovering. To make a clam play an accordion is to invent not to discover" (OP 177). The darkness of Lawrence and Stevens also is not akin to the Freudian unconscious, a topography Lawrence dismisses for its nonspecificity maintaining that there is no such thing as an unconscious state.²²¹ Nor is their darkness the undifferentiated chaos of phenomenological sensation, rather, it is something that is *knowable*. This knowledge is neither pure thought nor pre-conscious sensation -- it is something between -- it is that which is *felt*. "The truth must be/ That you do not see, you experience, you feel" (CP 219), Stevens writes when faced with the seeming fact that creative otherness "is not to be seen beneath the appearances/ That tell of it" (CP 533). It is perhaps Johann Fichte who comes closest to Stevens and Lawrence in conceptualizing how perceptual knowledge of reality is rooted in feeling. He dialogues in *The Vocation of Man*:

I. I know that they [objects] are as different as the way I feel is different in each case; and this distinction of feelings is an immediate and in no way a learned and derived distinction.

Spirit. Which you can make independently of all knowledge of things?

I. Which I *must* make independently of it, for this knowledge itself depends upon that distinction.

Spirit. Which distinction is therefore given to you immediately through mere self-feeling?

I. Yes. . . . The space behind the surface is invisible and intangible to me and perceptible by none of my senses.

Spirit. And nevertheless you assume such an interior which you simply don't perceive.

I. I admit it and my astonishment increases. . . . Here no connection between subject and object is required; my own being is this connection. I am subject and object: and this subject-objectivity, this return of knowledge

²²⁰ "The modern artists, who make art out of antipathy to life, always leave me feeling a little sick. It is as if they used all their skill and their efforts to dress up a skeleton." Lawrence qtd. in *D. H. Lawrence in Italy*, Leo Hamalian (New York: Taplinger, 1982) 159.

²²¹ See Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious/Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 201-204.

into itself, is what I designate with the concept 'I', if I think anything definite at all with this concept.²²²

Fichte's correlating of "I" to perception, of how the return of knowledge into itself ultimately can be defined no further than "mere self-feeling," is the conclusion Stevens draws when considering feeling the heroic force which humanizes the spectre of 'pure-eyed' reason:

It is not an image. It is a feeling.
 There is no image of the hero.
 There is a feeling as definition. . .
 The hero is a feeling, a man seen
 As if the eye was an emotion,
 As if in seeing we saw our feeling
 In the object seen and save that mystic
 Against the sight, the penetrating,
 Pure eye. Instead of allegory,
 We have and are the man, capable
 Of his brave quickenings, the human
 Accelerations that seem inhuman.
 (CP 278-79)

The "brave quickenings" are imaginative acts which are powered and accelerate out of the unknowable, and thus dark, creative force. Feeling is that knowledge which operates darkly behind/beneath/between definite optical referents. Such Fichtean blindness forces one to "Throw away the lights, the definitions,/ And say of what you see in the dark" (CP 183). Stevens, as "savant of this dark nature" (CP 134), finds that "in the simple-colored night" (CP 531) the otherness of the creative force -- "a power, an inherent life,/ In spite of the mere objectiveness of things" (CP 531) -- can only be described as a third-term: "It is the third commonness with light and air,/ A curriculum, a vigor, a local abstraction/ Call it, once more, a river, an unnamed flowing" (CP 533). From the creative dark, art produces works of light, "Sprinklings of

²²² Johann Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, trans. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1991) 31, 35, 48.

bright particulars from the sky . . . the brilliantest descriptions of new day" (CP 344). Lawrence works out a similar equation in "The Crown" where darkness is cast as creative force -- "The Beginning, this is the great sphere of darkness, the womb wherein the universe is begotten . . . a vast infinite, an origin, a Source" (PHII 368) -- whose unknowability is fractioned off by the light of description -- "the infinite oneness of the Light, the escape from the infinite not-being of the darkness" (PHII 369) -- which produces an ethical third term: "the goodness of anything depends on the direction in which it is moving . . . into the third reality, of real creation, creative being" (PHII 396). Goodness expressed as a function of motion -- the motion of life process -- inheres simple negation: "Evil is the great principle that opposes life" (KG 122). "The secret of life is in obedience," Lawrence connotes, "to the urge that arises in the soul, the urge that is life itself, urging us on to new gestures, new embraces, new emotions, new combinations, new creations" (KG 121). Life itself is prior to language and culture and therefore is given the priority of a divine power: ecce the dark god of life. And compoundedly, after immersion in language and culture, life itself is still traceable throughout the secondary realm of the symbolic: Te Deum the dark god of life. Life itself is Lawrence's great religion. Phillip Rieff is instructional on the religious quality of Lawrence's ontological constitution:

Lawrence takes his origin from the powerful tradition of religious mysticism, both Christian and non-Christian, aiming at an integration of the inner and outer man. Despite the frequent violence of his literary voice, there is an interior tranquillity in Lawrence's prose, a confident walking in the darkness of understanding that will seem odd to those only who have no familiarity with the imagery of mysticism. Mystics have never suspected that the worst is in the dark, as rationalists always have. . . . Mysticism bred acceptance of what the more ascetic rationalist tradition called the "animal" in man; mystics of all schools often decried the isolate and manipulative view of life bred by intellectualizing about it. The oneness of all creation is perhaps the fundamental prehension of both Christian and non-Christian mysticism; to that prehension Lawrence held throughout his life and work. From its oneness with creation mankind has fallen by misattributing omnipotence to

thought; Lawrence inveighs against all abstractions, including psychological ones. The original sin against life is abstract thought.²²³

Lawrence and Stevens temper their darkness against a backwash of Heraclitus and Einstein: Greek fascination with elemental surfaces plus the interiorizing wonder of quantum physics; oppositional strife and the polarizing mysteries of relation; night and day cycles of human activity coursing alongside the infinite continuum of atemporal space: the show of shows in the always just-darkened theatre of the mind. "By a poetic act I mean," Stevens explains, "a projection of poetry into reality. . . Just as in space the air envelops objects far away with an ever-deepening blue . . . the poetic act subtilizes experience. . . It is an illumination of a surface, the movement of a self in the rock" (OP 255-56). Wanting to avoid the optical sterility of rationalism, where visual intelligence lacks a sensuous ground, Lawrence and Stevens interpret creative darkness as an oracle issuing one absolute statement: there are only levels of feeling metered by descriptive acts. Their science of description is organically based, Stevens claims, because "Spirit comes from the body of the world. . ./ Whose blunt laws make an affectation of mind/ The mannerisms of nature caught in a glass" (CP 519), a mirror which, "Even at noon . . . glistens in essential dark" (CP 172). "Shall I tell you, then," Lawrence asks,

how it is? --
There came a cloven gleam
Like a tongue of darkened flame
To flicker in me.

And so I seem
To have you still the same
In one world with me.

In the flicker of a flower,
In a worm that is blind, yet strives,
In a mouse that pauses to listen

²²³ Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 194.

Glimmers our
Shadow; yet it deprives
Them none of the glisten.

In every shaken morsel
I see our shadow tremble
As if rippled from out of us hand in hand.

As if it were part and parcel,
One shadow, and we need not dissemble
Our darkness: do you understand?

For I have told you plainly how it is.
(CP 169-70)

Connecting to the body of the world is how one holds up the mirror of nature long enough "For a human that can be accounted for" (CP 519). Such connection is what makes Lawrence and Stevens Romantic, as the "theme of this romance form is the attaining of an expanded consciousness, the sense of identity with God and nature."²²⁴ But the risk of such attainment is alienation and social ostracism, particularly for Lawrence who lived his romance literally, and thus heroically. The 'tragedy' of England's misapprehension of Lawrence is Romantic, because, again in Frye's terms, "the hero who is placed outside the structure of civilization . . . represents the force of physical nature, amoral or ruthless, yet with a sense of power, and often of leadership, that society has impoverished itself by rejecting."²²⁵ Kermode remarks "that the poet has to be alienated, estranged from society, and that he ought to be defiant about it. Stevens was fruitfully different but in a way that disappoints the myth."²²⁶ Stevens, like Cézanne, was less a hero and more a reclusive craftsman. Yet, as it "was in the earth only/ That he was at the bottom of things/ And of himself" (CP 236), Stevens

²²⁴ Frye, *Romanticism* 37.

²²⁵ Frye, *Romanticism* 41.

²²⁶ Frank Kermode, *Wallace Stevens* (London: Faber, 1989) 16.

found himself a member of the revolution who believed "It is the earth itself that is humanity" (CP 454).

To write of dark blood passion in post-war Europe was to ask for trouble regardless how honest or true. Eliot labeled Lawrence a fascist (admittedly without reading him), Woolf faulted him for primitive crudeness, and John Middleton Murry continued the insult by portraying him as a megalomaniac. Aldous Huxley, one of Lawrence's few contemporary admirers, correctly diagnosed Lawrence as being drawn up with the wonder of creative darkness:

He was always intensely aware of the mystery of the world, and the mystery was always for him a *numen*, divine. Lawrence could never forget the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind. This special sensibility was accompanied by a prodigious power of rendering the immediately experienced otherness in forms of literary art. This loyalty to his own self, or rather to his gift . . . is fundamental in Lawrence and accounts as nothing else can do, for all the world found strange in his beliefs and behaviour.²²⁷

Lawrence's ability to provoke extreme reaction derived from the accuracy of his description. From killing a porcupine in New Mexico to Lady Ottoline Morrell pouring tea at Garsington, the interplay of nature and culture was the subject about which he believed there should be no punches pulled (a belief which resulted in invitations out to new continents as well as being threatened with libel). By the time Lawrence completed his only 'traditional' masterwork, *Sons and Lovers*, he felt constrained and ready to break from the ranks of Hardy, James, Wells, Ford, Huxley and follow the dark god of feeling into "new combinations, new creations" (KG 121). This newness was pursued in a prose that rhythmically attempted to emulate the organic sways of life at Brangwen farm -- an 'experiment' which produced his first controversial novel, *The Rainbow*, where the traditional English pastoral home of Miriam in *Sons and Lovers* was transformed into a virtual realm of passionate feeling

²²⁷ Aldous Huxley, introduction, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heineman, 1932) xi-xii, xv, xxiii.

radiating from bog to fen to field to cow to farm to Tom and Ursula. Lawrence wrote to publisher Edward Garnett relating how difficult it was to compose *The Rainbow* (of which the first several working drafts were entitled *Sisters*) and of the imperative to write from his natural disposition of deep religious passion:

All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is *hard* to express a new thing, in sincerity. And you should understand, and help me to the new thing, not get angry and say it is *common*, and send me back to the tone of the old *Sisters*. In the *Sisters* was the germ of this novel: woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative. But the first *Sisters* was flippant and often vulgar and jeering. I had to get out of that attitude, and make my subject really worthy . . . I have very often the vulgarity and disagreeableness of the common people, as you say Cockney, and I may be a Frenchman. But primarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that. And my cockneyism and commonness are only when the deep feeling doesn't find its way out, and a sort of jeer comes instead, and sentimentality, and purplism. But you should see the religious, earnest, suffering man in me first, and then the flippant or common things after. Mrs. Garnett says I have no true nobility -- with all my cleverness and charm. But that is not true. It is there, in spite of all the littlenesses and commonnesses.

(*Letters* Vol. II, 165)

Where most early modernists accepted the ruins of Eliot's unreal London and the dandy decay of Europe as their new rag and bone shop, Lawrence left for the New World driven by the lure of "*Life as it is!*" (RDP 109), because, "More than anything else in the world, we want to have life, and life-energy abundant in us" (RDP 130). For Lawrence, whose genius operated solely on the art of *honest* relation, to assess *life as it is* was to realize its absoluteness; to meet life on its own terms was to interiorize its wonder and take up the artist's struggle. "The artist and his work are not to be separated . . . the deed and the doer together make ever one sober fact,"²²⁸ states Thoreau in his measure of the artist, a portrait Lawrence drew in full agreement with

²²⁸ Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (Boston: Riverside Press, 1906) 312-13.

Thoreau's maxim: "We should not endeavor coolly to analyse our thoughts, but, keeping the pen even and parallel with the current, make an accurate transcript of them. Impulse is, after all, the best linguist."²²⁹ As modern artist Lawrence projected works as an evolutionary courtship with "the living life," a relationship where compulsion and attentiveness regulate interiority:

So again came back to him the ever-recurring warning that *some* men must of their own choice and will listen only to the living life that is a rising tide in their own being, and listen, listen, listen for the injunctions, and give heed and know and speak and obey all they can. Some men must live by this unremitting inwardness, no matter what the rest of the world does. (KG 170)

Lawrence's transparent posing of his own consciousness as the motor force of his novel's chief characters (Paul, Rupert Birkin, Aaron Sisson, Richard Somers, Mellors, etc.) and their antagonistic foils (Miriam, Gerald Crich/Ursula Brangwen, Rawdon Lilly, Jack Callcott/Kangaroo, the Chatterleys, etc.) results in a perspectival canvassing of the human psyche that breathes, regardless of any critical reservation, authentic as its author. In *Aaron's Rod* Lawrence violates the narrative with an interjection of his own voice in order to underscore what he feels to be the primary challenge of writing--translating the edge between language and the dark energy underlying human intentionality:

We cannot be exposed to the looks of others, for our very being is night-lustrous and unseeable. . . . Aaron realized this. . . . And hence even his deepest ideas were not word-ideas, his very thoughts were not composed of words and ideal concepts. They too, his thoughts and his ideas, were dark and invisible, as electric vibrations are invisible no matter how many words they may purport. If I, as a word-user, must translate his deep conscious vibrations into finite words, that is my own business. I do but make a translation of the man. He would speak in music. I speak with words.

(AR 199)

²²⁹ Henry David Thoreau, *Journal*, Vol. I, ed. John Broderick (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 35.

The interiorization (fragmentation/dissipation/reformulation, etc.) of intention as a theme of modernistic experimentalism permuted into various strands, each coded by their interpretation of creative power and its relation to culture. Joyce testified to the rise of the anti-hero as ratioed by the decline of civilization; Hemingway tracked this hero up into the moral realm of 'if it feels good afterwards, it is good; if it feels bad . . .' Optically, artists like Kandinsky and Mondrian ejected the traditional "I" completely, in its place were abstract spirits located by means of intuitive geometrics. The sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska, writing from the trenches of modernized warfare, appraised the creative force with the detachment of an abstractionist combined with alert Lawrentian appreciation of place [his italics]:

I have been fighting now for two months and I can now gauge the intensity of Life. . . With all the destruction that works around us nothing is changed, even superficially. *Life is the same strength*, the moving agent that permits the small individual to assert himself. The bursting of shells, the volleys, wire entanglements, projectors, motors, the chaos of battle do not alter in the least, the outline of the hill we are besieging. A company of partridges scuttle along before our very trench. . .

My views on sculpture remain absolutely the same. . . I shall present my emotions by the arrangement of my surfaces, the planes and lines by which they are defined.²³⁰

Gaudier-Brzeska's death profoundly affected Ezra Pound, his friend of several formative years. Pound, who had pep-talked a generation of modernists into believing in art's power to define the world, was himself a serious casualty of The Great War -- he couldn't accept the fact that logos-led civilization really had fallen. "It was in 1915 the old world ended," Lawrence records, "the spirit of the old London collapsed; the city, in some way, perished, perished from being a heart of the world" (KG 243). Shortly before this collapse, Roger Fry set up a post-Impressionist exhibition in London that championed the genius of Cézanne.

²³⁰ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, last testament, qtd. in *Ezra Pound*, Peter Ackroyd (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980) 42.

Due in part to a pre-war grace of being able to ignore culture, Cézanne became one of modernism's exemplars by virtue of his particular *lack* of authorial intention. From Fry's mentoring of Bloomsbury to Altieri's work with Williams and Stevens and modern art, Cézanne's influence traverses the twentieth century because he looks to the world of natural process for the model of *life as it is*. Cézanne's gaze avoids the ideological foci that drive the allegorical dimension of cultural progression (2-D examples: the morality play which dictated the rise and fall of Oscar Wilde; mechanical monumentalism of Futurists; Pound's radio broadcasts supporting fascism). Instead of borrowing poses from a cultural referential base as does the fluid Picasso, Cézanne slips through the construction sites of historical determinism and allows his body to broach the world feelingly. Cézanne's myopic scrutiny of life is not analogous to Derridean blindness,²³¹ his interest lies in *perceiving* rather than postulating the something that is *there*, the same something that Gaudier-Brzeska saw in the shape of the hill and scuttle of partridges. Lawrence, more than most of his Bloomsbury contemporaries, emulates Cézanne in that he never relinquishes the primacy of physical experience as the only locus for art: the body must deliver the word in order to pass "through the horrible glass screen of the mental concepts, to the actual *touch* of life" (PH 581). In "Introduction to These Paintings," Lawrence displays a grasp of Cézanne that doubles as an explication of his own artistic bias:

Cézanne was a realist, and he wanted to be true to life. But he would not be content with the optical cliché. . . Cézanne wanted something that was neither optical nor mechanical nor intellectual. . . He wished to displace our present mode of mental-visual consciousness, the consciousness of mental concepts, and substitute a mode of consciousness that was predominantly intuitive, the awareness of touch. In the past the primitives painted intuitively, but *in the direction* of our present mental-visual, conceptual form of consciousness. They were working away from their own intuition. Mankind has never been able to trust the intuitive consciousness, and the

²³¹ See M. Rubinstein's review of Derrida's curatorial efforts at the Louvre in *Art in America*, April 1991, 47-53. In "Mémoires d'aveugle: L'autoportrait et autres ruines," Derrida presents and discusses various forms of blindness and the "apperception of the graphic act," all linked by self-consciousness as a dynamic of representation — the very state of mind Cézanne avoided.

decision to accept that trust marks a very great revolution in the course of human development. . .

If the human being is going to be an apple, as for Cézanne it was, then you are going to have a new world of men: a world which has very little to say, men that can sit still and just be physically there, and be truly non-moral. . . It is the appleyness of the portrait of Cézanne's wife that makes it so permanently interesting: the appleyness, which carries with it also the feeling of knowing the other side as well, the side you don't see, the hidden side of the moon. For the intuitive apperception of the apple is so *tangibly* aware of the apple that it is aware of it *all round*, not only just of the front. The eye sees only fronts, and the mind, on the whole is satisfied with fronts. But the intuition needs all-aroundedness, and instinct needs insideness. The true imagination is for ever curving round to the other side, to the back of presented appearance.

(PH 577, 578, 579)

Life as it is for Lawrence is never the inert and exacted realism of Zola and Flaubert, or the compressed vision of Pound the vorticist or William Carlos Williams's minimalism. Lawrence faults the 'objectivity' of these types of realism for their two-dimensionality which freezes both subject and object into the glorification of either the epiphanous *moment durée* or the sparkless ennui of generational inertia. Life for Lawrence is motion, process; it is never an object but always a relation: "Everything is relative. Every Commandment that ever issued out of the mouth of God or man, is strictly relative: adhering to the particular time, place and circumstance. And this is the beauty of the novel; everything is true in its own relationship, and no further" (RDP 114). The author cannot withdraw or be obliterated by life process, he must, says Lawrence, "have a quick relatedness to all other things," because, "the novel can't exist without being *quick*" and "interrelated in all its parts, vitally, organically" (RDP 111, 116). "Above all," Stevens agrees, "it is a new engagement with life. It is a miracle to which the true faith of the poet attaches itself" (OP 257). But it is difficult to be a full-

time Romantic, because, as Shelley observes, "Life, the great miracle, we admire not, because it is so miraculous."²³²

It is how one determines what is "quick" that challenges and defines the artist. This determination is the cornerstone of Lawrentian betweenness, the third-term dimension of creative being. Lawrence attempts to describe this process in "The Novel":

We have to choose between the quick and the dead. The quick is God-flame, in everything. And the dead is dead. In this room where I write, there is a little table that is dead: it doesn't even weakly exist. And there is a ridiculous little iron stove, which for some unknown reason is quick. And there is an iron wardrobe trunk, which for some still more mysterious reason is quick. And there are several books, whose mere corpus is dead, utterly dead and non-existent. And there is a sleeping cat, very quick. And a glass lamp, that, alas, is dead. What makes the difference? *Quien sabe!* But difference there is. And I *know* it . . .

And if one tries to find out, wherein the quickness of the quick lies, it is in a certain weird relationship between that which is quick and -- I don't know; perhaps all the rest of things. It seems to consist in an odd sort of fluid, changing, grotesque or beautiful relatedness. That silly iron stove somehow *belongs*. Whereas the thin-shanked table doesn't belong. It is a mere disconnected lump . . .

For the relatedness and interrelatedness of all things flows and changes and trembles like a stream. . .

No god, that men can conceive of, could possibly be absolute or absolutely right. All the gods that men ever discovered are still God: and they contradict one another and fly down one another's throats, marvellously. Yet they are *all* God: the incalculable Pan.

(RDP 110-11, 114, 119)

Life as quickness, quickness as relation, and relation as a description of betweenness sums up the literal aspect of Lawrence's sense of the literary. Literally, a relation has to be expressed before it can be realized and all forms of expression are, irreducibly, acts of description. Acts of description enable consciousness to register itself as reality

²³² Percy Bysshe Shelley, "On Life," *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald Reiman (New York: Norton, 1977) 475.

of 'that which is between'. The act of description operates tropistically (tropism n. [Gr. *τροπικὴν* to turn]: involuntary orientation by an organism to a source of stimuli; a natural inclination). Tropism is not figurative, it is literal (felt) description. Any act of description -- painting, singing, sculpting, waving, etc. -- can be utilized by consciousness in order to orient itself to stimuli (the world). Therefore, proportionately, it is not language exclusively that constitutes "a man in his wholeness wholly attending" (CP 673). For Lawrence and Stevens, the world, ontologically, is tropocentric. The logocentric world, rationally, is secondary, because it is only after fundamental acts (tropes) are gathered and refined into various communicative modes (words into language, numbers into mathematics, lines into figures, etc.) that language then can be tropologically manipulated. Tropism occurs in the realm of the creative dark, tropological activity occurs in the shifting light of symbolic orders (the relative movement between darkness and light is what drew Lawrence into line with Heraclitean cosmology). The priority of tropism is what directs Stevens's nativity of "The description that makes it divinity" (CP 475) and Lawrence's religious enshrinement of creative darkness. However, ontological priorities are just that for Lawrence and Stevens: an acknowledgement of an ultimate reducibility of mind to the primary act of describing relations of betweenness (priority=prior=first things first). In second place, they have a no less intense interest in the secondary realm of the symbolic, where, they know, like Barthes, language will determine the fate of their consciousness. Hegel's summation of Absolute Spirit bedrocks the same knowledge Cézanne conveys through his apples: perceptual truth of the senses is always penultimate -- in relation to mimetic or reflective consciousness -- to the referential medium of its expression. Thus, Stevens senses, there is no final truth, there are only third terms of betweenness which allow the curve of the imagination to assert its primacy as the mirror from which nature springs "in the blind/ Forward of the eye that, in its backward, sees/ The greater seeming of the major mind" (CP 340). Lawrence's ability to glance about his immediate surroundings -- however mundane or

rarefied -- and to draw it into relation with the circumference of the visible world and the "ever-dark central" creative force is heralded as both the hallmark fault and genius of his work. Lawrence's adherence to "quickness" is categorical enough to modify complaints of irrationalism, unpredictability, and unevenness by critics like Eliot and Wayne Booth who cannot abide his preoccupation with life -- his vitality is more consistent than their attending to the shifting trends of professional criticism.²³³ "To say that the message, or the spirit which is communicated to you, is more important than your living body, is nonsense. You might as well say that the potato at dinner was more important," declares Lawrence, "Nothing is important but life. . . I am a man, and alive. . . For this reason I am a novelist" (PH 534, 535). The room in which Lawrence sits is not a Woolfian room of one's own, or one with Flaubertian peaches or Eliot's cunning passages, it is an always relative room of quickness: not a writer's den but a real living room.

Lawrence and Eliot both were driven by a need to establish connections with forces quantifiable only through 'faith'. Lawrence's god of creative darkness differs more in typology than category when compared to Eliot's Anglican immersion: both intellects sought an absolute empiricism, a spiritual foundation from which to measure their individual aesthetics against modernism's erasure of Romantic self-ideality. Their substantiative difference lay in the application of their faith -- Lawrence used his to valorize the creative mutability of life (nature) while Eliot retreated to the church believing that creativity was a limited compensatory act for an already fallen world (culture). Eliot considered the fall as given, Lawrence as a sin of stasis, of not producing "More life! More *vivid* life!" (RDP 239). There are other words besides faith, Stevens adds, which impart the condition of belief in life itself, "words of understanding, words of reconciliation, of enchantment, even of forgetfulness. But

²³³Eliot admits, late and lamely in 1961, "My opinions of D. H. Lawrence seem to form a tissue of praise and execration. . . [I]n discussing the subject of literary criticism . . . we cannot escape personal bias, and that there are other standards besides that of 'literary merit', which cannot be excluded." *To Criticize the Critic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965) 24.

none of them . . . have penetrated to our needs more surely than the word *confidence*" (OP 279). Stevens contends that poetry's task is both to instill confidence in the "immediate certainty" of life and the promotion of the "willingness to believe beyond belief" (OP 279, 280). Eliot, Joyce, and Hemingway felt the telos of Western confidence was displaced irrevocably by the war; their writerly interiorizations introduce modern heroic spectres (Prufrock, Bloom, Nick Adams) who find definition in demarcating how far fallen were the various gods of Western idealism. Ironical and stoic they patch fragmentary selves back together, uncertain how to establish tropic relations between a new reality of modern chaos and old spent systems of belief. Lawrence, who also felt his former cultural self destroyed by the war, began viewing chaos not as some aestheticizable dissolution but as a recuperative wholecloth. Like Gaudier-Brzeska noting the profound diffidence of partridges scuttling before the trenches, Lawrence looked through the horror of a shattered Europe to life and placed his faith in its ever-dark ability to renew itself. He writes to Lady Ottoline Morrell in the autumn of 1915:

Last night when we were coming home the guns broke out, and there was a noise of bombs. Then we saw the Zeppelin above us, just ahead, amid a gleaming of clouds: high up, like a bright golden finger, quite small, among a fragile incandescence of clouds. And underneath it were splashes of fire as the shells fired from earth burst. Then there were flashes near the ground--and the shaking noise. It was like Milton--there was war in heaven. But it was not angels. It was that small golden Zeppelin, like a long oval world, high up. It seemed as if the cosmic order were gone, as if there had come a new order, a new heaven above us: and as if the world in anger were trying to revoke it. Then the small, long-ovate luminary, the new world in the heavens disappeared again.

I cannot get over it, that the moon is not queen of the sky by night, and the stars the lesser lights. . . So it seems our cosmos has burst. . .

But there must be a new heaven and a new earth. . . Everything is burst away now, there remains only to take on a new being. . .

I feel awfully queer and trembling in my spirit, because I am going away from the land and the nation I have belonged to: departing, emigrating, changing the land of my soul as well as my mere domicile. It is rather terrible, a form of death. But I feel as if it were my fate. I must: to live.

(*Letters*, Vol. II, 389-90, 428)

The imagery of darkness attending Lawrence's descriptions of the source of creative power, traceable throughout his literary works, spilled into political essays and personal correspondence as his life and career suffered the annihilatory prospects of censure, war, and exile. "The Crown" was written in 1915 for a movement he and Bertrand Russell were organizing to 'save' England. The banning of *The Rainbow* and accusations of being a spy for Germany also occur in 1915. Writing to Lady Morrell in 1915, darkness appears in organic imagery as he counsels her to "let go, entirely, and become dark, quite dark . . . like the plants which die away utterly above ground . . . [and] sleep in the profound darkness where being takes place again. . . Only then will you act straight from the dark source of life, outwards, which is creative life" (*L*, II, 468-69). Shortly before leaving England, Lawrence again writes to Lady Morrell and uses darkness to spatialize the unknown life he would soon embark on: "we can force nothing, and compel nothing, we can only nourish in the darkness the unuttered buds of the new life that shall be . . . the unknown quicks where the new life is coming into being" (*L*, II, 475). By the time he reaches Australia, darkness is factored as a prime root, "every living human soul is a well-head to this darkness" (*KG* 298), because, according to Lawrence, "even relativity is only relative. Relative to the absolute

. . . the one absolute: man alone by himself, alone with his own soul, alone with his eyes on the darkness which is the dark god of life. . . The oracle, the fissure down into the unknown, the strange exhalations from the dark, the strange words that the oracle must utter. Strange, cruel, pregnant words: the new term of consciousness.

This is the innermost symbol of man: alone in the darkness of the cavern of himself, listening to soundlessness of inflowing fate. The man by himself -- that is the absolute -- listening -- that is the relativity -- for the influx of his fate, or doom.

(*KG* 314, 316)

Lawrence's absolutizing of creative power rewires Enlightenment principles: holiness of dark immediate contact with life replaces dialectical privileging and endless deferral of transcendent Heavens, Spirits, and Signifieds. Traditional promises of redemption (light, more light) are replaced with the darker challenge of continuous self creation. To live life apocalyptically is the goal -- something along the lines of Nietzsche's ethic of Newness and translation of man back into nature or the "mutual exchange" Blake's Emanations where "Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders of Intellect."²³⁴ Nietzsche's apocalypse, however, shies away from any explicit organicism, it relies more on the intellectualism of Wilde's maxim, "The Critical Spirit and the World-Spirit are one,"²³⁵ where the Critic as Artist "by concentration makes culture possible."²³⁶ A critic's relation to culture is textual, and any apocalyptic or revolutionary claim so advanced remains temporally affiliated to literary traditions. Both Nietzsche and Blake's apocalypses remain bound by the Enlightenment telos of a perfectable City and Romantic dream of a New Jerusalem of secular perception, where 'fallen' time of real experience is redeemed by the positivistic present of superior intellect; they both remain in history. Lawrence's apocalypse attempts to eradicate the fixation on temporality (moral and scientific) and live up to its name and end history by envisioning a re-establishment of the sense of self that existed before separation from God (nature); that state of seeing-by-feeling where

In the oldest of the old Adam, was God: behind the dark wall of his breast, under the seal of the navel. Then man had a revulsion against himself, and God was separated off, lodged in the outermost space.

Now we have to return. Now again the old Adam must lift up his face and his breast, and un-tame himself. Not in viciousness nor in wantonness, but having God within the walls of himself. In the very darkest continent of the body there is God. And from Him issue the first dark rays of our feeling, wordless, and utterly previous to words: the innermost rays, the first

²³⁴ William Blake, *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*, ed. David Erdman (New York: Anchor Press, 1982) 246.

²³⁵ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist in Essays by Oscar Wilde*, ed. Hesketh Pearson (London: Methuen, 1950) 187.

²³⁶ Wilde, *Essays* 182.

messengers, the primeval, honourable beasts of our being, whose voice echoes wordless and for ever wordless down the darkest avenues of the soul, but full of potent speech. Our own inner meaning.

(PH 759)

Lawrence's typology of the creative force fuses the unknowable dark of universal emanative power with the pure interior of the self ~ a site where "dark rays of . . . feeling" compose the "inner meaning" that shapes identity. Lawrence's imagery is religious; Stevens charts the same territory using the Romantic image of the quest, where, "*Under the shape of his sail, Ulysses,/ Symbol of the seeker, crossing by night/ The giant sea, read his own mind*" (OP 126):

If knowledge and the thing known are one
 So that to know a man is to be
 That man, to know a place is to be
 That place, and it seems to come to that;
 And if to know one man is to know all
 And if one's sense of a single spot
 Is what one knows of the universe,
 Then knowledge is the only life. . .
 The deep comfort of the world and fate.

There is a human loneliness,
 A part of space and solitude,
 In which knowledge cannot be denied,
 In which nothing of knowledge fails,
 The luminous companion, the hand,
 The fortifying arm, the profound
 Response, the completely answering voice,
 That which is more than anything else
 The right within us and about us,
 Joined, the triumphant vigor, felt,
 The inner direction on which we depend . . .

This is the true creator...
 For this creator is a lamp
 Enlarging like a nocturnal ray
 The space in which it stands, the shine
 Of darkness, creating from nothingness . . .

The unnamed creator of an unknown sphere,
 Unknown as yet, unknowable,
 Uncertain certainty. . .
 The center of the self . . .
 The order of man's right to be
 As he is, the discipline of his scope
 Observed as an absolute, himself.

(OP 126-27)

Stevens's "nocturnal ray" matches Lawrence's "dark rays" in its conceptualization of how "the inner direction" on which everything (consciousness) depends becomes "the manifestations of a law/ That bends the particulars to the abstract. . ./ As if abstractions were, themselves/ Particulars of a relative sublime" (OP 129-30). Dark otherness is life itself, the relative sublime whose source is undefinable, "a shade that traverses/ A dust, a force that traverses a shade" (CP 489). Reality, as Robert Rehder appraises Stevens's conception of life in the final tercet of "Ordinary Evening in New Haven,"

is insubstantial, moving and within an object: an intangible shade traversing tangible dust, then an imperceptible force, like electro-magnetism, traversing the intangible shade -- the final restatement making it more inward, darker. Nothing could be more down-to-earth than the dust, and there are biblical overtones: the word reminds us of the clods from which Yahweh made Adam. . . We are left with an impression of unknowable power.²³⁷

It is from Stevens and Lawrence's literalness in trying to describe the absolute range of the creative universe that darkness assumes monumental stature²³⁸ and links their

²³⁷ Robert Rehder, *The Poetry of Wallace Stevens* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988) 290, 291.

²³⁸ Not unremarkable is how physical theorists currently are proposing that an unseeable plenum of dark matter (different from black holes) composes over ninety per cent of the universe -- literally -- in a measurable sense. See, for starters: J. Gribbon, "Dark Matter and the Universe" *Science* 19 March 1994; L. Krauss, *The Fifth Essence: The Search for Dark Matter in the Universe* (New York: Basic Books, 1989; Michael Riordan and David Schramm, *The Shadows of Creation: Dark Matter and the Structure of the Universe* (New York: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1991).

sense of the religious to natural process. Stevens's belief in the executive function of this process was operational by age twenty-three, where he records that "the true religious force in the world is not the church but the world itself: the mysterious callings of Nature and our responses" (SP 104).

The ahistorical isolation of the artist as a measure of absorption into *place* is why Stevens and Lawrence are alignable to the aesthetics of Cézanne where the perpetual landscape of life itself reserves its priority over history (unfolding within it) as the informing principle of art (organicism trumps ideology). Lawrence confirms this sentiment in an aside by Rupert Birkin looking out a train window in *Women in Love*:

Birkin looked at the land, at the evening, and was thinking, 'Well if mankind is destroyed . . . and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening.' (WL 111)

Stevens, who also believed that "luminous land and trees" were of more importance to the artist's eye than backdrops of human history, observes how "the mind of the poet describes itself as constantly in his poems . . . as the mind of Cézanne described itself in his psychological landscapes" (NA 46). In the same essay Stevens quotes several of Cézanne's letters which underscore the essential schematic of the aesthetic he and Lawrence share: primary force --> render the image <-- succeed in feeling:

Cezanne: *Primary force alone can bring a person to the end he must attain, id est temperament, the realization of that part of nature which, coming into our line of vision, gives the picture. Now the theme to develop is that -- whatever our temperament of power in the presence of nature may be -- we must render the image of what we see. . . Obviously one must succeed in feeling for oneself and in expressing oneself sufficiently.* (NA 47)

Stevens gives the life-itself priority a further turn by remarking, "Kant says that the objects of perception are conditioned by the nature of the mind as to their form. But the poet says that, whatever it may be, *la vie est plus belle que les idées*" (NA 56). Even as the historical particulars of modernism fade so does much of the relevance of its literature, argues Richard Eberhart, when remarking that the "reason Stevens will last hundreds of years (in contrast, say, to W. H. Auden) is because his mind was not enmeshed in the goings on of the day; it was on more eternal aspects of reality."²³⁹ "There is a life apart from politics," Stevens asserts, "It is the life . . . of agreement with the radiant and productive world in which he lives. . . The morality of the poet . . . is the morality of the right sensation. . . There the philosopher is an alien" (NA 57-58). The morality of the right sensation is dictated by place, where individual agency becomes a matter of absorption into natural process. The act/art of describing the right sensation is the ethos that drives the organicism of Lawrence and Stevens. But to implement an organic dispensation as an ethical model for culture, is of course impossible, Fredric Jameson would yawn.²⁴⁰ Lawrence and Stevens would not necessarily disagree as they dismiss, like Thoreau, the lower communicative level of the "we" of political ethics: "why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring."²⁴¹ Like Thoreau, Lawrence and Stevens prefer to "live with the license of a higher order of beings"²⁴² which they claim is derived from the recognition that nature -- not culture -- is the proprietorial power: "There is nothing inorganic. . . The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history . . . but living poetry . . . not a fossil earth, but a living earth; compared with whose great central life all

²³⁹ Richard Eberhart, qtd. in *Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered; An Oral History* by Peter Brazeau (New York: Random House, 1983) 149.

²⁴⁰ For a précis of Stevens and politics see Charles Altieri's "Stevens's Idea of Feeling: Towards an Exponential Poetics," *The Centennial Review* Winter 92, 139-172. The first footnote situates Jameson and other critical approaches and shortcomings.

²⁴¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906) 357.

²⁴² Thoreau, *Walden* 356.

animal and vegetable life is merely parasitic . . . the institutions upon it are plastic like clay. . . We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor."²⁴³ They would concede to Jameson the argument against organicism not on its merits as an intellectual guide but rather on its inapplicability for the "we" caught up in the culture of techno-driven survival. The creative force, the right sensation, life itself, the will to power -- whatever the name -- does it translate man back into nature, or is it the agency, as Foucault insinuates, that allows human intentionality to marginalize nature as the mere fuel supply of culture? Nietzsche's answer is diffracted by his antithetical stance towards culture/history which curves him ever closer to it, this while claiming to free philosophy by placing it on the same plane as art: "The sphere of the philosopher and the artist exists above the tumult of contemporary history, beyond necessity."²⁴⁴ But Nietzsche cannot be satisfied with a look out of a train window upon a shining evening, he keeps his eyes, like Blake, trained on the texts through which the world of pure human construction exercises its sphere of instructionary influences. Civilization is the place for Nietzsche, Blake and Wilde; place is the place for Stevens and Lawrence, a place ruled by "the aristocracy of the invisible powers, the greater influences, nothing to do with human society" (SM 119), and fueled by a "passion which identifies with life, faith in life itself . . . beyond the carping of human knowledge" (JL 372). Robert Rehder notes the ahistorical aspect of Stevens's preoccupation with sense of place:

As a poet, he does not have the historical feeling of Hardy, Yeats, Pound or Eliot, or even Williams. His poetry is not concerned to differentiate between different periods of time. It is imbued with the feeling of things changing rather than of time passing. The past resembles an unordered set of present moments and every landscape in this virtual or mythic present is a text to be read. Each of the miscellaneous items of his reading offers a new vista upon

²⁴³ Thoreau, *Walden* 340–41, 350.

²⁴⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy & Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1979) 8.

the self. Stevens writes to Elsie Moll, 'The love of books for the thoughts in them is like the love of the earth for its seas and distances.'²⁴⁵

Fernihough, working through the skepticism and volatile politics surrounding theories of the organic, concludes her book on Lawrence with a short tentative chapter entitled, "An Aesthetics of the Body?" Conditionally remarking "that if 'the earth' is, like 'the body', an effect of discourse, there may none the less be important political or practical reasons for positing it,"²⁴⁶ she distances herself from Barthes-like reckonings of actual physicality and from the directness of Lawrence himself [his italics]: "The quick of the universe is the *pulsating, carnal self*, mysterious and palpable" (CP 183). Nevertheless, realizing that "Lawrence's reverence for the natural landscape is not reducible to the desire for an aesthetically pleasing backdrop to human activity . . . his aesthetic rests on a kind of de-aestheticized art which is not guilty of coercing nature, or of sacrificing matter to spirit,"²⁴⁷ Fernihough declares, "Lawrence's stance is, in the final analysis, apolitical."²⁴⁸ She then observes as apologist:

He was only too aware of the dangers inherent in the repression of difference. Totalities are seen by Lawrence to be inherently dangerous in that, by their very nature, they dematerialize: they allow everything to be read off as a sign or cipher of the whole. They are not to be confused with the version of the organic implicit in Lawrence's art-criticism, where the emphasis is on *materiality*, on semantic conflict and on the impossibility of reading off the parts as signs of the whole. The difference between totality and organicity, is, for Lawrence, that between a denial and an affirmation of the body.²⁴⁹

Fernihough ends without suggesting how an aesthetic of non-coercive materiality that affirms the body can be squared with the totalizing effects of history. Yet it is this question that drives the arc of Lawrence's commentary through the cosmologically-

²⁴⁵ Rehder, *Stevens* 89.

²⁴⁶ Anne Fernihough, *D. H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 187.

²⁴⁷ Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 189, 190.

²⁴⁸ Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 187.

²⁴⁹ Fernihough, *Aesthetics* 191.

based political philosophy of "The Crown"; to the escapism of Ranim (proposed artist colony; to artistic isolation (self-publication of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*); and to the prophetic tones of his last writings in *Apocalypse*. For Lawrence, the affirmation of the body produced a politics of perception which recognized power as immediate and eternal -- prior to and predicate of history -- available to anyone with vision. Lawrence's visionary politics led him to the area reserved throughout history for those of similar persuasion: the wilderness. In *The Visionary D. H. Lawrence*, Robert Montgomery considers Eliot's charges of heresy against Lawrence (and Yeats) anti-Romantic, because, "for Eliot there is no possibility of the third position that we have been calling 'ideal realism' or 'natural supernaturalism' . . . the *philosophia perennis* . . . the conviction that the truth, if it is truth, must be universal and timeless."²⁵⁰ To be universal and timeless is to be ahistorical, a state which Eliot, like Plato, believed could lead to crimes against Tradition (order) should the criteria for timelessness be rooted in the mystery of immediate natural process instead of time-proofed rationalism. "The vision on the canvas is a third thing," writes Lawrence regarding Van Gogh in "Morality and the Novel." "It is," he continues,

a revelation of the perfected relation, at a certain moment, between a man and a sunflower. It is neither . . . above or below or across anything. It is in between everything. . . And this perfected relation between man and his circumambient universe is life itself, for mankind. It has the fourth-dimensional quality of eternity and perfection. Yet it is momentaneous. . .

Me and a nation . . . me and the animals . . . me and the earth, me and the skies and sun and stars . . . me and the timber I am sawing, the lines of force I follow; me and the dough I knead for bread, me and the very motion with which I write. . . This, if we knew it, is our life and our eternity: the subtle, perfected relation between. . .

(PH 527, 528)

Eliot objected to what he thought was primitive, and therefore tasteless, in the spiritual approaches of Lawrence and Yeats; he failed to understand their necessity to make

²⁵⁰ Robert Montgomery *The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994) 227, 228.

immediate (miraculous) sense of life, which is the driving force of all primitive myth, and, he failed to appreciate their intellectual virtuosity in re-shaping myth to fit the modern world. Frye was more aware of how the primitive (primary) and the intellectual (secondary) interact: "Hence while the production of culture may be, like ritual, a half-involuntary imitation of organic rhythms or processes, the response to culture is, like myth, a revolutionary act of consciousness."²⁵¹ Aptly recorded in 1921 was Evelyn Scott's review of Lawrence in the *Dial*: "Religions are immediate philosophies. Mr. Lawrence, by accident a novelist, actually is the priest of an age almost intolerably self-aware. Evocative, rather than delineative, he consciously desires what all ritual infers, the release of individuality in the confusion of sense."²⁵² Lawrence might agree but would claim that individuality is formed as well as released by the senses, and would strike the phrase "confusion of sense" in favor of "free spontaneous psyche" (*PU* 187). Stevens also affirms psychic spontaneity in "the more than natural figure/. . . the more than rational distortion,/ The fiction that results from feeling" (*CP* 406), where 'fiction' is read as the 'unreal' sense (third-term ideal realism) one makes in being part of sensational life. The aesthetical splits from the rational always at this juncture: where the act of description itself becomes a transformative agency categorizable only by feeling. Literature carries the reader, philosophy keeps him at well-informed arm's length. "Being is *not* ideal, as Plato would have it: nor spiritual. It is a transcendent form of existence, and as much material as existence is" (*PHII* 470), Lawrence maintains, transcendence here marking the same form of awareness as Stevens's unreal. This awareness registers the felt meanings of the world and breathes life into art -- a process which leads Lawrence and Stevens to consider myth as the primary negotiator of matter, and discourse about such negotiations (philosophy) as secondary. Stevens recognizes that the drama of human consciousness lies not so much in its exact historical relation with culture but rather in

²⁵¹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 344.

²⁵² Evelyn Scott, *Dial* LXX (April 1921) 459-60.

its recognition of how the frontiers of human fate are kept open by the unreal extensions of imaginative descriptive acts: "underneath the chaos of life today and at the bottom of all the disintegrations there is the need to see, to understand: and, in so far as one is not completely baffled, to re-create" (OP 245). Stevens requires the act of description -- the one that produces poetry -- to meet no criteria other than that it produce feeling "intenser than any actual life could be" (CP 344) ("actual" here understood as the operative 'real' of rationalism). For a man obsessed with language, neither grammatical rules nor ideological biases that govern limited descriptive modes attract much attention from Stevens. Description, as he conceives it, is important because it is a mirror -- more constructive than mimetic -- that offers the creative force a third-term space in which to make sense of (give meaning to) place. This theory unfolds in the couplets of "Description Without Place" where the "dark musician, listening to hear more brightly the contriving chords" (CP 340), acknowledges, like "Nietzsche in Basel" (CP 342), the third-term betweenness of art where

Description is revelation. It is not
The thing described, nor false facsimile.

It is an artificial thing that exists,
In its own seeming, plainly visible,

Yet not too closely the double of our lives,
Intenser than any actual life could be,

A text we should be born that we might read,
More explicit than the experience of sun

And moon, the book of reconciliation,
Book of a concept only possible

In description, canon central in itself,
The thesis of the plentifullest. . . (CP 344-45)

Description for Stevens does not supercede the priority of place; it is secondarily "Composed of a sight indifferent to the eye./ It is an expectation, a desire,. . ./ A little different from reality:/ The difference that we make in what we see" (CP 343-44). The difference one makes in what one sees is art; difference suppressed/ignored when postulating general laws is the original sin of progressive rationalism: the relation between these differences composes the dialogic agon of Stevens's poetry. "Poetry seeks out the relation of men to facts" (OP 204), but, he elaborates, there are differences in kind, according to the intensity of the relation -- an intensity metered by the description of "severe" and "harassing" masters:

This endlessly elaborating poem
Displays the theory of poetry,
As the life of poetry. A more severe,

More harassing master would extemporize
Subtler, more urgent proof that the theory
Of poetry is the theory of life.

As it is, in the intricate evasions of as,
In things seen and unseen, created from nothingness,
The heavens, the hells, the worlds, the longed-for lands.
(CP 486)

In *Modernist Poetics of History*, James Longenbach remarks that after "Nietzsche's critique of positivistic historiography, it became difficult to find the 'truth' of history in the scientific patterning of events."²⁵³ Longenbach then traces Nietzsche's influence through Paul de Man who "goes on to characterize modernity not as an historical period, but as an antihistorical state of mind."²⁵⁴ This state of mind, according to de Man, attempts to "wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a

²⁵³ James Longenbach, *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot, and a Sense of the Past* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 6.

²⁵⁴ Longenbach, *Poetics* 6-7.

true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure."²⁵⁵ But this becomes untenable de Man continues, "because both are linked by a temporal chain that gives them a common destiny . . . the bases for historical knowledge are not empirical facts but written texts."²⁵⁶ The written texts of culture compose the filiative genealogies of canonic tradition against and within which art and criticism objectify the 'real' (as well as the jargon) of any specific present time. Modernism defined strictly as an antihistorical state of mind leaves only the visionary prophet and the isolated artist as modernists; their protest against the power processes of culture usually being two-fold: expose the lifelessness of allegorized temporality (ideology used to support questionable political practices), and, oppose further degradation of time in its valuation as a capital commodity (time freed = apocalypse). Nietzsche and Lawrence are both modern in their dismay at the triumph of technology over 'noble' forms of life and at the success of mediocrity as the key to survival in burgeoning democracies.

Nietzsche presents his notion of mediocrity by means of a genetic analogy in *Beyond Good and Evil*. After noting how a species "becomes fixed and strong through the long fight with essentially unfavorable conditions" and linking this process to the development of aristocratic, or noble, principles of ancient Greece, Nietzsche advances the idea that once the tension of survival decreases because of a plenitude-producing mastery of nature, "variation . . . suddenly appears on the scene in the greatest abundance and magnificence; [and] the individual dares to be individual and different." Continuing, he notes,

At these turning points in history we behold beside one another, and often mutually involved and entangled, a splendid, manifold, junglelike growth and upward striving, a kind of *tropical* tempo in the competition to grow, and a tremendous ruin and self-ruination, as the savage egoisms that have turned, almost exploded, against one another "for sun and light" and can no longer derive any limit, restraint, or consideration from the previous morality. It was this morality itself that dammed up such enormous strength and bent the

²⁵⁵ Paul De Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford UP, 1971) 144.

²⁵⁶ DeMan, *Blindness* 150, 165.

bow in such a threatening manner; now it is "outlived". The dangerous and uncanny point has been reached where the greater, more manifold, more comprehensive life transcends and *lives beyond* the old morality; the "individual" appears, obliged to give himself laws and to develop his own arts and wiles for self-preservation, self-enhancement, self-redemption. All sorts of new what-fors and wherewithals; no shared formulas any longer; misunderstanding allied with disrespect; decay, corruption, and the highest desires gruesomely entangled; the genius of the race overflowing from all cornucopias of good and bad; a calamitous simultaneity of spring and fall, full of new charms and veils that characterize young, still unexhausted, still unwearied corruption. Again danger is there, the mother of morals, great danger, this time transposed into the individual, into the neighbor and friend, into the alley, into one's own child, into one's own heart, into the most personal and secret recesses of wish and will: what may the moral philosophers emerging in this age have to preach now? These acute observers and loiterers discover that the end is approaching fast, that everything around them is corrupted and corrupts, that nothing will stand the day after tomorrow, except *one* type of man, the incurably *mediocre*. The mediocre alone have a chance of continuing their type and propagating -- they are the men of the future, the only survivors: "*Be like them! Become mediocre!*" is now the only morality that still makes sense, that still gets a hearing. But this morality of mediocrity is hard to preach: after all, it may never admit what it is and what it wants. It must speak of measure and dignity and duty and neighbor love -- it will find it difficult to *conceal its irony*.²⁵⁷

Nietzsche caustically inscribes (with an accuracy sustained by the ironical functionings of criticism in our present time) several directional tendencies of cultural energy which became thematic markers in modernist literature: lost nobility (stable culture) and the subsequent rise of the fragmented individual; the fall of various moral philosophies (Mill, Ruskin, Arnold, etc.) and the emergence of the ironic priesthoods of fallen culture (Baudelaire, Wilde, Eliot, etc.). That cultural progress should end up in the infinitely varied ("junglelike growth") yet opaque flotsam of its own productive powers ("highest desires gruesomely entangled"), moved from Nietzsche's conjectural prose into modernist complaints, like Ford Madox Ford's: "Could anything be more depressing than the present state of public affairs? . . . We are standardizing ourselves and we are

²⁵⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1966) 211-12.

doing away with everything that is outstanding.”²⁵⁸ Ford, who was instrumental in launching Lawrence’s early career, is positioned by Michael Levenson as “an exemplar of the early development of modernism” in his reaction to the decline of the West: “A stratified social order has been obliterated, and in its place there stands a democracy of ‘amiable mediocrity’.”²⁵⁹ With the commonal of social democratization on one side and scientific technology complicating the other, Ford, in “The Passing of the Great Figure,” assesses that life has become “much more bewildered than it ever has been since the Dark Ages” and that “any connected thought is almost an impossibility.”²⁶⁰ The attempt to re-connect thought into some meaningful form of coherence became the theatre in which literary ‘modernists’ began to reconstitute the over/de-generating modern human subject -- “Only connect. . .” as Forster blandly declares in the 1910 motto for *Howard’s End*. Foregrounded by this re-connection process was the individual subject, who, Levenson notes, “became the refuge for threatened values. The process was almost territorial: as traditional values were jeopardized, there was a retreat to the sure, if more modest, zone of the self.”²⁶¹

Eliot’s concerns with history as texts were influentially stated in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), the same year in which he composed “Gerontion”:

History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
What’s not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Ford Maddox Ford, qtd. in Michael Levenson’s *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984) 50.

²⁵⁹ Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984) 48, 50.

²⁶⁰ Ford, qtd. in Levenson’s *Genealogy* 51.

²⁶¹ Levenson, *Genealogy* 61.

²⁶² T.S.Eliot, *The Waste Land* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1934) 20.

Longenbach claims that a single-word revision in "Gerontion" provides a "worthy metaphor for the much debated transition from Romanticism to modernism."²⁶³ The revision: "Nature" was changed to "History". Nature, whose passages had been utilized by Romantics as a means of patterning creative energy (organic genius) into correspondent formulations of universal Spirit, was being inversed according to the conscriptive power of History, a capricious force according to Nietzsche because of its textual manipulability. History was now the mirror of identity construction, nature was left positioned merely as the tain. Thereby Blake, the atypical Romantic poet (because he did not prioritize Nature with the Poet-as-Aeolian-Harp analogy), finds his proverb, "Where man is not nature is barren"²⁶⁴ tuned to its highest pitch by Oscar Wilde: "Behind everything that is wonderful stands the individual, it is not the moment that makes the man, but the man who creates the age."²⁶⁵ However, for modernists, as Ford complained, history was being determined by a cultural order turned degenerate because of the democratizing forces of its own overproductive capabilities. Nietzsche's prophecy of a growing jungle of mediocre individuals found partial realization in Eliot's description of modern life in *Unreal City*, capital of the *Waste Land*.²⁶⁶ Eliot chose to remain attached to culture, even one that was degenerating, because his life-force was already contaminated, as he complicitly admits: "I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it/ Since what is kept must be adulterated?"²⁶⁷ By allowing history to engineer consciousness construction, Eliot, as honest poet, replaced the circumambient atmosphere of Romantic idealism with irony. The rise of/retreat into an individualism that had no use for nobleness provided modernism with its chief literary agent: the anti-hero.

²⁶³ Longenbach, *Poetics* 3-4.

²⁶⁴ Blake, *Complete* 38.

²⁶⁵ Wilde, *Essays* 120-21.

²⁶⁶ Nietzsche's antagonistic yet dependent relation to history is hard to categorize; he occupies a jumpy ground between the unstable poles of the organicism of his will to power and the textual dream of a transcendent noble philosopher.

²⁶⁷ Eliot, *Waste* 21.

Lawrence refused to change the word "Nature" to "History." He did not allow the decline of civilization to dampen his immediate connection with life -- he left the Unreal City vexing:

More life! More *vivid* life! Not more safe cabbages²⁶⁸, and meaningless masses of people... The democratic mass, capitalist and proletariat alike, are a vast, sluggish, ghastily greedy porcupine, lumbering with inertia... The cactus had a rose to fight for. But what has democracy to fight for, against the living elements, except money, money, money! The world is stuck solid inside an achieved form, and bristling with a myriad of spines, to protect its hulking body as it feeds: gnawing the bark of the young tree of Life, and killing it from the top downwards. Leaving its spines to fester and fester in the nose of the gay dog. The actual porcupine, in spite of legend, cannot shoot its quills. But mankind, the porcupine out-pigging the porcupine, can stick quills into the face of the sun.

Bah! Enough of the squalor of democratic humanity.

(RDP 239, 240)

Ezra Pound voiced similar complaints about the effects of democratic leveling in *The Egoist*: "The arts have grown dull and complacent. . . . The artist . . . has dabbled in democracy and he is now done with that folly."²⁶⁹ Both Lawrence and Pound developed theories of art and life that respected necessary (natural) hierarchies which they felt, however hegemonic or not, ruled the processes of life itself (Pound falls into the organic trap of fascism Fernighough warns of, Lawrence does not). These 'aristocratic' principles prevented them, to arguable degrees, from championing the voices of the modern mediocrity. The success of James Joyce, however, Guy Davenport argues, is keyed by the portraiture of those voices:

²⁶⁸ It appears that cabbage also appealed to the class Eliot places himself in "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture": "The reader must remind himself as the author has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term *culture*. It includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar. The reader can make his own list." Qtd. in *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975) 297-98.

²⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, *The Egoist*, qtd. in class handout (Eng549, UW, 1988) 99.

Nothing characterizes the twentieth century more than its inability to pay attention to anything for more than a week. Pound spent the last third of his life learning that the spirit of the century was incoherence. . . . So a tradition rotted not in but around Pound. Joyce knew that the tradition had begun to rot a long time ago. He believed Flaubert. Joyce therefore locates his work in the heart of the century, its grief and alienation, and speaks for it. Pound spoke to it. . . . Joyce, not Pound, was the voice of the century. . . .

Stephen Dedalus was killed in Joyce and was replaced by an artist who could understand Leopold Bloom as civilization's failure and humanity's triumph. Pound could do neither. He kept his Dedalus inside himself, maturing around him, utterly unable to see the acumen of Odysseus distributed among all the people, recognizing it only in those examples of Odyssean cunning which in Joyce's opinion were best bred out of man. Pound kept his attention on rulers, Joyce on the ruled. Pound's eye was on the sources of energy, guiding us to the neglected ones, guarding them from contamination. Joyce was interested in energy as it is actually used.²⁷⁰

Questions of what might be "best bred out of man" problematized themselves in the critical issues of modernist creativity. The choice, in its starkest form: acceptance of the real vs need for aesthetic nobility. Williams and Stevens's differing opinions on what the subject of poetry should be provide an obvious example of this opposition. Many of the literary figures emerging from modernist beginnings can be traced by their negotiation of this opposition: Samuel Beckett accepts the real (fallen culture) to the point of losing identifiable human agency -- a disembodied voice is all that remains; Hemingway's insistent need for a higher (or at least stable) order is purchased by paying strict attention to the mundane functionings of the real. Davenport argues that Joyce, by understanding "civilization's failure", became the voice of the century by cross-breeding any/every cultural influence that historical process made seminally available. Nietzsche's prophecy rang true: the noble human subject had given way to mediocre man, the monster of no dimension. Where Frankenstein personified

²⁷⁰ Guy Davenport, *The Geography of the Imagination: Forty Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981) 172, 173.

Romantic complaints against the rational coercion of nature, mediocrity, his modern grandchild, signified a complete break from natural process.

Of all the high modernists, Eliot and Lawrence were perhaps the most demanding in their need for a culture that could provide a human subject an appropriate dwelling; a need leading them into opposite directions as they rode the edges of their discontent into the polarized positions of Anglican convert (culture champion) and exiled artist (cultural revolutionary). Eliot and Lawrence exemplify how artistic consciousness deals with the historical weight of culture: reshuffle and deal out new personal vision -- the 'dealings' themselves becoming the texts which allow civilization to articulate, and perhaps recuperate, its discontents. Linking this discontentment process with Romantic antecedents, Tobin Siebers remarks, "That modern culture remains discontent with itself is, ethically speaking, its most redeeming feature."²⁷¹ While Lawrence attempted to compose his work from a deeply religious center of feeling, he nevertheless was a product of his time -- a modernist in search of an attitude. In *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence's surrogate Aaron Sisson, afflicted by the malaise of the age, "recognized it as a secret malady he suffered from: this strained, unacknowledged opposition to his surroundings, a hard core of irrational, exhausting withholding of himself. . . . He hated the hard, inviolable heart that stuck unchanging in his own breast" (AR 31, 57). Enlightenment indifference moves through Romanticism to arrive here in its modernistic form: pure selfness with no governable center, only flights from tradition into the Nietzschean New, where the only self-respecting ethic left is irony. But Lawrence and Stevens do not make any pledges to the ironic priesthods of modernism, they choose instead to isolate themselves in order to cultivate the sense of wonder life itself still held out in various pockets of place.

One characteristic of the ethics of place is its one-on-oneness: the solitary self as courting and being courted by the creative force. Stevens details this situation as dark fluid interplay between agency and agent in "Swatara":

²⁷¹ Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 40.

Swatara, Swatara, black river,
 Descending, out of the cap of midnight,
 Toward the cape at which
 You enter the swarthy sea,

Swatara, Swatara, heavy the hills
 Are, hanging above you, as you move,
 Move blackly and without crystal.
 A countryman walks beside you.

He broods of neither cap nor cape,
 But only of your swarthy motion,
 But always of the swarthy water,
 Of which Swatara is the breathing,

The name. He does not speak beside you.
 He is there because he wants to be
 And because being there in the heavy hills
 And along the moving of the water --

Being there is being in a place,
 As of a character of everywhere,
 The place of swarthy presence moving
 Slowly, to the look of a swarthy name.
 (CP 428-29)

"The cap of midnight" from which Swatara descends is cousin to imagery that appears elsewhere in Stevens in the dark form of sombreros, hats, capes, shawls (CP 75, 379, 483), and statues and abstract giants with their heads wrapped in violet shades of space (OP 100-01, CP 188, 299) -- all of which depict the more abstract male version of creative darkness: "Last night at the end of night his starry head,/ Like the head of fate, looked out in darkness, part/ Thereof and part desire and part the sense/ Of what men are" (CP 299). "Swatara" is atypical in that the dark element of the creative force is usually linked by Stevens to a shadowy feminine presence. But common to

both and ever consistent is the image of water, as in "The Idea of Order at Key West" where "the dark voice of the sea" incorporates itself into perceptual consciousness as "the spirit that we sought and knew" so that "when she sang, the sea,/ Whatever self it had, became the self/ That was her song, for she was the maker" (CP 129). The solitary effect also remains constant,

Whether it be in mid-sea
On the dark, green water-wheel
Or on the beaches,
There must be no cessation
Of motion, or of the noise of motion,
The renewal of noise
And manifold continuation;

And, most, of the motion of thought
And its restless iteration,

In the place of the solitaires,
Which is to be a place of perpetual undulation.
(CP 60)

Stevens covets isolation because it affords the site where one perceives the "criers, undulating the deep-oceaned phrase" through which the "mind herein attains simplicity" (CP 71) as it recognizes the shape of creative otherness:

. . . the humming of the central man, the whole sound
Of the sea, the central humming of the sea. . .
The self is a cloister full of remembered sounds
And of sounds so far forgotten, like her voice,
That they return unrecognized. The self
Detects the sound of a voice that doubles its own,
In the images of desire, the forms that speak,
The ideas that come to it with a sense of speech.
. . . the philosophers are haunted by that
Maternal voice, the explanation at night.
They are more than parts of the universal machine.
Their need in solitude: that is the need,

The desire, for the fiery lullaby.

(OP 105)

Stevens's muse of natural process, "Timeless mother" (CP 4), rises up early in *Collected Poems* like Venus from "the high interiors of the sea" (CP 5), and continues throughout the volume "Partaking of the sea,/ and of the evening" (CP 8). Empowering, "radiant bubble that she was" (CP 13), and exhausting, "A deep up-pouring from some saltier well/ Within me, bursts its watery syllable" (CP 13), the muse leads on as the "partaker partakes of that which changes him. . . / The sailor and the sea are one" (CP 392). The kinetic link of consciousness to elemental process is explained in "Theory": "I am what is around me./ Women understand this" (CP 86). This understanding rises "liquidly in liquid lingerings,/ Like watery words awash" (CP 497) and metaphorically produces "the necessary angel of earth,/ Since, in my sight, you are the earth again" (CP 496), a metaphor dependent on the clear perception of natural process. This theory is showcased famously in "The Snow Man" where "One must have a mind of winter/ To regard the frost and the boughs" (CP 9). The snow man is the wintry cousin of the sea goddess, both are gods of place, places ruled by creative otherness and by its spectre of "Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is" (CP 10). "Sunday Morning," also exhibits the theory of place that travels "upon that water without sound . . . wide water, inescapable" (CP 70). When contextualized with the lesser poems "O Florida, Venereal Soil," "Stars at Tallapoosa," "Colloquy with a Polish Aunt," and "Two Figures in Dense Violet Night," the poem can be read not as an early masterpiece anomalous to Stevens's poetic development, but as a coherent staging of the motif already prevalent in his work: feminine casting of creative otherness in sea, darkness, cries, diurnal dependencies. Given these relations, "Sunday Morning" is not so much an elegiac voicing of Western physical/metaphysical limitation (a la Vendler)²⁷² as it is just another canvassing attempt to describe the

²⁷² Helen Hennessy Vendler, *On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969) 57-58.

creative force. As well, an obvious theme of death in the much later "The Owl in the Sarcophagus" is routed subsumely through "a third form, she that says/ Good-by in the darkness. . ./ The earthly mother. . ./ an influence felt instead of seen" (CP 431, 432, 435), an alignment which combines the unknowability of death with the mystery of creative darkness, where beginnings and ends of life itself emerge and exit within a feminine "sense of self. . ./ a knowledge that she had,/ She was a self that knew, an inner thing,/ Subtler than look's declaiming" (CP 435). And emanating from the darkness is the masculine energy of expression, "the whiteness that is the ultimate intellect,/ A diamond jubilation" (CP 433), which, with its visual compassing of place, "gives its power to the wild-ringed eye" (CP 433). As the intellect works to locate "the radial aspect of . . . place/. . . a sense in the changing sense of things," it becomes a "figure like Ecclesiast/ Rugged and luminous, [and] chants in the dark/ A text that is an answer, although obscure" (CP 479).

Obscure answers in Stevens are usually accompanied by a cry, cries, crying -- all denoting an ambiguous neuter charge in the creative force: "The cry is part. . ./ a voice/. . . the coldest coil/ That grips the centre, the actual bite, that life/ Itself is like a poverty in the space of life" (CP 298-99). This poverty/nothing-ness constitutes the "indifference of the eye" (CP 475) and works itself as an irreconcilable burr alongside and separate from creative otherness.²⁷³ It is responsible for the conditional array of "seemings", "likes" and "as ifs" in Stevens's similes. This anti-otherness makes its fullest appearance in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" as an isolation: "Out of the isle, but not of any isle./ Close to the senses there lies another isle/ And there the senses give and nothing take,/ The opposite of Cythère, an isolation/ At the centre, the object of the will, this place,/ The things around -- the alternate romanza. . ./ The clear" (CP 480). Stevens's watery muse, the foam-born Aphrodite/Venus, inhabits the

²⁷³ One can return to "Sunday Morning" and more specifically note how within the balanced masculine/feminine "dependency of day and night," fourth-term "quail/ Whistle about us their spontaneous cries. . ./ And, in the isolation of the sky,/ At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make/ Ambiguous undulations as they sink/ Downward to darkness. . ." (CP 70).

island of Cythère -- its opposite is the fourth-term null awareness, something akin to Blake's Spectres. But where spectral energy for Blake is unbalanced and over-willed, the form of consciousness Stevens places in the central isolation of place as objectified by the will is "The clear", a balanced yet unsettling clarity produced by ultimate contact with the elements. B. J. Leggett relates how Stevens agreed with Coleridge's notion that "organic life is but a state of somnambulism"²⁷⁴ unless one counters the severity of neutral otherness with feeling. Stevens's water motif crests in "Somnambulisma" where the neutrality of place is given a sense of being by the fluid and creative force of feeling:

On an old shore, the vulgar ocean rolls
Noiselessly, noiselessly, resembling a thin bird,
That thinks of settling, yet never settles, on a nest.

The wings keep spreading and yet are never wings.
The claws keep scratching on the shale, the shallow shale,
The sounding shallow, until by water washed away.

The generations of the bird are all
By water washed away. They follow after.
They follow, follow, follow, in water washed away.

Without this bird that never settles, without
Its generations that follow in their universe,
The ocean, falling and falling on the hollow shore,

Would be a geography of the dead: not of that land
To which they may have gone, but of the place in which
They lived, in which they lacked a pervasive being,

In which no scholar, separately dwelling,
Poured forth the fine fins, the gawky beaks, the personalia,
Which, as a man feeling everything, were his.

(CP 304)

²⁷⁴ B. J. Leggett, *Wallace Stevens and Poetic Theory: Conceiving the Supreme Fiction*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) 37.

For Stevens the poet is the man who feels everything, like the Large Red Man Reading whose *poesis poesis* "took on color, took on shape and the size of things as they are" because he "spoke the feeling for them, which was what they had lacked" (CP 424). In "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas," the neutral aspect of place is associated with the indefinite abstract, while feeling is considered the specific gravity of self, polarized by "that difference between the and an,/ The difference between himself and no man" (CP 255) (no man=snow man). This difference sets up the perceptual trap that divides into "half earth, half mind;/ Half sun, half thinking of the sun;/ half sky,/ Half desire for thinking about the sky" (CP 257). The uneasy division is reconciled by the most primal of conduits -- breathing -- "the deepest inhalation" (CP 258), which enables a "return to the subtle centre" (CP 258) of the creative force. This return reveals how difference as a principle of truth discernment is conceptually myopic, as in Locke's "Two Horn'd Reasoning, Cloven Fiction,/ In Doubt, which is Self contradiction."²⁷⁵ To breath the deepest inhalation is to return to the centre of doubtlessness, a site Stevens can allude to only as a supra-rational realm of feeling in which "abstraction would/ Be broken. . ./ And he would see himself again,/ Being, becoming and seeing and feeling and self,/ Black water breaking into reality" (CP 255). Stevens's 'return' in "Extracts" is part mediation and part epiphany as the poem moves from having "satisfied the mind" (CP 257) to where "What/ One believes is what matters. Ecstatic identities/ Between one's self and the weather. . ./ belief in one's element" (CP 258). Such belief (third-term ideality) constitutes the feeling which powers the 'fiction' of "the final chants,

the chants
Of the brooder seeking the acutest end
Of speech: to pierce the heart's residuum
And there to find music for a single line,
Equal to memory, one line in which
The vital music formulates the words.
(CP 259)

²⁷⁵ Blake, *Complete* 268.

The "acutest end of speech" is not merely descriptive nor necessarily rational. It connotes, for Stevens, an ultimate 'where', a religious endpoint, the search for and connection with "vital music" -- a sound transmittable only through feeling. Feeling remains dark ("black water breaking") as thought powers "the light-bound space of the mind, the floreate flare" (CP 436). Feeling as an antithetical force to the spectre of materialism allows Stevens's overall staging of the interaction between the imagination (the unreal) and reason (the real) to be resolved lyrically -- given one *believes* in the vital music of art. "The principle of music would be an addition to humanity if it were not humanity itself, in other than human form," Stevens states, "and while this hyperbole is certain to be repulsive to a good many people, still it may stand. This is the life of the arts which the all-round man thinks of in relation to life itself" (OP 233).

Where Stevens's imaging of Aphrodite is as diffuse as the many sea-surfaces he sketches throughout his work, Lawrence presents her with a corporeal literalness:

The man of Tyre went down to the sea
pondering, for he was Greek, that God is one and all alone and ever
more shall be.

And a woman who had been washing clothes in the pool of rock
where a stream came down to the gravel of the sea and sank in,
who had spread white washing on the gravel banked above the bay,
who had lain her shift on the shore, on the shingle slope,
who had waded to the pale green sea of evening, out to a shoal,
pouring sea-water over herself
now turned, and came slowly back, with her back to the evening sky.

Oh lovely, lovely with the dark hair piled up, as she went deeper,
deeper down the channel, then rose shallower, shallower,
with the full thighs slowly lifting of the wader wading shorewards
and the shoulders pallid with light from the silent sky behind
both breasts dim and mysterious, with the glamorous kindness of
twilight between them
and the dim blotch of black maidenhair like an indicator,
giving a message to the man --

So in the cane-brake he clasped his hands in delight

that could only be god-given, and murmured:
 Lo! God is one god! But here in the twilight
 godly and lovely comes Aphrodite out of the sea
 towards me!

(CP 692-93)

Lawrence, like Gauguin and Van Gogh, found models for reformulating myth in specific real local landscapes. Lawrence conversed directly with the continents he crossed -- Europe, Australia, America -- as if in agreement with Stevens's Crispin: "That's worth crossing seas to find. . . / A still new continent in which to dwell. . . / To make a new intelligence prevail" (CP 36, 37). Stevens's cloistered life at Hartford resulted in the abstract quality of his relationship with "elemental fate,/ And elemental potencies and pangs" (CP 31) through which he became "an introspective voyager" (CP 29). But Lawrence in literal Australia agrees with interiorized Crispin: "Above all things, man is a land animal and a thought adventurer. . . This deepest self makes him abide by his own feelings, come what may" (KG 249, 238). Aphrodite for both Lawrence and Stevens symbolizes the dark glamour of the creative force which femininely cradles the light of masculine expressivity.

Darkness as creative fount is imaged by Stevens in "Notes" as a "muddy centre" (CP 383), a dark plenum B. J. Leggett uses to compare Stevens to Nietzsche via Arthur Danto, who writes that Nietzsche could not become an idealist nor a phenomenalist

because he felt, and not so differently from either Kant or Spinoza, that there was a world which remained over, tossing blackly like the sea, chaotic relative to our distinctions and perhaps to all distinctions, but there nevertheless... Nietzsche's view of the world verges on a mystical, ineffable vision of a primal, undifferentiated *Ur-Ein*, a Dionysiac depth.²⁷⁶

But it is precisely such oceanic darkness that turns Stevens and Lawrence into phenomenological idealists: "There is ocean in me/ swaying, swaying O, so deep/ so

²⁷⁶ Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Macmillan, 1965) 96, 97.

fathomlessly black/ and spurting suddenly up, snow-white, like snow-leopards rearing high" (CP 454). Leggett doesn't correlate how the muddy centre of Notes relates to Stevens's "Mud Master" where the "mind snarls" because the "mind is muddy" because the "muddy rivers of spring/ Are snarling/ Under muddy skies" (CP 147). The "mud" is the creative dark. It is mastered and produces "new banks/ Of bulging green" by virtue of a "shaft of light/ Falling, far off, from sky to land" (CP 147, 148). Into and out of an undefinable muddy center of creative propensity, the imagination lights up "Sky-sides of gold" (CP 148). "Imagine," writes Lawrence, "among the mud and the mastodons/ God sighing and yearning with tremendous creative yearning, in that dark green mess/ oh, for some other beauty, some other beauty/ that blossomed at last, red geranium, and mignonette" (CP 691). Stevens finds that the snarling mud and yearning green mess pitches "the final need/ Of final access to its element" as it flares into the "eloquences of light's faculties" (CP 333). The mud is "the great urge that has not yet found a body/ but urges towards incarnation" (CP 691), and therefore, reasons Lawrence,

There is no god
 apart from poppies and the flying fish,
 men singing songs, and women brushing their hair in the sun.
 The lovely things are god that has come to pass. . .
 The rest, the undiscoverable, is the demi-urge.

(CP 691)

Darkness (feminine creative power) emanating and absorbing light (masculine reason projection) produces the motion that Lawrence and Stevens describe as *life itself*. Description of such movement graphologizes consciousness and secondarily composes culture. With darkness set up as creative absolute, intellectual expression is tracked as "an innate light,/ The sun of Nietzsche gildering" (CP 342), a descriptive light whose tropistic power is concentrated like "rubies reddened by rubies reddening" (CP 346) into the jewels of canonic Tradition. "What is it my feeling seeks?" asks Stevens, "It

wants the diamond pivot bright./ It wants . . . luminous pages . . . of being" (CP 207). Situated in the century of technology, the desire for illuminated pages of being modernizes the Romantic quest for self identity in both Stevens and Lawrence, as their Nietzschean fear of 'plenitude=mediocrity' is countered by their agreement with Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*: "The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature."²⁷⁷ The cultivation of poetry for Lawrence and Stevens involves translating the luminous mirror of natural process into feeling -- that quality of consciousness which perpetually almost resists the intelligence. Such cultivation produces the interiorization where

The thinker as reader reads what has been written.
He wears the words he reads to look upon
Within his being.

A crown within him of crispest diamonds,
A reddened garment falling to his feet,
A hand of light to turn the page,

A finger with a ring to guide his eye
From line to line, as we lie on the grass and listen
To that which has no speech,

The voluble intentions of the symbols,
The ghostly celebrations of the picnic,
The secretions of insight. (CP 492)

The artist's methodology of describing *life itself* rarely rights itself soon enough to be rewarded by the culture it ultimately comes round to define. Lawrence was penniless for most of his career. He was turned away when applying for a job in

²⁷⁷ Shelley, *Poetry* 503.

California as a cook on a commercial ship -- this, *after* having had *Women in Love* published and reviewed favorably.²⁷⁸ The English genius whose novels and paintings were banned in Britain and who was forced to scrape by elsewhere in the world, did manage, however, to affect a few of the best and brightest at Oxford. According to Stephen Spender:

Joyce, Proust, Eliot, and Virginia Woolf had turned a hero or heroine into a passive spectator of a civilization falling into ruins.

One writer whom I began to read at Oxford challenged the passive sensibility which was characteristic of this literature. He was D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence, despite his artistic defects, wrote poetry and prose which turned outwards from himself towards men and women, and towards nature. He had an abhorrence for the isolation of certain modern writers within their own highly developed sensibility. He had a sense that the distinctions between outer and inner are sacred: that whilst the inner life should meet the outer, the outer world should not become the inner world of the writer. To him the idea of the separateness of perceiving from what is perceived, of man from nature and from other men, is sacred. Meeting is a dark mystery, a kind of godliness, and even within the fusion of the sexual act the separateness of man and woman remain. This paradox of a fusion of existences which cannot become one another is for him the creative mystery. For from the contact of the individual with what is outside him, with nature, and with other people, there is a renewal of himself.

No attempt to resume Lawrence's ideas can explain the influence he had over me. This was an immediate reaction when I read a page of his descriptive prose, or one of his poems. At once I was aware of nature as a life-and-death force, existing independently of man's existence but containing energies capable of renewing him. Lawrence's birds, beasts and flowers were marvellously themselves, marvellously outside Lawrence, even where his intuition of them had an uncanny animal or vegetable quality. They stubbornly refused to become ideas or to be coloured by his own mental preoccupations. Lawrence could not have cerebralized the sea in the manner of Joyce calling it the 'snot-green sea'. Nor could he, like Eliot, have described the evening sky as 'a patient etherized upon a table'.

Lawrence, besides opening my eyes to a world that was just not potential literature, also seemed to challenge my own existence, my mind and my body. I felt the force of his criticism of his contemporaries and did not feel

²⁷⁸ "While we were at work, Lawrence was actually chasing ships and seeking hire in Los Angeles Harbour, San Pedro and Wilmington. But I am sorry to say he met with absolute failure." Qtd. in *A Poet and Two Painters: A Memoir of D.H. Lawrence*, Knud Merrild (New York: Viking Press, 1939) 319.

that I myself was spared his condemnation of Oxford undergraduates and namby-pamby young men. Worst of all, I felt that my work must suffer from that which was lacking in my own physical and mental being.²⁷⁹

Lawrence lived a life authenticated solely by what he felt -- the Spirit was not abstract, it was right *there* -- the quickness between all things. The creative dark which led Lawrence out of England sustained him literally, as witnessed in a self-directed psalm:

And what do I care though all the crowded sunlight jostling
Its way across the dark should mock my nakedness.
What do I care though the very stones should scoff me discovered
A naked nightly thing too frail and wise for the stress
Of the day that battles its journey over the face of the Dark
Only to wreck on the shores of night again, and again
To sink unconscious in the rocking dark, what though
The day shall mock me inefficacious, what then?

What though the clouds should shine in conceit of substance upon me
Frailer than they, what though the clouds go glancing down
The sky with a wealth of ease and assurance and cast me scorn
For my tainted transiency as a thing unreal --
I wear my frailty as a crown.
Yea, though the very clouds have vantage over me
I have a darkness intact within me, glowing secure,
A lovely shadow of death in the place of my love that was
Keeps me proud in shame, pledge of the Night dark-pure.

I have a tent of darkness by day that nothing can stale or profane
I have a knowledge of lovely night, and scarcely can refrain
From seeking the utter drowning, to share the rhythm of the deathless wave
Of Death; but I wait awhile in this tabernacle, singing my stave.

What do I care though from the day's white envelope
I tear but news of sorrow and pain; -- I bear the hope
Of sharing the Night with God, of mingling up again
With all the unquenchable darkness that nothing not life can stain.

For I know the host, the minute sparkling of darkness which

²⁷⁹ Stephen Spender, *World Within World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971) 96-97.

Vibrates untouched and virile, in life unutterable, rich,
 And which when day crows challenge, flings out its vivid black notes
 Of life unborn and is fretted.
 Life is dark and rippling, but fretted
 Bursts like an arc lamp into light
 Blue at the core; and when is whetted
 A blade on the wheel, then the slumbering night
 In the stone and iron leaps in fire.
 And darkness runs the racing wheel,
 And self-same darkness, chafed to ire
 Thunders in heaven till the brave worlds reel
 Which else were a silent grasp that held the skies.
(CP 771-73)

The physical senses work to locate the self in place. As echo-locaters in the dark, the senses arrange the primary elements into orders which feed the secondary miracles of consciousness. Consciousness produces the light of awareness and is guided by an ethos that works to locate a higher sense of place -- a place which in general is the specific endpoint of all quests: home. The next chapter will examine how Lawrence and Stevens journey to the center of the word in search of eloquence to be used as a flare against accepting irony as the dominant mode of modern life. How the masculine/feminine polarity inherent in creative process comes to center their idea of the world and the word will be the theme, what they call home will be the key: "when we realize that life itself, and not inert safety, is the reason for living. For out of the full play of all things emerges the only thing that is anything, the wholeness of a man, the wholeness of a woman, man alive, and live woman" (PH 538).

Chapter IV

Journey to the Center of the Word

Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then.

~ Thoreau: *Walden*

The subject's return home to itself . . . lies at the root of the experience of hope. It is this return home that, in retrospect, completes everything that was begun, interrupted and allowed to fall by the way, completes it and turns it into rounded action. The lyrical character of moods is transcended in the mood of experiencing this homecoming because it is related to the outside world, to the totality of life. And the insight which grasps this unity, because it is thus related to the object, rises above mere analysis; it becomes an intuitive, premonitory comprehension of the unattained and therefore inexpressible meaning of life - the innermost core of all action made manifest.

~ Lukács: *The Theory of the Novel*

The royal pair mingled in love again and afterward lay revelling in stories: hers of the siege her beauty stood at home from arrogant suitors, crowding on her sight, and how they fed their courtship on his cattle, oxen and fat sheep, and drank up rivers of wine out of the vats.

Odysseus told of what hard blows he had dealt out to others and of what blows he had taken ~ all that story.

She could not close her eyes till all was told.

~ Homer: *The Odyssey*

It matters, because everything we say
Of the past is description without place, a cast

Of the imagination, made in sound;
And because what we say of the future must portend,

Be alive with its own seemings, seeming to be
Like rubies reddened by rubies reddening.

~ Wallace Stevens

Beauty reveals everything, because it expresses nothing. When it shows us itself, it shows us the whole fiery-coloured world.

~ Oscar Wilde: "The Critic as Artist"

Consciousness, regardless of any ontological abyss it might fashion for itself, functions as a congregate series of descriptive acts.²⁸⁰ To describe, Webster's defines, is "1) to represent or give an account of in words 2) to represent by a figure, model, or picture;" with all forms of description "intended to give a mental image of something experienced." Stevens and Lawrence's conception of description, in terms of what makes something art, slides from the secondary level of mimetic representation and favors a more primary form of description as conveyed by the verb, *descry*, which, according to the OED, means "1) to cry out, announce, declare; to make known, disclose, reveal : a. of persona b. of things." "The business of art is never to solve," Lawrence writes, "but only to declare. There is no such thing as solution" (PH 461). To *descry*, Stevens instructs, "One holds off and merely hears the cry/. . . One feels the life of that which gives life as it is" (OP 123). The OED informs how *descry* and its cousin *describe* were "in the course of the 16th century gradually superseded by the latinized form *describe*." This supersession is analogous to the primary/secondary relationship of tropism and tropology. Stevens, as noted earlier, uses 'cry' as a vatic image to denote irreducible difference. Lawrence finds similar resonance in "Tortoise Shout" when correlating the literal cry of a tortoise to a string of cries produced by "wild dark lips" of other creatures:

I remember, when I was a boy,
I heard the scream of a frog, which was caught with his foot
in the mouth of an up-starting snake. . .
I remember hearing a wild goose out of the throat of the night
Cry loudly, beyond the lake of waters;

²⁸⁰ Peter Zinkernagel's *Conditions for Description* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), written for an *International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method* series which included Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, works through the history of philosophy to conclude and admit: "Knowledge about conditions for description cannot be characterized as knowledge about language, in contrast to knowledge about reality; nor can it be characterized as knowledge about reality, in contrast to knowledge about language. Preoccupation with epistemological problems is often accompanied by painful experience: from apparently solid premises we are led to obviously absurd consequences. It was my ambition to write a book on epistemology in which everything, even the conclusions, was trivial."

I remember the first time, out of a bush in the darkness, a nightingale's piercing
cries and gurgles startled the depths of my soul;
I remember the scream of the rabbit as I went through a wood at midnight;
I remember the heifer in her heat, blorting and blorting through the hours,
persistent and irrepressible;
I remember my first terror hearing the howl of wierd, amorous cats;
I remember the scream of a terrified, injured horse, the sheet-lightning,
And running away from the sound of a woman in labour, something like an
owl whooping,
And listening inwardly to the first bleat of a lamb,
The first wail of an infant,
And my mother singing to herself,
And the first tenor singing of the passionate throat of a young collier, who has
long since drunk himself to death,
The first elements of foreign speech
On wild dark lips.

And more than all these,
And less than all these,
This last,
Strange, faint coition yell
Of the male tortoise at extremity,
Tiny from under the very edge of the farthest far-off horizon of life.

The cross,
The wheel on which our silence first is broken,
Sex, which breaks up our integrity, our single inviolability, our deep silence,
Tearing a cry from us.

Sex, which breaks us into voice, set us calling across the deeps, calling, calling
for the complement,
Singing, and calling, and singing again, being answered, having found.
Torn, to become whole again, after long seeking for what is lost,
The same cry from the tortoise as from Christ, the Osiris-cry of abandonment,
That which is whole, torn asunder,
That which is in part, finding its whole again throughout the universe.
(CP 363, 364, 365-67)

The “first elements of a foreign speech” are the tropistic turns of the sensuous body which are tracked by Lawrence and Stevens as moving from creative darkness into the

search for self-completion -- a quest necessitated and enabled by the awareness of otherness. This movement informs the light/dark, male/female polarity which grounds the cosmo-philosophical charge of their poetic vision. Otherness is never precisely identified; instead, a conflation of unknowable creative force (the Absolute) and awareness (individual consciousness) is presented in the form of dark-god worship or watery-muse tracking, a conflation spiked by "The cross,/ The wheel on which our silence first is broken,/ Sex." Sex as fundamental generator of difference and complementation is veiled somewhat in Stevens by his metaphoric diffraction, whereas for Lawrence, from the examination of disintegrative modern sexuality in "The Crown" to the didactic 'sex as therapy' in *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, the approach is literal (and therefore still controversial). In "Re-statement of Romance," Stevens draws a schematic for romanticism that backdrops the otherness of creative darkness ("chants of night") against the self which acquires definition through polarized interchange with a feminine counterpart (the oblique "you"):

The night knows nothing of the chants of night.
It is what it is as I am what I am:
And in perceiving this I best perceive myself

And you. Only we two may interchange
Each in the other what each has to give.
Only we two are one, not you and night,

Nor night and I, but you and I alone,
So much alone, so deeply by ourselves,
So far beyond the casual solitudes,

That night is only the background of our selves,
Supremely true each to its separate self,
In the pale light that each upon the other throws.

(CP 146)

Nature is never barren in the romance which partakes "of male reality/ And of that other and her desire" (OP 125). Romance as identification of creative polarity guides Stevens's quest: "The centre that he sought was a state of mind. . . / And the two poles continue to maintain it. . . / The rosy men and the women of the rose" (OP 138). The rosy male/female polarity finds Lawrence agreeing that "man and woman are like the earth, that brings forth flowers" (CP 477). But Stevens's abstractions are never quite blooded -- his casting of the feminine frequently appears as a sensuous spectre of the creative force ("The Souls of Women at Night," "The Candle a Saint," "Bouquet of Belle Scavoir," "The Woman in Sunshine"), a platonic lassie projected by the analogical faith ("seemings") he has in his ability to virtualize metaphor with feeling. Lawrence, the sharper animal, presents an actual woman because of the "contact, the infinitely subtle living contact between her and him. The relationship" (LC1 314). In *Women in Love*, Birkin comments on the genesis of sexual complementation (somewhat reversing the broken-whole sexual arc of "Tortoise Shout"):

We are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed. . . In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture. The process of singling into individuality resulted in the great polarisation of sex. The womanly drew to one side, the manly to the other. But the separation was imperfect even then. And so our world-cycle passes. There is now to come the new day, when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference. . . But there is no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love. There is only the pure duality of polarisation, each one free from any contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal, sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarised. Each has a single, separate being, with its own laws. . . Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarised sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in the other. (WL 271)

Lawrence maintained his stability by steadying himself successfully with a woman. A mate, he determines in *John Thomas and Lady Jane* (the second version of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*), is more important than culture: "You are home to me . . . with you

I'm all right, you open all the world to me" (*JT&LJ* 370). The novel draws to a close with a scene in Hucknall Church where "rests the pinch of dust which was Bryon's heart" (*JT&LJ* 372). As Connie and Parkin prepare to leave Hucknall (and England altogether) Lawrence describes how "they went slowly down the path where long ago Byron must have limped in his unhappy inability to feel sure in his love" (*JT&LJ* 375). The image of hero-hearted Byron limping and being thwarted by conventional England conveys a major theme of the final version of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*: bravery to live according to self-derived standards regardless of social consequences. Also implied is the physical importance of love, as Mary Shelley records, "No action of Lord Byron's life -- scarce a line he has written -- but was influenced by his personal defect."²⁸¹ Lawrence uses Freida and himself in this two-fold Bryonic context to model Connie's irreversible (and thus heroic) flight from the upper class of England by having her strength based on the surety of physical love from Parkin: "And from his body came the physical effluence of life which has its own peace, of passion which identifies itself with life, faith in life itself, in the soft splendour of the flesh. . . In the stillness of his body, she felt again the unconscious faith in life, faith in his own living sex, faith in his own purity" (*JT&LJ* 372). Connie's legal husband Clifford meanwhile sits in a wheelchair representing the remains of modern post-war man: mental sterility induced by false Victorian morality below and technological bombardment above. In "A Propos of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*," Lawrence responds to the controversies surrounding the novel's publication, from pirated editions to the status of sex in England. He claims his critics and defenders of the status quo "only know one form of sex: in fact, to them there is only one form of sex: the nervous, personal, disintegrative sort, the 'white' sex" (*PHIII* 508). Lawrence counteroffers an ethic of awareness -- "true attention" -- wherein sexual expression could reflect the same dynamics of the cosmos of which it is a part (hence the "polarisation" aspect of heavenly and humane bodies):

²⁸¹ Mary Shelley, qtd. in *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 153.

The greatest need of man is the renewal forever of the complete rhythm of life and death, the rhythm of the sun's year, the body's year of a life-time, and the greater year of the stars, the soul's year of immortality. This is our need, our imperative need. It is a need of the mind and soul, body, spirit and sex: all. It is no use asking for a Word to fulfill such a need. No Word, no Logos, no Utterance will ever do it. The Word is uttered, most of it: we need only pay true attention. But who will call us to the Deed, the great Deed of the Seasons of the year . . . the Deed of a woman's life at one with a man's. . . It is the *Deed* of life we have now to learn. . . Word-perfect we may be, but Deed-demented. Let us now prepare for the death of our present 'little' life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos.

(*PHII* 510)

Lawrence's thoughts on sex and sexuality have been misinterpreted by many from the banning of *The Rainbow* up to the latest Kate Millet-influenced graduate seminar. Lawrence was certainly not a sexist in the hegemonic light with which feminists paint him, nor did he, as the 1960 Chatterly obscenity trial prosecution lawyer repeatedly asked witnesses, set "upon a pedestal promiscuous and adulterous intercourse."²⁸² Robert Montgomery addresses misreadings of Lawrence by situating that "from first to last his thinking defines itself in relation to and in opposition to Christianity."²⁸³ Lawrence's Christian heritage is then contrasted to cosmological affinities he shares with Burckhardt and Boehme. Montgomery works through their alchemical concepts of regeneration and transmutation, where Burckhardt's "central symbol of alchemy . . . the marriage of Sulphur and Quicksilver, Sun and Moon, King and Queen . . . with the star of the Spirit hovering between, reconciling the opposition"²⁸⁴ is compared to *The Plumed Serpent* where Ramon as Quetzalcoatl, the Morning Star, performs the marriage of Kate and Cipriano: "Remember the marriage is the meeting-ground, and the meeting-ground is the star. If there be no star, no meeting-ground, no true coming together of man with the woman, into a wholeness, there is no marriage" (PS 331).

²⁸² *The Trial of Lady Chatterly*, ed. C. H. Rolph (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961) 43.

²⁸³ Robert Montgomery, *The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994) 208.

²⁸⁴ Montgomery, *Visionary* 196, 197.

The transformational aspect of Burckhardt and Boehme's 'mysticism' and the Christian concept of resurrection of the body is mixed in the "process of rebirth envisioned by Lawrence," in which sex, Montgomery notes, "is often the occasion but not the essence" of a "vision that transcends and encompasses the opposition spirit-flesh."²⁸⁵ Montgomery relates how this process is the engine of revelation when Kate and Connie undergo their transformations in *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, as had Ursula in *Women in Love*, when she "knew, with the clarity of ultimate knowledge, that the body is only one of the manifestations of the spirit" (WL 192). Sex is useful because of the immediate lessons of touch which can prompt awareness of what Montgomery states is "the symbolic or subtle body [as derived from Boehme] in which are manifested the invisible forces 'beneath' or 'within' the surface that make the visible body what it is and without which there would be no body."²⁸⁶ The invisible forces are, internally, the feeling body, externally, life itself. Thus for Lawrence the symbolic here is a process that must serve as connector-expander and not as religious encloser-separator. "We can know the living world only symbolically," Lawrence realizes in an Etruscan tomb, "Yet every consciousness, the rage of the lion, and the venom of the snake, is, and therefore is divine. . . And man, with his soul and his personality, emerges in eternal connection with all the rest. The blood-stream is one . . . yet storming with oppositions and contradictions" (EP 122). Connection itself is the betweenness Lawrence identifies as quickness: "The quick is God-flame, in everything" (RDP 110). To connect -- symbolically or blindly -- allows a person to live wholly, as he emphasizes in his conclusion to *Apocalypse*:

What man most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his 'soul'. Man wants his physical fulfilment first and foremost, since now, once and once only, he is in the flesh and potent. . . For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. . . I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and

²⁸⁵ Montgomery, *Visionary* 212, 217.

²⁸⁶ Montgomery, *Visionary* 216.

my blood is part of the sea. . . There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters. (AP 110)

Lawrence's *real* belief in living in sync with the cosmos is the key for any analysis dealing with his intentions as a writer. This belief, depicted by the Heraclitean 'imagery' of two eternities conflicting to produce a streaming third-term arc of life, is a *literal* description of natural process as Lawrence perceived it in "The Crown". Lawrence composed "The Crown" for *The Signature*, a small pamphlet-style magazine he developed with John Middleton Murry and Bertrand Russell. From letters to William Hopkins, Arthur McLeod, Lady Cynthia Asquith in the fall of 1915, one can piece out Lawrence's goal for "The Crown":

I want to initiate, if possible, a new movement for real life and real freedom. One can but try. . . But this is my first try at direct approach to the public: art after all is indirect and ultimate, I want this to be more immediate. . . We are doing this little paper [*The Signature*] because it contains the stuff I believe in most deeply -- the philosophy. . . I think my papers are very beautiful and very good. I feel if only people, decent people, would read them, somehow a new era might set in. But I don't think people care. And perhaps I am too self-important. At any rate, it will be as it will be. But still, we must do our best. It is no good, if everybody leaves the doing to everybody else.

(*L Vol. II*, 391, 395, 405)

With the short run of *The Signature*, Lawrence learned, like Blake with his single public exposition, how ineffective it was to try and transform a general populace by appealing to its ability to respond to the truth of art. Much has been made of Lawrence's bond with his mother and his frail health, but it was having the attempt to save England backfire into the banning of his work which became the defining crisis of his mature career. Bertrand Russell, who admitted contemplating suicide because of the inadequacy of his life as revealed upon reading and agreeing with Lawrence's

philosophy,²⁸⁷ later turned, still the coward, and accused the same writings of paving the way to Auschwitz. But Lawrence was one of the few intellectuals to deplore the war openly beyond mere pacifism, which was Russell's approach -- the same tactic Chamberlain later would use to appease the Germans in Munich. However, when "The Crown" was collected later in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, Lawrence added a preface with the admission, "In a great issue like the war, there was nothing to be 'done,' in Murry's sense" (PHII 364). But Lawrence maintained that it "says what I still believe," and noted the real problem for the majority of his intended audience: "It's no use for a five minutes' lunch" (PHII 364). The decline of true (polarized) sexuality in industrializing nations could only lead, Lawrence warned, towards lifelessness: "In sex, we have plunged the quick of creation deep into the cold flux of reduction. . . In war, we have plunged the whole quick of the living, sentient body into a cold, cold flux. Much has died and will die" (PHII 401).

Thirty years after his death, Lawrence's sexual ethics were formally brought to trial with charges of obscenity against *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. But, finally, the English government lost one -- they had misread the people's ability to read. During the Chatterly trial, Francis Williams reversed Russell's assessment by testifying that "Lawrence points in a prophetic way . . . to the growth of Nazism in Germany, and the dangers of Bolshevism, to people being used as part of a system and not as human beings."²⁸⁸ Another witness, the Bishop of Woolwich, brought in as an ethics expert, correctly tied Lawrence's sexuality to his religious reverence for organic principles of natural process:

For him flesh was completely sacramental of spirit. His description of sexual relations cannot be taken out of the context of his whole, to me, quite astonishing sensitivity to the beauty and value of all organic relationships. Some of his descriptions of nature in the book seem to me to be extraordinarily beautiful and delicate and portraying an attitude to the whole

²⁸⁷ Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell: 1914-1944*, Vol. II (New York: Bantam, 1969) 22.

²⁸⁸ Francis Williams, qtd. in *The Trial of Lady Chatterly* 111.

organic world of which he saw sex as the culmination, which I think in no sense anybody could possibly describe as sordid.²⁸⁹

England's legal and social intolerance of sexual deviation maintained a high literary pedigree as neither title nor genius could exempt Byron's involvement with his half-sister or Oscar Wilde's homosexuality from censure in the form of emigration to the continent and prison. Lawrence, while empathetic to both their talents and fates, appraised the sexuality of Byron and Wilde quite differently. Byron appears in *Study of Thomas Hardy* during a long Ruskin-meets-Nietzsche-like digression where Lawrence develops his theory of polarized relation as expressed in religion, architecture, art, and literature: "The Greek sculptors of the 'best' period, Phidias and then Sophocles, Alcibiades, then Horace, must have been fairly well-balanced men, not passionate to any excess, tending to voluptuousness rather than to passion. So also Victor Hugo, and Schiller and Tennyson. The real voluptuary is a man who is female as well as male, and who lives according to the female side of his nature, like Lord Byron" (PH 459). Lawrence then goes on to claim that "A man who is well balanced between male and female, in his own nature, is, as a rule, happy, easy to mate, easy to satisfy, and content to exist" (PH 460). Imbalance, the more normative state, produces the 'cry' -- from a tortoise to "Michelangelo, then Shakespeare, then Tolstoi, then St. Paul" -- which precipitates description: "It is only a disproportion, or a dissatisfaction, which makes the man struggle into articulation. And the articulation is of two sorts, the cry of desire or the cry of realization" (PH 460). Lawrence's approval of Byron's balance is literary; for Wilde and 'the love that cannot speak its name' the problem was of a more literal nature. The stolid feel of Cambridge homosexuality that Lawrence observed when invited up and introduced around by Russell repulsed him -- Platonic love and Greek boy worship staged in English tweeds was not vital, it was parasitic and culture-

²⁸⁹ Dr. John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, qtd. in *Trial* 71.

bound.²⁹⁰ Lawrence didn't object morally to the homosexual act, he contested the culture which fostered it as being divorced from the cosmos. Recent Feminist-Gender-Queer (F-G-Q) approaches to the subject as an entity constituted solely from sexual orientation would be faulted by Lawrence, as he faulted Freud, for not recognizing sex as a subset of a more primordial force: "All is *not* sex. And a sexual motive is *not* to be attributed to all human activities. . . . The essentially religious or creative motive is the first motive for all human activity. The sexual motive comes second" (FU 17, 18). Fredric Jameson would yawn once more and say it is neither sex nor some creative force that determines subjectivity -- it's the power grid of cultural process.²⁹¹ Lawrence would counter Jameson somewhat along the mind-body lines drawn in the first chapter. However, his difference with the F-G-Q's is more affinitive than oppositional because both deem the body the source for ontological determinations. Lawrence differs in that he values the body as an instrument rather than as an endpoint of perception. Politically this translates into a choice between activism, which must deal with the needy collective 'we' of social reform (actual politics), or the more intense pursuits of the isolated "I" of art. Lawrence's frustration with the former led him -- even though critically supportive of the suffragette movement and worker's rights -- to prefer the latter, agreeing with Thoreau that political life ultimately was "unreal, incredible, and insignificant." Artistic isolationism expressed itself in Lawrence's long-running and futile scheme to set up an artist's colony (Rananim). Regarding the politics of homosexuality, Lawrence would view the incarceration of Wilde as an indictment of English hypocrisy -- the tragedy of the body denied in the name of an upper-class power structure whose morality (vanity) would never let some 'overwrought Irish fag' tweek its nose. Lawrence, persecuted by the same powers, did what

²⁹⁰ Paul Delany's *D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War* (New York: Basic Books, 1978) details this episode of Lawrence's life in depth (pp.73-91).

²⁹¹ Fredric Jameson, in "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," writes: "The modernist aesthetic is in some way organically linked to the conception of a unique self and private identity. . . . There have never been autonomous subjects of that type. Rather, this construct is merely a philosophical and cultural mystification." Qtd. in *Modernism/Postmodernism*, ed. Peter Brooker (London: Longman, 1992) 167, 168.

Byron did and what Wilde mysteriously refused to do -- got on a boat. But Lawrence would hardly approve nor be surprised by the new liberated England where George Michael and Hugh Grant relieve themselves in America while Princess Fergie has her toes sucked by a rich industrialist back in the south of the same Europe in which Princess Diana sorted out her imbalanced life -- the reductive decline into pure sensationalism he prophesied for sexuality had progressed into the star-less modernity whose technological nativity continues its gorge of the natural world.

Lawrence's employment of his own life as a direct model for art is a method Stevens found little use for in his projective dealings with the imagination. Where Lawrence is demonstrative and literal, Stevens is indirect and abstract. Where Frieda is recognizable in the characters of Ursula Brangwen or Harriet Somers, Stevens's wife never really appears. In his courtship of Elsie Moll, Stevens confesses that the literal presence of his future wife could not match the image he constructed of her when writing. An excerpt from a letter reveals this need for imaginative complementation²⁹²:

And here I am -- and you want me to take you into my heart! Oh, wonderful girl -- you will have to turn into something else before I can take you into that little chamber. . . I know you are in my thoughts, because I can see you and hear you there. How do you look in my thoughts? . . . You are perfectly yourself and that is a little different I think, although not so very much, from the way you are sometimes when we are together. I wonder whether, in saying that, I haven't stumbled across the reason for our being easier in our letters than we are -- when we are together. It must be because you are more perfectly yourself to me when I am writing to you, and that makes me more perfectly myself to you. (L 95, 96)

This initial statement of Stevensian romance anticipates the spectral feel of "Restatement of Romance" and telegraphs his later poetic relations with the real and

²⁹² Robert Rehder makes a similar point in *The Poetry of Wallace Stevens* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988) 15. But to be fair to Stevens, the next sentence of the letter uncovers a more physical cause for his abstraction: "You know that I do with you as I like in my thoughts: I no sooner wish for your hand than I have it -- no sooner wish for anything to be said or done that it *is* said or done; and none of the denials you make me are made there. You are *my* Elsie there" (L 96).

the unreal in that reality doesn't seem 'perfectly itself' until receiving a makeover complements of the act of description which stimulates "an alteration/ Of words that was a change of nature, more/ Than the difference that clouds make over a town" (CP 487). "The plain truth is," Stevens writes in another letter to Elsie, "that I like to be anything but my plain self; and when I write a letter that does not satisfy me -- why it seems like showing my plain self, too plainly" (L 109). The need to modify the "eye's plain version" (CP 465) of reality remained a pressing concern throughout Stevens's career, from Crispin's elemental voyage in "The Comedian as the Letter C" to the end of the road in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven":

The plainness of plain things is savagery,
As: the last plainness of a man who has fought
Against illusion . . .

Plain men in plain towns
Are not precise about the appeasement they need.

They only know a savage assuagement cries
With a savage voice; and in that cry they hear
Themselves transposed, muted and comforted

In a savage and subtle and simple harmony,
A matching and mating of surprised accords,
A responding to a diviner opposite . . .

Inescapable romance, inescapable choice
Of dreams, disillusion as the last illusion
Reality as a thing seen by the mind,

Not that which is but that which is apprehended,
A mirror, a lake of reflections in a room,
A glassy ocean lying at the door,

A great town hanging pendent in a shade . . .
Everything as unreal as real can be,

In the inquisite eye. Why, then, inquire
Who has divided the world, what entrepreneur?

No man. The self, the chrysalis of all men
 Became divided in the leisure of blue day
 And more, in branchings after day. One part
 Held fast tenaciously in common earth

 And one from central earth to central sky
 And in moonlit extensions of them in the mind
 Searched out such majesty as it could find.
 (CP 467-69)

Stevens's search for majesty is grounded in the organicism of natural process ("common earth") from which, he weighs in "The Rock", the imagination provides "a cure of the ground and of ourselves,/ In the predicate that there is nothing else" as it promotes "New senses in the engenderings of sense" which leave "The body quickened and the mind in root" (CP 527). George Lensing remarks that for Stevens "the persistent and elusive quest for the mind's harmonious encounter with exterior objects was more than fundamental and absorbing; it was antecedent to all other human interests."²⁹³ Such a quest is what edges the solipsistic quality of Stevens's dialogical poetics and drives the engine of his aloofness. The oft-remarked upon detachment of Stevens and its attendant qualities of reclusiveness, privacy, isolation, secrecy -- "solitude of the self" (CP 494) -- contributed to what Rehder says "made his relations with other people difficult. . . . He separated himself from his family, his marriage does not seem to have been happy."²⁹⁴ Stevens's reticence at becoming involved on a social and personal level with insurance co-workers or with literary academics or professional writers is well-documented and confirmed by himself and those who interacted with him. But the level of 'happiness' Rehder measures between Stevens and his wife is perhaps inaccurate as Stevens's marriage to Elsie certainly was successful in its quiet longevity and overall balance. The charge that she didn't encourage or have any

²⁹³ George Lensing, *Wallace Stevens: A Poet's Growth* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1986) 64.

²⁹⁴ Robert Rehder, *The Poetry of Wallace Stevens* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988) 23.

interest in her husband's poetry can be modified by noting that this disposition resulted not from lack of appreciation on her part but from what she felt was the violation of *her* privacy. Holly Stevens remembers: "While I was growing up my mother did not read my father's poems, and seemed to dislike the fact that his books were published. Questioning her about this after my father's death, she told me that he had published 'her poems'; that he had made public what was, in her mind, very private."²⁹⁵ It appears that Elsie did not want their romance diminished by the voyeurism of print. The poems Elsie claimed were 'hers' were early works of Stevens. As Stevens matured he turned more and more to his abstract muse as the distance between himself and the 'real' increased with his interest in identifying the 'unreal' plane that existed as third-term feeling. "Little existed for him but the few things," Stevens confides,

For which a fresh name always occurred, as if
He wanted to make them, keep them from perishing,

The few things, the objects of insight, the integrations
Of feeling, the things that came of their own accord,
Because he desired without quite knowing what,

These were the moments of the classic, the beautiful.
These were that serene he had always been approaching
As toward an absolute foyer beyond romance.

(OP 137-38)

The interiority ("objects of insight") that feeds otherness ("the integrations of feeling") which positions itself "beyond romance" is the difficult site Stevens can never quite occupy because this 'beyond' cannot detach itself from its romantic predicate -- the desire of wanting to create a "fresh name". Stevens's need to describe otherness is what spurs his analogical dependence on ghostly "as ifs" and "seemings" and motivates his identification of that "accretion from ourselves, intelligent/ Beyond intelligence, an

²⁹⁵ Holly Stevens, *Souvenirs and Prophecies: The Young Wallace Stevens* (New York: Knopf, 1977) 227.

artificial man/ At a distance, a secondary expositor" (CP 311). As Stevens configures the relations between the real and unreal while under pressure to choose a position from which to judge the world, the location of "beyond" becomes conflated with "between". Stevens resolves this positionality crisis (position=choice) by revolving it around a sense of 'of-ness' as he confronts his otherness, the "nothingness . . . a nakedness, a point

Beyond which thought could not progress as thought.
He had to choose. But it was not a choice
Between excluding things. It was not a choice

Between, but of. He chose to include the things
That in each other are included, the whole,
The complicate, the amassing harmony.
(CP 403)

The imperative of having to choose finds Stevens realizing that choice ultimately can never exceed its enabler, description, because the act of occupying a real position or place resembles "the presences of thoughts, as if/ In the end, in the whole psychology, the self,/ The town, the weather, in a casual litter,/ Together, said words of the world are the life of the world" (CP 474). If words are life and one is out to construct harmonically, then the poet can acknowledge the limitation of "an eye that does not look/ Beyond the object," because he "seeks/ God in the object itself, without much choice.

It is a choice of the commodious adjective
For what he sees, it comes in the end to that:

The description that makes it divinity, still speech
As it touches the point of reverberation -- not grim
Reality but reality grimly seen

And spoken in paradisaic parlance new
And in any case never grim, the human grim

That is part of the indifference of the eye

Indifferent to what it sees.

(CP 475)

Stevens's confessed need to escape plainness by complementing and intensifying the real with the unreal (indifferent) power of description can be marked from early Elsie letters to his late poetry. By applying the intricate forces of description to objects Stevens transforms them into his beloved: "These lineaments were the earth,/ Seen as inamorata" (CP 484). The dictionary -- consulted often by Stevens -- defines *inamorata* as "a woman with whom one is in love or has intimate relations." Stevens's casting of the feminine incorporates the earth (real things) and description (unreal thought) to the point of aphorism: "A poet looks at the world somewhat as a man looks at a woman" (OP 192). Why should a line of mountains against the clouds ("lineaments") inspire love? Because, for an aging Stevens, the wonders of mental perspectivalism offered a range of intimate relation contingent on the power of language to arrange nature. Such arrangements necessitated detachment, for "the inamorata, without distance. . . / Shrunk in the poverty of being close" (CP 484). Stevens's enamourment with the search for perfect vantage points led to the aestheticizing of his isolation, of "The organic consolation, the complete/ Society of the spirit when it is alone,/ Supported by a half-arc in mid-earth. Millions of instances of which I am one" (CP 309). But Stevens's perspectival need of not getting too close to the objects of his description kept him from being a perfect lover for the real -- a failed romance that would culminate in a real fistfight in Key West with the man he referred to as the great poet of the real, of "EXTRAORDINARY ACTUALITY", the man who could "limit himself to the mere sensation" (L 411, 500), Ernest Hemingway.

To compare Frieda Lawrence and Elsie Stevens in terms of measuring the creative influence someone's mate might exert in relation to highly creative individuals risks the perniciousness of speculative criticism, which attempts to indict the writer's work based

on assumptions about personal life.²⁹⁶ Wilde and Byron would argue that the personal life of artists should remain just that: let art speak for itself. When discussing this subject with Stevens, Hi Simons wrote, "Criticism rightfully and necessarily uses every mite of evidence accessible (autobiography, biography, letters by and to the artist, contemporary records and memoirs, collateral works of art, etc.) to make sure of its understanding of the artist before it presumes to judge him."²⁹⁷ Stevens replied, "A poem is like a man walking on the bank of a river, whose shadow is reflected in the water. If you explain the poem, you are quite likely to do it either in terms of the man or in terms of the shadow, but you have to explain it in terms of the whole" (L 354). These images of man/shadow/river (Swatara) appear in "The Countryman" and "Metaphor as Degeneration" where terms of the whole are explained by equating the creative force with being. In his response to Simons, Stevens didn't comment on the role direct biographical information should play for criticism, but in *The Necessary Angel* he quotes Aristotle: "The poet should say very little *in propria persona*." Stevens then gives a telling explication which reveals how he values the indirect over the direct, and how the act of description itself is the key to the whole personality of the poet:

The principle so stated by Aristotle is cited in relation to the point that poetry is a process of the personality of the poet. This is the element, the force, that keeps poetry a living thing, the modernizing and ever-modern influence. The statement that the process does not involve the poet as subject, to the extent to which that is true, precludes direct egotism. On the other hand, without indirect egotism there can be no poetry. There can be no poetry without the personality of the poet, and that . . . is why the definition of poetry has not been found. . . Henri Focillon says: *Human consciousness is in perpetual pursuit of a language and a style. . . Even at levels far below the zone of definition and clarity, forms, measures and relationships exist. The chief characteristic of the mind is to be constantly describing itself.* This

²⁹⁶ Lawrence in particular has been a target in this field. Cornelia Nixon's *Lawrence's Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women* and Linda Williams's *Sex in the Head* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) are two of many examples.

²⁹⁷ Hi Simons to Wallace Stevens, 1/14/40, in Folder 8, Box 1, Hi Simons Papers, University of Chicago Library.

activity is indirect egotism. The mind of the poet describes itself as constantly in his poems . . . as the mind of Cézanne described itself in his 'psychological landscapes'. We are talking about something a good deal more comprehensive than the temperament of the artist as that is usually spoken of. We are concerned with the whole personality and, in effect, we are saying that the poet who writes the heroic poem that will satisfy all there is of us and all of us to come, will accomplish it by the power of his reason, the force of his imagination and, in addition, the effortless and inescapable process of his own individuality. (NA 45-46)

Stevens's philosophical commentary is sometimes muddled, but his championing of indirect egotism is clear: to describe the mind describing the world is *it* -- it is the living thing for the poet of detached indirection. The 'unreal' predicate of such poetry provides another clue to Stevens's antithetical attraction to Hemingway's direct realism.²⁹⁸ Lawrence, able to out-direct even Hemingway's ACTUALIZATION of the real, declares, in the Introduction to *Pansies*, that he locates poetic practice in description that attempts to present "true thought, which comes as much from the heart and the genitals as from the head. A thought,

with its own blood of emotion and instinct running in it like the fire in a fire-opal. . . . At least, they do not pretend to be half-baked lyrics or melodies in American measure. They are thoughts which run through the modern mind and body, each having its own separate existence, yet each of them combining with all the others to make up a complete state of mind.

(CP 417)

²⁹⁸ Stevens discusses the attraction in letters to Leonard van Geyzel and Henry Church: "If poetry is limited to the vaticinations of the imagination, it soon becomes worthless. The cognitive element involves the consciousness of reality. Someone told me the other day that Ernest Hemingway was writing poetry. I think it likely that he will write a kind of poetry in which the consciousness of reality will produce an extraordinary effect. It may be that he will limit himself to the mere sensation. No one seems more addicted to the *épatant*. . . . I have no doubt that supreme poetry can be produced only on the highest level of the cognitive. . . . When you come to think of it, [it] is a terrifying subject: ACTUALITY. . . . What I am trying to lead up to is the idea that the anti-poet may be the right man to discuss EXTRAORDINARY ACTUALITY, and by discussing it in his own way reveal the poetry of the thing. Such a man would bring us round to recognizing that the mere delineation of an EXTRAORDINARY ACTUALITY is the natural poetry of the subject. It is not a subject that requires conjunction with the imagination. . . . Now the best man I can think of for the job is Ernest Hemingway." *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966) 500, 411.

Where Stevens's search for the commodious adjective relies on a tropology of indirect redressment, of re-membling real things with unreal imaginative license, Lawrence's adjectives are troped from immediate experience. The adjectival activity throughout Lawrence's wide range of writing formats -- poetry, novels, travel essays, letters, criticism, philosophy, short-stories, history -- bears his direct connection with life as the literalness of his observational skills are marked by the continuous invention of new adjectives. A brief sampling: "bluey-black, winter-numb, seal-like, death-hot, knob-scaly, mushy-lovey, glossy-maned, flaky-ribbed, marsh-soft, ice-dark, ice-blue, moth-still, sugar-dusty, sea-dust-covered [artichokes], yellow-budding, jaguar-splashed, puma-yellow, leopard-livid, clay-dry, clay-pale, tawny-tangled, afternoon-weary, cold-glowing, khaki-muffled, rabbit-indistinguishable, primrose-smouldering, black-shiny, mud-greasy, sea-fibred, palm-desolate, forward-bulging. whitey-grey, creamy-grey, curd-white, whitey-muddy, mimping-pimping, cruel-seeming, rabbit-fluffy, craggy-studded, frail-tissued, shell-tender, slag-wattled, scorched-pallid, weapon-hard, cold-twinkly, dawn-lovely, vast-blooded." Lawrence's symbology also never drifts too far from direct descriptive ties to the natural world. The vatic cry and psychic-sexual-religious cross of "Tortoise Shout" is unfolded from Lawrence's sharp look at real-life symmetry:

The Cross, the Cross
 Goes deeper in than we know,
 Deeper into life;
 Right into the marrow
 And through the bone.

Along the back of the baby tortoise
 The scales are locked in an arch like a bridge,
 Scale-lapping, like a lobster's sections
 Or a bee's.

Then crossways down his sides
 Tiger-stripes and wasp-bands.

Five, and five again, and five again,
And round the edges twenty-five little ones,
The sections of the baby tortoise shell.

Four, and a keystone;
Four, and a keystone;
Four, and a keystone;
Then twenty-four, and a tiny little keystone.

It needed Pythagoras to see life playing with counters on the living back
Of the baby tortoise;
Life establishing the first eternal mathematical tablet,
Not in stone, like the Judean Lord, or bronze, but in life-clouded, life-rosy
tortoise shell.

The first little mathematical gentleman
Stepping, wee mite, in his loose trousers
Under all the eternal dome of mathematical law.

Fives, and tens,
Threes and fours and twelves,
All the *volte face* of decimals,
The whirligig of dozens and the pinnacle of seven.

Turn him on his back,
The kicking little beetle,
And there again, on his shell-tender, earth-touching belly,
The long cleavage of division, upright of the eternal cross
And on either side count five,
On each side, two above, on each side, two below
The dark bar horizontal.

The Cross!
It goes right through him, the sprattling insect,
Through his cross-wise cloven psyche,
Through his five-fold complex-nature.

So turn him over on his toes again;
Four pin-point toes, and a problematical thumb-piece,
Four rowing limbs, and one wedge-balancing head,
Four and one makes five, which is the clue to all mathematics.

The Lord wrote it all down on the little slate

Of the baby tortoise.
 Outward and visible indication of the plan within,
 The complex, manifold involvedness of an individual creature
 Plotted out
 On this small bird, this rudiment,
 This little dome, the pediment
 Of all creation,
 This slow one.

(CP 354-56)

Lawrence's literal insight and Stevens's analogical interiority -- is-ness vs seemings -- pair off in contrast: Lawrence's wife Frieda=Ursula, religious quality of creative force/Christ=*The Man Who Died* ~ himself as model; Stevens's wife replaced by fractal feminine muse, religious power of the imagination=abstract Major Man ~ self relegated to third-term otherness. The marriages of Lawrence and Stevens reflect the extroverted and introverted shadows of their lives as lived, which was the subject of their art. Achieving an artistic subjectivity balanced between atemporal individual apprehension (feeling ~ organic links with life process) and the general comprehension of contemporaneous culture (language ~ symbolic ordering of consciousness) was the quest. The Romantic aspect of their ordering of awareness is similar to what Frye sees in Shelley's handling of Prometheus where "an expanding of consciousness which destroys the antithesis of subject and object . . . creates a larger identity, as the 'mask' falls from man and the 'veil' from nature. The transcending of opposites . . . is expressed by the myth of the marriage with a sister-bride. The release of Prometheus also releases the Eros-figure of the Spirit of the Earth . . . a partaker of human and sexual love."²⁹⁹ Lawrence actively sought out Frieda as an opposite, because, he writes as Gilbert in *Mr. Noon*, "if he had married some *really* nice woman . . . he would never have broken out of the dry integument that enclosed him. . . It needed the incalculable fight such as he fought, unconscious and willy-nilly, with his German Johanna" (MN 370, 371). In the incomplete novel *Mr. Noon* (left unfinished because it

²⁹⁹ Northrop Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968) 112-13.

was too autobiographical and haphazard even for Lawrence), Gilbert, a newly-wed Englishman traversing Europe with his willful German bride, describes, with Promethean imagery, his discovery of the eros-spirit of the earth:

His soul broke like a dry rock that breaks and gushes into life. . . It was as if the old sky cracked, curled, and peeled away, leaving a great new sky, a great new pellucid empyrean that had never been breathed before . . . possibilities of life, magnificent life which had not been life before. Loveliness which made his arms live with delight. Now all his life he had been accustomed to know his arms and knees as mere limbs and joints for use. Now suddenly like bare branches that burst into blossom they seemed to be quivering with flowers of exquisite appreciation . . . of the warm, silken woman, not in one's mind or breast, but deep in one's limbs and loins. (MN 369)

Lawrence's early raptures with Frieda bespeak his actual young age (he began composing *Sisters/The Rainbow* in his late twenties) and its attendant incredulousness at the sensuous world -- a fact often overlooked by those who find relations between his fictional characters overwrought, unreal, and, most criminal of all, unsophisticated. Frieda's continental directness helped Lawrence detach himself from the English approach to the senses: detachment. Many of his English friends -- Maria Huxley, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Lady Cynthia Asquith -- believed Lawrence to be ill-matched in his marriage to Frieda, whom they considered coarse and selfish. Maria witnessed how Frieda's inability to help attend, or at least not aggravate, her husband's tuberculosis, finally drew from him the summation, "You have killed me."³⁰⁰ Maria and her husband Aldous were two (of the few) in English literary society who contemporaneously appreciated the magnitude of Lawrence's genius as well as the care his frail health demanded. The Huxley's helped make medical arrangements for Lawrence, Maria going so far as acting as personal nurse during his final days in Vence, France. She was present when he died -- cradling his head while Frieda held

³⁰⁰ Recorded from an Aldous Huxley recollection qtd. in Harry T. Moore's *The Priest of Love: A Life of D. H. Lawrence* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 630.

his ankles. Frieda's 'selfishness' had been reported by friends like John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield who saw Lawrence doing all household chores while Frieda watched, helpless until her part in a meal or a quarrel was required. But it was Frieda, steadfast enough, who had remained at Lawrence's side during the years of life-threatening tubercular episodes, and it was her self-center through which Lawrence chose to affirm life in "the time-balancing oscillation of eternity. In this we live, and from this our lives are made. There is a duality in opposition, between man and woman. There is a dual life-polarity. And the one half can never usurp the other half -- the one pole can never replace the other. It is the basis of the life-mystery" (MN 269).

The marriages of Lawrence and Stevens concurred with their maturation as artists during Modernism's experiments with virtual subjectivity. Lawrence was well aware that *The Rainbow* was a violation of 'normal' novelistic form: "I should like to know what Henry James and Bennett say of the book. I know Henry James would hate it . . . he was always on a different line -- subtle conventional design was his aim. . . . As for Wells and my observation of life -- if his own portrayal of life had a tithe of truth in it nowadays, he would be glad" (L 446-47, 451). Marriage was a central theme of *The Rainbow*; for Lawrence to take it out of the Victorian parlor and use it to deliver an organic subterranean world of feeling and sensate awareness was to invite prosecution from the very parlors of English sensibility from which James, Bennett and Wells hailed and upheld within their fiction. Lawrence, like Wilde before him, forced England to examine sexuality out in the open. As modern literature's interiorization of the Romance quest meandered into the anti-heroic dimensions of Joyce, Hemingway, Pound, Stein, Eliot, etc., Lawrence and Stevens persisted in their belief, if not in the cultural possibility of heroic action, at least in the mythos of a non-ironic subjectivity. As 19th-century Romantics, Shelley and Byron could inhabit with belief their projected figurations of the Hero; as post-heroic Neo-Romantics, Stevens constructs Major Man as an interior paramour from safe within the belly of his day

job while Lawrence chooses the external fate of accepting the challenge of his creative beliefs by living for and through art. Lawrence and Stevens are modern in the sense of having no stable culture in which to hear themselves wholly -- luxuries which Bryon and Wilde could enjoy, if only antithetically. Unlike the godfathers of Modernism, Nietzsche and Wilde, Lawrence and Stevens do not try philosophically to substantiate writerly omniscience any further than the burning-bush of feeling (illuminated by L's dark god and S's water muse). Richard Ellmann, discussing Wilde and Nietzsche, remarks,

In their different ways, both were constructing a new man, what Wallace Stevens called a 'major man'. Wilde did not share Nietzsche's elaborate view of the the genealogy of morals . . . but he did see hypocrisy all about him, masquerading as seriousness. His conception of the major man was of the artist who dared to 'harrow the house of dead'. . . In making the artist an advance man rather than a camp-follower of his society, Wilde implied that the artist is by necessity as well as choice a deviant. . . It is in large part thanks to Wilde . . . that the taboo against writing about . . . sexuality began to be lifted in England. Opening our eyes has been the principal labor of modern literature. . . Later writers such as D. H. Lawrence also made an alliance between their sexual and their artistic needs.³⁰¹

Lawrence and Stevens's modernism is Nietzschean in its thematizing of the death of Enlightenment telos, but they differ from Nietzsche in their ability to create anew without too much angst for not having a consolidated relationship with Western intellectual activity. This ability is what bothers Eliot³⁰² about Lawrence and provides grounds for charges of insular dandyism against Stevens. Nietzsche and Eliot need

³⁰¹ Richard Ellmann, *a long the riverrun: Selected Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1989) 8, 10, 9.

³⁰² It is peculiar that Eliot did not extend the same waiver to Lawrence as he did to Joyce in "Ulysses, Order, and Myth": "It is much easier to be a classicist in literary criticism than in creative art -- because in criticism you are responsible for what you want, and in creation you are responsible for what you can do with material which you must simply accept. And in this material I include the emotions and feelings of the writer himself, which, for that writer, are simply material which he must accept -- not virtues to be enlarged or vices to be diminished. The question, then, about Mr. Joyce, is: how much living material does he deal with, and how does he deal with it: deal with, not as a legislator or exhorter, but as an artist?" *The Dial*, November, 1923; qtd. in *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 177.

Tradition to define their figures of Superman and old man. Lawrence and Stevens need a one-on-one relationship with natural process (organic consolation) to define the individual as feeling agent. Stevens locates "the element, the force, that keeps poetry a living thing, the modernizing and ever-modern influence" in the "process of the personality of the poet" (NA 45). Lawrence observes that "it suits the modern temper better to have its state of mind made up of apparently irrelevant thoughts that scurry in different directions, yet belong to the same nest" (CP 417), because, with no unified cultural base/vision/support for heroic action (Nietzschean nobleness), the only realm left is the process, the nest, of the individual. The organicism of Lawrence and Stevens does not buff up the allegorical shine of mimetic tradition, it is more concerned with escaping the pettiness of history than with explaining it -- ecce transpersonal third-term man: hero without a cause.

Cultural plenitude would, Nietzsche prophesied, reduce the noble fibre of life because of the mediocrity factor inherent in mass (re)production. This reduction manifested itself as the experiential world became over-categorized with the technological dismantling of nature.³⁰³ Lawrence felt the marginalization of nature to be a tragedy for life as lived, Stevens viewed it refractedly as a diminution of the imagination. Stevens images this process in "Esthétique du Mal" as the "death of Satan/. . . And, with him, many blue phenomena" (CP 319). The negation of an organic-based imagination leads Stevens -- reactively not nostalgically -- to seek out "the softest woman/ Because she is as she was, reality,/ The gross, the fecund, proved him against the touch of impersonal pain (CP 321-22). The achievement of making proper contact with the spirit of the earth by balancing the polarities of masculine and feminine energy allows one to see how

The greatest poverty is not to live

³⁰³ Theodor Adorno confirms: "There is a universal feeling, a universal fear, that our progress in controlling nature may increasingly help to weave the very calamity it is supposed to protect us from, that it may be weaving that second nature into which society has rankly grown." *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1973) 67.

In a physical world, to feel that one's desire
 Is too difficult to tell from despair. Perhaps,
 After death, the non-physical people, in paradise,
 Itself non-physical, may by chance, observe
 The green corn gleaming and experience
 The minor of what we feel. The adventurer
 In humanity has not conceived of a race
 Completely physical in a physical world.
 The green corn gleams and the metaphysicals
 Lie sprawling in majors of the August heat,
 The rotund emotions, paradise unknown.
 This is the thesis scrivened in delight,
 The reverberation psalm, the right chorale.
 (CP 325-26)

Difficulties involved with conceiving or living "Completely physical in a physical world" does not, Stevens writes, diminish the desire of ghosts "that would have wept to step barefoot into reality/. . . And cried out to feel it again, have run fingers over leaves" (CP 423, 424). "The dead may look after the afterwards," agrees Lawrence, "but the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos" (AP 110).

The heteronomous organicism of Lawrence and Stevens would be troubling to Kantian Charles Altieri, because, "To the degree that agents belong to the world of sense, they have no control over the laws that govern their actions."³⁰⁴ This lack of control undermines freedom of the subject, caught as it were in "the confusing buzz of phenomenal appearances."³⁰⁵ Kant's search for the highest form of subjective freedom leads him, Altieri argues, to pure rationalism where the "subject *wills* to be bound to the rational law, which then defines the subject by determinate universals," and thus an automony is produced where "such commitments to rationality create a possibility

³⁰⁴ Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989) 101.

³⁰⁵ Altieri, *Painterly* 99.

that all subjects can win for themselves a dignity."³⁰⁶ Lawrence would claim the word *wills* buzzes with a determinism that can only measure freedom through self-consciousness, which for him is a lower form of awareness: "The pebble is real, and $4 \times 4 = 16$ is a property of the pebble. Man is real, Mind is a property of man. The cosmos is certainly conscious, but it is conscious with the consciousness of tigers and kangaroos, fishes, polyps, seaweed, dandelions, lilies, slugs and men: to say nothing of the consciousness of water, rock, sun and stars. Real consciousness is touch. . . Mind is a secondary form of existence, a getting out of touch, a standing clear, in order to come to a better adjustment in touch" (AP 172). Touch for Lawrence is feeling, and is why he calls for a 'science' of feeling as a more effective/affective way to determine, or at least assess, the experience of reality. But Kant also could see how pure rational principles "are haunted by the empiricism they attempt to resist"³⁰⁷ and thereby, Altieri continues, he developed a theory of supra-rational genius -- 'counterpart of a *rational idea*' -- which permits "the mind's elaboration of something fundamental to natural energies" and "makes available a sense of the phenomenal world."³⁰⁸ Kant, while placing rationalism above the buzz of the phenomenal world, nevertheless can't resist returning to elaborate on the function of that *something* fundamental to natural energies. This something cannot be comprehended, only felt:

So now the role of theory is to align a faculty of cognition (intuition) to a faculty of production (imagination) in a way that specifies how the object displays powers that neither the understanding nor reason can comprehend. And the role of the artist is to make the purposive activity show that there can be an other to representation, because art so 'puts the mental powers purposefully into swing' that we feel a connection to the world, and to our own nature, that cannot be explained by the categories available to the understanding. The inner lawfulness of the work simply establishes a direct spiritual life as a site inviting a reflective judgment that all participants can share.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Altieri, *Painterly* 102.

³⁰⁷ Altieri, *Painterly* 103.

³⁰⁸ Altieri, *Painterly* 104.

³⁰⁹ Altieri, *Painterly* 104-05.

Altieri above shows how Kant's aesthetic method sidesteps with rational elegance the understanding and reason which had prevented the subject from factoring in the unquantifiable feelings associated with the sublime as they might be applied towards the construction of a 'whole' self. This complex rendering of Kant addresses the slippage between rationalism and the phenomenon of feeling (fuzzy to sublime) and suggests the utility of nonpurposive genius lies in its transpersonal service of allowing the subject, through the insights of art, to "feel a connection to the world, and to our own nature" which in turn can become the principle which binds/links intellectual communities. This is roughly the same identification process through which Lawrence and Stevens channeled their artistic genius in the attempt to refer to and record the creative force that is 'behind' life and 'beyond' the range of rationality. However, their theoretical justifications of art did not make much categorical advance upon the vague generality of "feeling". Their organic absolutism remained warped by the circumferential woof of feeling because life looms large:

It was how the sun came shining into his room:
 To be without a description of to be,
 For a moment on rising, at the edge of the bed, to be,
 To have the ant of the self changed to an ox
 With its organic boomings, to be changed. . .
 To know that the change and that the ox-like struggle
 Come from the strength that is the strength of the sun. . .
 It was how he was free. It was how his freedom came.
 It was being without description, being an ox.
 It was the importance of the trees outdoors,
 The freshness of the oak-leaves. . .
 It was everything more being more real, himself
 At the centre of reality, seeing it.
 It was everything bulging and blazing and big in itself.
 The blue of the rug. . . (CP 205)

To be without a description of to be is a site made desirable by the greenless grass of absolutist ratiocination whereby vision is limited to the inside of what can be structurally stated. To be "At the centre of reality, seeing it" is what drives the will of art.³¹⁰ "To Be, And To Be Different" is the title of Lawrence's final section of "The Crown" where he sums up his relational absolute of betweenness, and where, after working through the two eternities of Past and Present, Dark and Light, Matter and Spirit, he touches down on the real object of subjective knowledge:

And then starts the one glorious activity of man: the getting himself into a new relationship with a new heaven and a new earth. Oh, if we knew, the earth is everything and the sun is everything that we have missed knowing. But if we persist in our attitude of parasites on the body of earth and sun, the earth and the sun will be mere victims on which we feed. . .

The thing in itself! Why I never yet met a man who was anything but what he had been *told* to be. Let a man be a man-in-himself, and then he can begin to talk about the *Ding an Sich*. Men may be utterly different from the things they now seem. And then they will behold, to their astonishment, that the sun is absolutely different from the thing they now see, and that they call "sun". (PHII 415)

Lawrence's allusion to Kant and to the sun closes "The Crown", Stevens ends *The Collected Poems* with similar imagery in "Not Ideas About the Thing But the Thing Itself." In this poem, Stevens's volume-long companion, the "cry" of otherness, is finally connected to its source the creative force -- c -- the sun, whose traveling light (Einstein's c squared) announces the compensation for bearing the burden of temporal consciousness: newness. A "new relationship with a new heaven and a new earth" is the object of Lawrentian romance, a quest ticketed by the acceptance of Heraclitean

³¹⁰ 'Drive' here is akin to what Altieri proposes in "Wordsworth's Poetics of Eloquence": "Suppose that poetry could earn its philosophical status less for what it overtly claimed than for what it displayed as the life of those passions and the fundamental qualities of the soils that nourished them. Rather than concentrating on making descriptive claims about the world, poetics could stress the ability of language to isolate and intensify those states that 'produce or enlarge' the capacity of the mind." Qtd. in *Canons and Consequences* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1990) 139.

flux.³¹¹ Stevensian romance, when the individual chorister realizes his pitch pipe is tuned to the communal c of everything “coming from outside”, likewise acknowledges the absolute of life-motion which alone can produce “a new knowledge of reality”:

. . .a scrawny cry from outside
Seemed like a sound in his mind. . .

The sun was coming from outside.

That scrawny cry -- it was
A chorister whose c preceded the choir.
It was a part of the colossal sun,

Surrounded by its choral rings,
Still far away. It was like
A new knowledge of reality.

(CP 534)

But the suggestion that Lawrence and Stevens consider art in its highest resolve to be a mediator of philosophical quandaries skews the purer aim of their work: an unmediated (nonpurposive) description of how it feels to feel the creative force at work. Kingsley Widmer conditions further: “Unlike many of his contemporary modernists, Lawrence did not worship art. . . The exaltation of art would be just another instance of a ‘mental-lifer’ attitude. The thing-itself is the passional quality, and part of Lawrence’s distinctive heroism among modernists . . . is to subordinate even art to the lived qualities of existence.”³¹² Stevens, however, did worship the unreal artifice of poetry, his aesthetic is Kantian in his love of and dependence on reflective judgment, where the plainness of undifferentiated phenomena are transformed by the unreal intensity of imaginative description. Stevens’s

³¹¹ Emerson writes in “The Method of Nature”: “You cannot bathe twice in the same river, said Heraclitus; and I add, a man never sees the same object twice: with his own enlargement the object acquires new aspects.” Qtd. in *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1884) 204.

³¹² Kingsley Widmer, “The Dialectics of Passion in Lawrence,” *The Spirit of D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies*, ed. Gamini Salgado, (Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1988) 127.

real/unreal/otherness triad which he uses to establish his betweenness aesthetic is more directly Romantic than Lawrence's in its similarity to Keats, who, like Shelley, Frye informs, "thinks in triads, and . . . divides reality into three aspects: real things, 'semireal' things 'which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them exist,' and 'Nothings' which are 'dignified by an ardent pursuit.' Without the third element, nothing made something by effort, the distinctively creative aspect of experience would not be there: without the other two, creation would be a private and subjective fantasy identical with the dream."³¹³ Lawrence, to stretch the Romantic comparison, is more akin to Byron in his comic mode (e.g., The informal tone of the 'dear reader' asides which sets up the sly reader-author familiarity in *Don Juan* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*).³¹⁴ In *Manfred*, Byron begins the final scene (Lawrentian hyphenated compound adjective included) with a soliloquy that would stand well for Lawrence's relationship to creative darkness: "The stars are forth, the moon above the tops/ Of the snow-shining mountains. ~ Beautiful!/ I linger yet with Nature, for the Night/ Hath been to me a more familiar face/ Than that of man; and in her starry shade/ Of dim and solitary loveliness,/ I learned the language of another world."³¹⁵

Kant is a great recuperator -- he alone might have been able to convince Plato to re-admit the poets. It is the very act of convincing, of how one becomes convinced of anything, that draws Lawrence's attention. "There are, in the consciousness of man, two bodies of knowledge: the things he tells himself, and the things he finds out," Lawrence measures, and then claims, "Man is a thought-adventurer.

But by thought we mean, of course, discovery. We don't mean this telling himself stale facts and drawing false deductions, which usually passes as thought. Thought is an adventure, not a trick.

And of course it is an adventure of the whole man, not merely of his wits. That is why one cannot quite believe in Kant, or Spinoza. Kant thought

³¹³ Frye, *Romanticism* 127-28.

³¹⁴ Eliot claimed that Lawrence had no sense of humour (a charge reiterated by the prosecutor during the Chatterly trial). Of all his complaints against Lawrence, this is the most uninformed and proof that he hadn't read much of the author he was condemning.

³¹⁵ Byron, *Manfred* (III, iv, 1-7), *Byron's Poetry*, ed. Frank McConnell (New York: Norton, 1978) 155.

with his head and his spirit but he never thought with his blood. The blood also thinks, inside a man, darkly and ponderously. It thinks in desires and revulsions, and it makes strange conclusions. The conclusion of my head and my spirit is that it would be perfect, this world of men, if men all love one another. The conclusion of my blood . . . tells me there is no such thing as perfection. . .

What a man has to do today is to admit, at last, that all these fixed ideas are no good. As a fixed object, even as an individuality or a personality, no human being, man or woman, amounts to much. The great I AM does not apply to human beings, so they may as well leave it alone. . . Man or woman, each is a flow, a flowing life. And without one another, we can't flow. . . A woman is one bank of the river of my life, and the world is the other. . . It is the relationship to woman, and to my fellowmen, which makes me myself a river of life.

And it is this, even, that gives me my soul. A man who has never had a vital relationship to any other human being doesn't really have a soul. We cannot feel that Immanuel Kant ever had a soul. A soul is something that forms and fulfills itself in my contacts, my living touch with people I have loved or hated or truly known. I am born with the clue to my soul. The wholeness of my soul I must achieve. And by my soul I mean my wholeness. What we suffer from today is the lack of a sense of our own wholeness, or completeness, which is peace. (PH 732, 192)

Lawrence's depiction of Kant would be more fairly applied to Hegel (as discussed at the end of Chapter One). Where Hegel's Absolute Spirit supersedes the informational base of the body, Kant's form of supra-rationality, as Altieri shows, at least attempts to connect mental sublimity to antecedents in the sensuous world. Regardless of how one views the idea of subjective freedom for philosopher or artist, autonomy, as a *shareable* measure of individual wholeness, appears to be ruled by the power of description to persuade, to convince, to induce a feeling of 'rightness', to transform through agreement.³¹⁶ Under such conditions, morality becomes a function of transformative

³¹⁶ Tobin Siebers remarks: "Autonomy in its purest form is not necessarily a sound philosophical principle. It is an ethical ideal, an ideal discovered by Romanticism, compatible with cultural and critical relativism, but incompatible with collective and normative enterprises, whether social or linguistic. Individuals cannot act by their own rules in society any more than speakers can speak by their own rules in language. There must be a system of mutual definition between the particular and the general. Consequently, Kant, unlike Rousseau, seeks to preserve order by placing certain restrictions on individual freedom. The autonomy of

performance (a.k.a. eloquence). But morality and aesthetics strain on the issue of construable perfection ("head and spirit") and the perceptual real ("blood"/feeling). Lawrence argues for a form of morality based on each person's experience/experiment with life: "Character is a curious thing. It is the flame of a man. . . It's the oldest Pan-mystery. God is the flame-life in all the universe. . . A man's manhood is to honour the flames in him, and to know that none of them is absolute: even a flame is only relative" (RDP 116, 121). The moral of Kant's aesthetic, while well-intentioned, is difficult to apply because calling for an imaginative form of interaction with the world requires citizens to develop artistic vision. Lawrence witnessed the futility of this approach with *The Signature* project. The base question becomes what really is shareable and what is necessary regulation in terms of what 'life' and 'human' should hold in common or in elevated differences with one another. Whether art can or should be applied as a social poultice is a question perhaps begged more by criticism's need for justification than by the values bestowed on art by the market economies of various human enterprise (from the buzz of the power bill to the sublimities of disposable income). On the higher end of the attention span, Frank Kermode remarks how "French theorists want a novel without transcendental reference as they want a world without God. They want it to be impossible for anybody to 'recuperate' the local and provincial which is inherent in the *lisible*. . . They have noticed, as D. H. Lawrence did, that the novel may be a way of demonstrating that it is possible to live, because it is possible to read, without accepting official versions of reality."³¹⁷ The realm of non-recuperable immediacy sought by the French is more a desire to refine the 'pureness' of linguistic function as it applies to literature (ultimate novel=perfect critical theory), whereas for Lawrence the novel is more a means than an end for connecting to life's quickness (same difference the body holds in relation to the F-G-Q's). "It is such a bore that nearly all great novelists have a didactic purpose,

individuals is sacred only on the condition that they respect the autonomy of others." Qtd. in *The Ethics of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 64-65.

³¹⁷ Frank Kermode, *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 70.

otherwise a philosophy, directly opposite to their passional inspiration" (RDP 105), writes Lawrence in "The Novel" when holding up what he considers its highest criteria: "1) Quick. 2) Interrelated in all its parts, vitally, organically. 3) Honorable" (RDP 116). Quickness is proper relation to life; unquantifiable, it is metered by the genius of feeling, whose high ground operates in the difficult to recuperate realm of passion. On the topic of passion, Altieri, evaluating "the ironic stances by which Romantic poets grapple with their own passionate ambitions," claims that the "display of passions becomes both an index of powers with which the reader can identify and a projected test of their value in engaging the world beyond the text."³¹⁸ Lawrence looks to the pre-ironic Etruscans for the same value: "It was by seeing all things alert in the throb of interrelated passional significance that the ancients kept the wonder and the delight in life, as well as the dread and the repugnance" (EP 122-23). Altieri holds that "direct, passionate personal utterance" can forge an ethical dimension of shareable ideals by its virtual ability to express the "the deeper principles,"³¹⁹ principles which, not named directly, are inferred to be those perceivable only through Kantian supra-rational faculties of non-empiric awareness -- an arena of perception known colloquially as feeling. Sharing itself becomes the integral principle whereby the 'depths' of human consciousness are given shape, and thus Altieri states that "all questions of idealization require social rather than foundational grounds."³²⁰ Social grounding of idealization via passionate performance raises the relative question of the audience. Hans Robert Jauss's reception theory and Barthes's notion of the writerly stake out, respectively, wide (general) and narrow (personal) bands of audience wavelengths that ground cultural consciousness. A principal question for anyone assuming the central ethic of literature to be its effect and relation to/on an audience would be the definition of what the ideal audience/community is and what ends it should serve. Unchallenged generalities beginning with Plato's 'as is generally known' posited with the use of a

³¹⁸ Charles Altieri, *Canons and Consequences: Reflections on the Ethical Force of Imaginative Ideals* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1990) 133.

³¹⁹ Altieri, *Canons* 133.

collective 'we' have buried the implied referent -- ideal social order -- for centuries.³²¹ Jauss accepts his current horizon of historical circumstance (referentially) as the arena of identity construction, and Barthes, although posing as an outsider, knows how dependent his 'originality' is on relations maintained from within French academic life. In an interview shortly before his death Barthes was asked if he was optimistic about individualism: "No, not really. Because anyone who lived his individualism in a radical fashion would have a tough life."³²² Lawrence would not disagree (nor complain).

Literary criticism, Tobin Siebers assesses,

needs a theory of language, but no viable theory of language can exist in the absence of a human ethics. Both the New Criticism and the new intentionalism try to divide literature and the human. . . But ultimately neither one can really separate ethics from criticism or the question of the human from that of literature. For "all questions," even W. K. Wimsatt has to admit, "lead to the master question, 'What is Man?'"³²³

The audience in general is the universal subject in particular. The failure to articulate a universal subject remains troublesome for most strains of criticism, a lack made obscure by the glossing power of such words as "human," "freedom," "transformation," "power," "justice," "indeterminacy," and so forth. Secular oppositionalist Edward Said asks, "What vocabulary can we employ that deals with human agency as well as the impersonal repeating discourse of literary structure?"³²⁴ Said proposes that the

³²⁰ Altieri, *Canons* 337.

³²¹ Altieri notes: "Appeal to ordinary or commonsense judgments is an ancient strategy. . . Yet we cannot do without the idea. For while there is no way to 'prove' the claims of common sense, there is also no way to escape endless regress -- of justifying theories by other theories -- unless one can appeal to prereflexive or pretheoretical experience." Qtd. in *Act and Quality: A Theory of Meaning and Humanistic Understanding* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981) 14.

³²² Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985) 364.

³²³ Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 68.

³²⁴ Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 155.

elemental role of human agency be met directly, like Barthes's sense of the "writerly" (a slightly less physical one), by engaging

the text as a dynamic field, rather than as a static block of words. This field has a certain range of reference, a system of tentacles (which I have been calling affiliative) partly potential, partly actual: to the author, to the reader, to a historical situation, to other texts. . . . Now the critic's task is obviously first to understand (in this case understanding is an imaginative act) how the text was and is made. No details are too trivial, provided one's study is directed carefully toward the text as a vital aesthetic and cultural whole. The critic therefore mimes and repeats the text in its extension. . . . Only by reproducing can we know what was produced and what the meaning is of verbal production for a human being: this is the quintessential Vichian maxim. And it is no less valid for the literary critic for whom the genesis of a human work is as relevantly interesting as its being.³²⁵

Said's call for an *imaginative* critical synchronization with the text as a "vital aesthetic and cultural whole" appears to contradict his objections to any form of "monocentrism"³²⁶ or to what he calls the "textual utopias"³²⁷ of T.S. Eliot and Northrop Frye. "My thesis," Said declares, offering an oppositional version of human textuality as an ignored other, "is that any centrist, exclusivist conception of the text, ignores *the self-confirming will to power* from which many texts spring."³²⁸ This emphasis on uncovering the force, the will, the power, the agency which activates humans also appears in *Orientalism* as a centering thesis [his italics]: "In fine, how can we treat the cultural, historical phenomenon of Orientalism as a kind of *willed human work*?"³²⁹ This 'force' is resistant to critical appropriation, it lends itself well to conceptual vagueness because of the ubiquitous duty (in terms of actualizing world, text, critic) it is called on to perform. It is not difficult to see why Foucault's free-radicalization of the term "power" would attract Said:

³²⁵ Said, *World* 157.

³²⁶ Said, *World* 53.

³²⁷ Said, *World* 50.

³²⁸ Said, *World* 50.

³²⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 15.

Though obviously anxious to avoid vulgar determinism in explaining the workings of the social order, he pretty much ignores the whole category of intention. Foucault is conscious of this difficulty, I think, and his account of something called a will to knowledge and power -- *la volonté de savoir* -- attempts in some way to redress the asymmetry in his work between the blindly anonymous and the intentional. Yet the problem of the relationship between individual subject and collective force is still an explicit difficulty...³³⁰

Said redresses this difficulty by identifying his oppositional notion of human intention as an "allied set of forces -- Blackmur called them collectively the *Mohs* -- whose presence in human life disturbs, wastes, the noumenal coercion of culture," human agency in turn forming a "dialectical opposite of the repeating material civilization."³³¹ Said considers this dialectical process the filiation/affiliation theatre of criticism:

The individual consciousness is not naturally and easily a mere child of the culture, but a historical and social actor in it. And because of that perspective . . . there is a distance, or what we might call criticism.

But to repeat [the dialectic formula]: the critical consciousness is a part of its actual social world and of the literal body that the consciousness inhabits, not by any means an escape from either one or the other.³³²

Said continues his critique of Foucault via a Chomsky question:

There is a more important criticism to be made of Foucault's theory of power, and it has been made most tellingly by Chomsky . . . [during an] exchange several years ago on Dutch television. . . Both men agreed on the necessity of opposing repression. . . Yet for Chomsky the sociopolitical battle had to be waged with two tasks in mind: one, "to imagine a future society that conforms to the exigencies of human nature as best we understand them; the other to analyze the nature of power and oppression in our present societies." Foucault assented to the second without in any way accepting the first.³³³

³³⁰ Said, *World* 186-87.

³³¹ Said, *World* 155.

³³² Said, *World* 16.

³³³ Said, *World* 245-46.

Chomsky's challenge "to imagine a future society" is a call to define the most tenable sense of 'home' for cultural man. Such a definition would also render a universal human subject since the definition is to be based on "the exigencies of human nature as best we understand them." Chomsky's first task points out what Said believes to be the crucial shortcoming in Foucault's positing of power: not enough human intention. Yet Said, while assenting to the necessity of both of Chomsky's demands, would fail on meeting the first because to imagine "a future society that conforms" would be to ground intellectual activity in a form of monocentric belief. Chomsky etches the point clearly: oppositionalist criticism needs a common universal human subject/home as an 'answer' to oppression. Said, by offering only a loose form of analytic pluralism to contest the real world of hegemonic power, in effect argues that there is no single great narrative with which to implement a uniform definition/agreement on what a complete "human" is. As such, Said's analytic pluralism seems congruent with Lyotard's *petits recits* in that both appear, from their viewpoints, the only type of theoretical framework operable in the wake of the breakdown of the West's "great narratives of emancipation and enlightenment."³³⁴ Commenting on Lyotard's failure to recognize how it was the "disturbing appearance in Europe of various Others" that caused the master narratives to fail and to be made inefficient by the "new and more inclusive counternarrative of liberation,"³³⁵ Said remarks:

to see Others not as ontologically given but as historically constituted would be to erode the exclusivist biases we so often ascribe to cultures, our own not the least. Cultures may then be represented as zones of control or of abandonment, of recollection and of forgetting, of force or of dependence, exclusiveness or of sharing, all taking place in the global history that is our element.³³⁶

³³⁴ Edward Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutor's" *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 1989) 222.

³³⁵ Said, "Colonized" 224.

³³⁶ Said, "Colonized" 225.

Said here avoids while simultaneously holding up the Chomsky challenge to imagine a future society and to analyze the oppressive nature of power. By suggesting that critical consciousness drop ontological biases (being = ideal form) for an analytic pluralism (being = historical construct), Said implies one should not idealize a future society. But this could be countered by Said's own conception of the ontological nature of the 'force' that gives rise to history, because, as he points out, history is the collect form of all *human action* -- "the global history that is our element." Therefore the question of ontology remains central in regard to any narrative, master or counter, which attempts to shape the context of culture, because culture (history) itself is the structural manifestation (home) of human attempts to define their being through constructive activity. Said would say, fine, call ontology what you will so long as it is posited as a function of active history (the present) and not as static ideological cornerstone with which one culture might oppress another.

Lawrence dramatizes the same issues of power and identity construction in *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed Serpent* (works too often overgeneralized as "the leadership novels"). In *Kangaroo*, political factions the Diggers and the Labour Party replace the Fascisti and Socialisti of *Aaron's Rod*. Willie Struthers, head of Labour, assumes the Chomsky role; the charismatic barrister Ben Cooley, *Kangaroo*, directs the Diggers's militant plans of revolution with Foucauldian abstraction. Richard Lovat Somers, Lawrentian protagonist, is courted by both Oppositionalist (Struthers) and Imperialist (*Kangaroo*) to become the written voice of their movements:

"Now, Mr. Somers, here's your chance. I'm in a position to ask you, won't you help us to bring out a sincere, *constructive* Socialist paper, not a grievance airer, but a paper that calls to the constructive spirit in men? Deep calleth to deep. And the trouble with us here is, no one calls to our deeps, they lie there stagnant. . . Come and breathe the breath of life into us, through the printed word. . . Show us how to *believe* in one another, with all our hearts. Show us that the issue isn't just the wage issue, or who holds the money. . .

Richard's pale, sombre face showed that he was moved. . . Because in truth he did love the working people, he did know them capable of a great, generous love for one another. And he did also believe, in a way, that they

were capable of building up . . . the great beauty of a People, upon the generous passion of mate-love. All this theoretical socialism . . . appealing only to the will-to-power in the masses, making money the whole crux, this has cruelly injured the working people of Europe . . . money was not their prime passion. (KG 224, 225)

Struther's invitation is turned down -- there will be no *Signature* for Australia.

Kangaroo takes his turn:

"In the first place, the greatest danger to the world is anarchy, not bolshevism. . . I want one central principle in the world: the principle of love, the maximum of individual liberty, the minimum of human distress. Lovat, you know I am sincere, don't you?"

There was a certain dignity and pathos in the question.

"I do," replied Somers sincerely. "But I am tired of one central principle in the world."

"Anything else means chaos."

"There has to be chaos occasionally. And then, Roo, if you *do* want a benevolent fatherly autocracy, I'm sure you'd better step in after there's been a bit of chaos. . ."

"Is there any other inspirational force than the force of love?" continued Kangaroo. "There is no other. . . All that man has ever created on the face of the earth, or ever will create -- if you will allow me the use of the word create, with regard to man's highest productive activities . . . has been created in the inspiration and by the force of love. . ."

"I don't quite believe that love is the one and only exclusive force or mystery of living inspiration. I don't quite believe that. There is something else. . ."

"Tell me what it is," he replied briefly.

"I am not very clear myself. And, you see, what I want to say, you don't want to hear."

"Yes, I do," snapped Kangaroo.

"With your ears and your critical mind only."

"Say it, anyhow, say it."

"Why," he said, "it means an end of us and what we are in the first place. And then a re-entry into us of the great God, who enters us from below, not from above. . . I know your love, Kangaroo. Working everything from the spirit, from the head. You work the lower self as an instrument of the spirit. Now it is time for the spirit to leave us again; it is time for the Son of Man to

depart, and leave us dark, in front of the unspoken God: who is just beyond the dark threshold of the lower self." (KG 232, 145, 146, 147-48)

Political and philosophical absolutism are directed towards the same resolution for Lawrence: surrender to the dark creative mystery. From *Sons and Lovers*, where darkness bookcases an early scene of Mrs. Morel being pushed literally and figuratively from the safe light of domestic life out to where the "night was very large, and very strange, stretching its hoary distances infinitely" (SL 60), and the final scene of Paul where "On every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him . . . there in a darkness that outpassed them all . . . and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing" (SL 492), through the essays ("The Crown," "A Study of Thomas Hardy," "Aristocracy," etc.), through the novels, letters, reviews, up to his last poems, "The End, The Beginning," where "If there were not an utter an absolute dark/ of silence and sheer oblivion/ at the core of everything. . ./ how terrible it would be to think and know, to have consciousness!" (CP 724) and "Shadows," where "if tonight my soul may find her peace/ in sleep, and sink in good oblivion. . ./ then I must know that still/ I am in the hands of the unknown God,/ he is breaking me down to his own oblivion/ to send me forth on a new morning, a new man" (CP 726, 727), Lawrence consistently routes all ontological inquiry away from Hegelian deification of the bodiless abstract or political enshrinement of material determinism. He refers all inquiries to the challenge:

We've got to accept the power motive, accept it in deep responsibility, do you understand me? It is a great life motive. . . The will-to-power -- but not in Nietzsche's sense. Not intellectual power. Not mental power. Not conscious will-power. Not even wisdom. But dark, living, fructifying power. . . The urge of power does not seek for happiness any more than for any other state. It urges from within, darkly, for the displacing of the old leaves, the inception of the new. It is powerful and self-central, not seeking its centre outside, in some God or some beloved, but acting indomitably from within itself.

(AR 345)

But even if accepted, what should one expect from 'pure' power? Said, like any good dialectician, offers answers that both affirm and deny the possibility of an ultimate direction for productive energy. Moving from his Vichian base he claims that "human beings can know . . . only what they have made, that is, the historical, social, and secular."³³⁷ Thus there is nothing that can be known *outside* the parameter of constructive activity and therefore Said cannot give himself "over to the view that an Archimedean point exists outside the contexts" of his own "concrete historical circumstances."³³⁸ One is always situated in the already world of "continuous human effort."³³⁹ Yet elsewhere Said asserts that "in human history there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible."³⁴⁰ This "something beyond" is the "force" (the creative one) which powers "willed human work" -- work imperatively grounded in the desire to feel at home in the structures it produces. Said's dialectic is fueled by a composite sense of this *single* force, a force which composes the various binary-producing patterns of power dispersement. Thus imperialism and oppositionalism are aspects of the same power, both have identical ideological bases resting on the assumption that the basic human political right is the freedom to control how one's individual sense of home -- identity -- is represented/regulated/appropriated by the cultural collective of global history. But Lawrence, like Somers caught between Struthers and Kangaroo, feels more responsibility to the creative force itself than to its effects -- he believes culture is a *by-product*, not an end-product of life itself: "Politics is no more than your country's housekeeping. If I had to swallow my whole life up in housekeeping, I wouldn't keep house at all, I'd sleep under a hedge" (KG 64-65). Sleeping under a hedge for Lawrence emblemizes what

³³⁷ Said, *World* 291.

³³⁸ Said, "Colonized" 211.

³³⁹ Said, *World* 26.

³⁴⁰ Said, *World* 247.

his vague referential dependance on darkness belies: organic principle ("flame") of life process is the only marker for truth:

We have got to know so much *about* things, that we think we know the actuality, and contain it. The sun is as much outside us, and as eternally unknown, as ever it was. And the same with each man's beloved: like the sun. What do the facts we know *about* a man amount to? Only two things we can know of him, and this by pure soul-intuition: we can know if he is true to the flame of life and love which is inside his heart, or if he is false to it.
(KG 146-47)

But even under a hedge, home is produced through the possessive act of naming.

"Man," writes Wilhelm von Humboldt, "senses and knows that language is only a means for him; that there is an invisible realm outside it in which he seeks to feel at home and that it is for this reason he needs the aid of language."³⁴¹ Humboldt's "invisible realm outside it" and Said's "something always beyond" are unnameable in that they are the force of naming itself. "The indissoluble *something*," Adorno states, "as a cogitatively indispensable substrate of any concept, including the concept of Being -- is the utmost abstraction of the subject-matter that is not identical with thinking, an abstraction not to be abolished by any further thought process."³⁴² Derrida also isolates a similar effect inherent in the naming process:

What is unnameable here is not some ineffable being that cannot be approached by a name; like God, for example. What is unnameable is the play that brings about the nominal effects, the relatively unitary or atomic structures we call names, or chains or substitutions for names.³⁴³

Derrida's "play that brings about the nominal effects" is unnameable because it is the activity itself. It operates at the tropological level of the mind (in one sense is the

³⁴¹ Wilhelm von Humboldt, qtd. in Hazard Adams's *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1983) 26.

³⁴² Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973) 135.

³⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973) 159.

troping mechanism itself) and functions as the plane upon which meaning is perpetually produced. The activity in its largest humane sense is the primal production impulse whose purposive goal is to secure a home. In its smallest abstract sense it is the activity of naming. To name the world is to gain it at the semiotic expense of being displaced from it, displacement being the relation of the play between words and the world. Awareness of displacement, what Lawrence calls self-consciousness, is trouble if formalized into *the* central concern. The priesthoods of the fall -- religion and philosophy -- help perpetuate displacement. Lawrence laments: "Only man can fall from God, Only man./ No animal, no beast nor creeping thing/ no cobra nor hyaena nor scorpion nor hideous white ant/ can slip entirely through the fingers of the hands of god/ into the abyss of self-knowledge, knowledge of the self-apart-from-god" (CP 701). Lawrence's "self-apart-from-god" is that form of consciousness that has contracted enough to reason that there must be a 'beyond' to the existential plane, which then compounds the error by wanting to merge with it (religion) or fetishize the separation (nihilistic philosophy).³⁴⁴ To be "in touch" with the creative God-urge is to translate it: "The highest function of mind is its function of messenger. . . to make that strange translation of the low, dark throbbing into open act or speech. . . There is no Morse-code for interpreting the new life-prompting . . . and there never will be. It needs a new term of speech invented each time" (KG 332, 333). The act of naming depends on difference, a process which at once displaces and connects subjects and objects; a process which, Lawrence describes, too often becomes an end unto itself in forms of Mind and God. Tropistically true naming is a form of worship in which language *follows* nature:

They say that reality exists only in the spirit
that corporal existence is a kind of death
that pure being is bodiless
that the idea of the form precedes the form substantial.

³⁴⁴ This 'error' is viewed by Lawrence as a form of irresponsibility because, in terms of self definition, to fall is too easy -- it guarantees the free enjoyment of having identity granted within a power structure as one who lacks power. Thus there is no incentive for action save for complaining and cries of "save me".

But what nonsense it is!
 as if any Mind could have imagined a lobster
 dozing in the under-deeps, then reaching out a savage and iron claw!

Even the mind of God can only imagine
 those things that have become themselves:
 bodies and presences, here and now, creatures with a foothold in creation
 even if it is only a lobster on tip-toe. (CP 689)

God and Mind are forms of self-consciousness, secondary ones, Lawrence figures when setting them against the higher duty of naming "the grand voluted reality, Life itself, the great Ruler" (AP 173). Adams studies how Humboldt "finds language involved in making nature, which is a nature beyond all nature -- not beyond it toward a 'Platonic' or 'religious' transcendent realm but beyond it inasmuch as nature alone is mere phenomena and unordered potentiality" so as much to state "Language makes a true nature of nature."³⁴⁵ Lawrence would hold that nature grants language just enough power to realize the relativity of truth, and that as language goes about its business of constructing a home for consciousness, displacement should be viewed reverentially as a process which allows for bodily awareness of "the mystery of the elemental powers in the Universe, the complex vitalities of what we feebly call Nature" (EP 43). Stevens, wondering "At what level of the truth shall he compose his poems" (NA 62), conflates language and nature: "*I am myself a part of what is real and it is my own speech and the strength of it, this only, that I hear or ever shall*" (NA 63). Stevens resists the alienation of self-conscious displacement by listening intently, which becomes a skill,

A difficulty that we predicate:
 The difficulty of the visible
 To the nations of the clear invisible,

The actual landscape with its actual horns
 Of baker and butcher blowing, as if to hear,
 Hear hard, gets at an essential integrity.

³⁴⁵ Hazard Adams, *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic* (Tallahassee: UP of Florida, 1983) 27.

(CP 474-75)

How does one intensify normal sensory perception, how does one "hear hard"? How does one "eke out the mind/ On peculiar horns, themselves eked out/ By the spontaneous particulars of sound/ . . . rising in speech we do not speak" (CP 311)?:

You have somehow to know the sound that is the exact sound; and you do in fact know, without knowing how. Your knowledge is irrational. In that sense life is mysterious. . . . What is true of sounds is true of everything: The feeling for words, without regard to their sound, for example. There is, in short, an unwritten rhetoric that is always changing and to which the poet must always be turning. (OP 231)

This 'sound' is not sound, it is "the feeling for words, without regard to their sound." This sound is what Peter Quince produces as he performs:

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. (CP 90)

Music operates on principles of pure relation (pure=nonpurposive) and therefore is used safely to analogize the value of 'arbitrary' functions within other referential systems. Wittgenstein uses music to qualify the grammatical dynamic of "proposition" [his parenthesis], "A proposition is not a blend of words -- (Just as a theme in music is not a blend of notes)," and then expands to include all linguistic activity, "the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world."³⁴⁶ Frye uses music to buttress a claim regarding symbolic relation: "So far we have been dealing

³⁴⁶ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1974) 12, 20.

with symbols as isolated units, but clearly the unit of relationship between two symbols, corresponding to the phrase in music, is of equal importance. The testimony of critics from Aristotle on seems fairly unanimous that this unit of relationship is the metaphor.³⁴⁷ Adorno uses music for a definition of philosophy:

Philosophy is neither a science nor the 'cogitative poetry' to which positivists would degrade it in a stupid oxymoron. . . Its suspended state is nothing but the expression of its inexpressibility. In this respect it is a true sister of music. There is scarcely a way to put the suspension into words, which may have caused the philosophers -- except Nietzsche, perhaps -- to gloss it over. . . The direct expression of the inexpressible is void; where the expression carried, as in great music, its seal was evanescence and transitoriness, and it was attached to the process, not to an indicative "That's it." Thoughts intended to think the inexpressible by abandoning thought falsify the inexpressible. They make of it what the thinker would least like it to be: the monstrosity of a flatly abstract object.³⁴⁸

Lawrence uses music to describe a version of apocalyptic life:

Every man himself, and therefore, a surpassing singleness of mankind.
The blazing tiger will spring upon the deer, undimmed,
the hen will nestle over her chickens,
we shall love, we shall hate,
but it will be like music, sheer utterance,
issuing straight out of the unknown,
the lightning and the rainbow appearing in us unbidden, unchecked,
like ambassadors.

We shall not look before and after.
We shall *be*, *now*.
We shall know in full.
We, the mystic NOW. (CP 268)

Jacqueline Brogan uses music to compass Stevens:

³⁴⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) 122-23.

³⁴⁸ Adorno, *Dialectics* 109, 110.

Even if the mysterious and paradoxical nature of the "relation" that Stevens creates in his poetry is something that we cannot fully "understand," still it is felt "like a sense." More importantly, there is music in this relation, so that even if it does resist understanding, its mystery does not remain a "mystery of silence."³⁴⁹

Wittgenstein, Frye, Adorno, Lawrence, and Brogan do not attempt to define music; like the ideal audience, it floats by on the commonsense inferential network of what its *is-ness* is. Music, for Stevens, is simply feeling in all its complexity of definition. Music is "not balances/ That we achieve but balances that happen,/ As a man and woman meet and love forthwith" (CP 386). Music, the "romantic intoning, the declaimed clairvoyance . . . differ[s] from reason's click-clack" (CP 387) as the hero, "Compelled . . . by an innate music" (CP 277), differs from abstract major man, "He comes . . . from reason" (CP 387-88). Reason produces allegory; music produces intensity which allows one to subsume reason and play tunes "beyond us, yet ourselves/. . . Of things exactly as they are" (CP 165), wherein the "mind/ Turns to its own figurations and declares/. . . *I compose myself* (CP 246):

As if the eye was an emotion,
As if in seeing we saw our feeling
In the object seen and saved that mystic
Against the sight, the penetrating,
Pure eye. Instead of allegory,
We have and are the man, capable
Of his brave quickenings, the human
Accelerations that seem inhuman. (CP 278-79)

Music is "Beneath, far underneath, the surface of/ His eye and audible in the mountain of/ His ear, the very material of his mind" (CP 403). It composes the force which aligns the gaps of betweenness formed by dialectical process into counterpointed relations (symbols) which produce meaning in the form of feeling allowing one "to

³⁴⁹ Jacqueline Brogan, *Stevens and Simile* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 158.

include the things/ That in each other are included, the whole,/ The complicate, the amassing harmony" (CP 403). The whole, complicated harmonic picture that Stevens's poetry tries to make one feel is an angagogic sense of the desiring self as relatively expressed within and as the mind's abstracting site of perceptual conceptualization. The object of such expression is human feeling: "To speak humanly from the height or from the depth/ Of human things, that is acutest speech" (CP 300). To reduce content (objective world) down into contingencies of relative feeling is not, however, to deny content at the forming expense of an idealized feeling self, it is rather to say expansively "That the whole world is material for poetry./ That there is not a specifically poetic material" (OP 189).

The 'mysterious' 'irrational' knowledge afforded by poetry provides, Stevens believes, the ethical value that reason never quite delivers: a sense of perfect place, the *feeling* that one has found a true home, or at least a place where one can "be complete in unexplained completion" (CP 512). Feeling becomes paramount because poetic language, in Stevens's musical conception of the causal universe, is always subject to the "unwritten rhetoric" of shifting relation (improvisation swings on grammar's wings). Stevens reduces this theme to three back-to-back lines in the *Adagia*: "Poetry must be irrational./ The purpose of poetry is to make life complete in itself./ Poetry increases the feeling for reality" (OP 188). Another successive pair of *Adagia* quotes reinforces the relation: "Poetry is the statement of a relation between a man and the world./ The feeling or the insight is that which quickens the words, not the other way around" (OP 197). Quickness for Stevens ("quick" (CP 435), "quickenings" (CP 278), "quicknesses" (CP 451), etc.) functions as it does for Lawrence as an intensity marker of life itself. Intensity qualifies (and quantifies) feeling. Intensity is created by the willful re-arranging of the relations between things in the objective world. Language, word for word, provides the currency for the subjective construction of home:

There it was, word for word,
The poem that took the place of a mountain.

He breathed its oxygen,
Even when the book lay turned in the dust of his table.

It reminded him how he had needed
A place to go to in his own direction,

How he had recomposed the pines,
Shifted the rocks and picked his way among clouds,

For the outlook that would be right,
Where he would be complete in an unexplained completion:

The exact rock where his inexactnesses
Would discover, at last, the view toward which they had edged,

Where he could lie and, gazing down at the sea,
Recognize his unique and solitary home.

(CP 512)

Whatever the era -- Cicero, Augustine, Mill, Foucault -- all assume the audience, where 'one' elides to 'we', to be *there*, the ideal human constant. This constant, however, has never been free of the mind/body problem instigated by Platonic distrust of the 'ecstatic' powers of nature as accessed through poetic manipulation of the senses.³⁵⁰ The argument continues: Jameson's twentieth-century dismissal of organicism still cannot overcome the material fact that the sun as a pure referent has outlasted Plato and will outlast any informed dialogue of the current ironic age. "The sun, I tell you, is alive, and more alive than I am, or a tree is," says Lawrence, "The sun is every sun that ever has been, Helios or Mithras, the sun of China or of Brahma, or of Peru or of Mexico: great gorgeous suns, besides which our puny 'envelope of

³⁵⁰ Frequently overlooked and undervalued in the Platonic dialogical labyrinth is the Greek organicism that attracted Nietzsche and Lawrence. Adorno, making one of many ontological distinctions in *Negative Dialectics*, touches on its appeal: "The ambiguity of the Greek words for 'being' -- an ambiguity that dates back to the Ionians' failure to distinguish between materials, principles, and the pure essence -- is not listed as a defect but as original superiority. Its mission is to heal the concept 'Being' of the wound of its conceptuality, of the split between thoughts and their content" (70).

incandescent gas' is a smoky candle-wick. . . The sun is to us what we take from it. And if we are puny, it is because we take punily from the superb sun" (*RDP* 236, 229, 230). Is there an ideal audience to which one can defer performative judgments? Is it the visible sun or the imagined city on a hill? Stevens recommends that one "Trace the gold sun about the whitened sky/ Without evasion by a single metaphor.

Look at it in its essential barrenness
And say this, this is the centre that I seek. . .

It is the natural tower of all the world,
The point of survey, green's green apogee. . .
Axis of everything, green's apogee

And happiest folk-land, mostly marriage hymns. . .
Here the sun,
Sleepless, inhales his proper air, and rests.
This is the refuge that the end creates.

It is the old man standing on the tower,
Who reads no book. His ruddy ancientness
Absorbs the ruddy summer and is appeased,
By an understanding that fulfils his age,
By a feeling capable of nothing more.

(*CP* 373-74)

Of course, Lawrence and Stevens imply, one cannot look at the sun without metaphor (unless a pert ball of gas is enough). Passion demands one honestly record the flaming manes that swirl from the centre of things. Abstraction demands you keep things tethered to what the city elders deem appropriate. It seems the more direct and passionate (intense) the utterance, the more unsocializable it becomes by virtue of the individualized interior context of the performance itself. "Art is a passion," Wilde declares, "and, in matters of art,

Thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is fluid rather than fixed...
There are two ways of disliking art. One is to dislike it. The other, to like it rationally. For Art, as Plato saw, and not without regret, creates in listener

and spectator a form of divine madness. . . It is too splendid to be sane. Those of whose lives it forms the dominant note will always seem to the world to be pure visionaries."³⁵¹

"Language and science abbreviate reality, while art intensifies it,"³⁵² Adams quotes when studying Cassirer. Frye adds that "all intensified language sooner or later turns metaphorical, and that literature is not only the obvious but the inescapable guide to higher journeys of consciousness."³⁵³ "Reading so intensely in one world puts us on the threshold of another, finer domain,"³⁵⁴ Altieri signals. "It is an element of revelation," Wilde determines, "If you wish to understand others [artists] you must intensify your own individualism."³⁵⁵ The poet "beholds intensely," says Shelley, noting that poetry's "language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension . . . if no new poets should arise to create afresh . . . language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse."³⁵⁶ Intensity as a literary marker of the very *something* literature claims to be its essential characteristic is subject to what Adams calls the "hegemony of language"³⁵⁷ whereby consciousness realizes its perpetual quest for realization (freedom) cannot transcend the determinate traces of linguistic process. Linguistically, intense artist and dispassionate critic both play with the same cards, just slightly different games, as Frye likes to remind, "In literature the creative structure is normally produced by an individual, criticism represents the forming of a social consensus around it."³⁵⁸ Altieri, examining hegemonic seams within language's representational

³⁵¹ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist in Essays by Oscar Wilde*, ed. Hesketh Pearson (London: Methuen, 1950) 167, 168.

³⁵² Hazard Adams, *Antithetical Essays in Literary Criticism and Liberal Education* (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1990) 216.

³⁵³ Northrop Frye, *Words With Power: Being a Second Study of "The Bible and Literature"* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) 28.

³⁵⁴ Altieri, *Painterly* 356.

³⁵⁵ Wilde, *Essays* 143.

³⁵⁶ Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, qtd. in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald Reiman (New York: Norton, 1977) 482.

³⁵⁷ Adams, *Antithetical* 227.

³⁵⁸ Frye, *Words* 28.

practices, uses Wittgenstein to position “a principle for extending the life of the deep subject into the flux of the quotidian.”³⁵⁹ This deep subject is the will, the nonobjective “I”, which Wittgenstein claims remains “deeply mysterious,”³⁶⁰ and of whose positionality, Adams says, “if there is an object beyond this symbolic form [language], one cannot know it anymore than one can know the Kantian thing-in-itself, which always remains hidden behind the understanding’s operations.”³⁶¹ There is no object behind understanding, there is only the supra-rational flux of creative power,³⁶² which, for Lawrence, is why language, like the body, is a means and not an end for connecting to life. Stevens gestures towards the same in “Not Ideas about the Thing, but the Thing Itself” (CP 534). Language is everything only so far as it remains connected to the unknown. Intensity in artistic disciplines is ruled by ‘rightfulness’ of absolute intelligence (rightfulness=eloquence= second order aesthetic hegemony as confirmed by feeling). The more intense the subject, the more outspoken the absolute. The object of literature, like science, is to make inroads into the the unknown, into what Lawrence calls “Terra Incognita”:

There are vast realms of consciousness still undreamed of
vast ranges of experience, like the humming of unseen harps,
we know nothing of, within us.
Oh when man has escaped from the barbed-wire entanglement

³⁵⁹ Altieri, *Painterly* 350. A more extended elaboration appears in “Wittgenstein and the Nature of Linguistic Signs,” *Act and Quality*, 23-52.

³⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, qtd. in Altieri’s *Painterly* 350.

³⁶¹ Adams, *Antithetical* 227.

³⁶² This point is made in agreement with Coleridge’s essay “The Meaning of Existence”: “To no class of *phaenomena* or particulars can it be referred, itself being none; therefore, to no faculty by which these alone are apprehended. As little we dare refer it to any form of abstraction or generalization; for it has neither co-ordinate nor *analogon*; it is absolutely one; and that it is, and affirms itself to be, is its only predicate. And yet this power, nevertheless, is; — in supremacy of being it is; — and he for whom it manifests itself in its adequate idea, dare as little arrogate it to himself as his own, can as little appropriate it either totally or by partition, as he can claim ownership in the breathing air, or make an inclosure in the cope of heaven. He bears witness of it to his own mind, even as he describes life and light: only as far as we dwell in it. The truths which it manifests are such as it alone can manifest, and in all truth it manifests itself. By what name then canst thou call a truth so manifested? Is it not a revelation? . . . What must we infer? Even this; — that the object and subject are one . . . and that the antithesis of truth and being is but the result of the polarizing property of all finite mind, for which unity is manifested only by correspondent opposites.” Qtd. in *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge*, ed. Donald Stauffer (USA: Random House, 1951) 520-21.

of his own ideas and his own mechanical devices
 there is a marvellous rich world of contact and sheer fluid beauty
 and fearless face-to-face awareness of now-naked life
 and me, and you, and other men and women
 and grapes, and ghouls, and ghosts and green moonlight
 and ruddy-orange limbs stirring the limbo
 of the unknown air, and eyes so soft
 softer than the space between the stars,
 and all things, and nothing, and being and not-being
 alternately palpitant,
 when at last we escape the barbed-wire enclosure
 of *Know Thyself*, knowing we can never know,
 we can but touch, and wonder, and ponder, and make our effort
 and dangle in a last fastidious fine delight
 as the fuchsia does, dangling her reckless drop
 of purple after so much putting forth
 and slow mounting marvel of a little tree.
 (CP 666-67)

The subject of literature, unlike science, is an illustration of what human's choose to call home. In "Traveling Theory" Said, quoting Lentricchia, challenges Frye's notion of what the primal human will-to-work sets as its goal:

"The primal human act in Frye's system," writes Frank Lentricchia in *After the New Criticism*, quoting Frye's *The Educated Imagination*, "and a model for all human acts, is an 'informative' creative act which transforms a world that is merely objective, set over against us, in which we 'feel lonely and frightened and unwanted' into a home." But most literary scholars find themselves now, once again, out in the cold.³⁶³

Said misreads Frye by inferring that he suggests literature could provide a home in which to take theological shelter from the world of secular objectivity. Yet Said's laudatory assessment of Auerbach's *Mimesis* in "Secular Criticism" hinges on the very principle he dismisses in Frye: displacement = exile = longing for home. Said asks the reader to look at "the notion by which during a period of displacement someone

³⁶³ Said, *World* 227-28.

like Auerbach in Istanbul could feel himself to be out of place, exiled, alienated.”³⁶⁴ This displacement breeds an intellectual tension in which the “the range of meanings and ideas conveyed by the phrases *belonging to or in a place*, being *at home in a place*. . . has its fullest realization.”³⁶⁵ And where does Auerbach look for the sense of belonging to a place, of home? In literature, in the stories that inform Western culture. Stories are the most effective structures which vehicle humans in their search for meaning; meaning itself, for real individual secular humans, being proportioned by their perception to how they fit in to the big story -- the actuality -- of the world.³⁶⁶ It is no surprise that Joseph Campbell’s work commands a greater secular audience at present than any other career-academic intellectual; he tells a great story of the great story. Regardless of how suspect Said might view the monocentrism of Campbell, people in search of what it is to be “human” in the “largest humane sense”³⁶⁷ (Said’s own critical base referent) utilize myth (stories) more than analytic criticism when attempting to ascertain their place in the world. However, Said would point out that one would have problems adding “intellectual” and “ethical” to the mix, as myths tend to explain, like palliative religions, rather than question and actively lead the direction critical consciousness should take in its will to work, in its force, in its own “inevitable trajectory”³⁶⁸ into the world of the intelligible. It is interesting, in terms of intellectual endeavor sustaining a world position without a monocentric theory, mythic or analytic, to note Said mentioning “that few of the anthropologists who are read outside anthropology make a secret of the fact that they wish that anthropology . . . might be more literary in style and awareness or that . . . cultural poetics take a more

³⁶⁴ Said, *World* 8.

³⁶⁵ Said, *World* 8.

³⁶⁶ Jan Gorak comments how “writers from Ricoeur to Kermode have been intrigued by the idea that a canon can operate as a total narrative, a work of art made out of other works of art that tries to tell the ‘whole story’ about the origins and transmission, the interrelationships between, and the final worth of a culture’s valued works.” *The Making of the Modern Canon* (London: Athlone, 1991) 254-55. As one reads through his listing of various attacks on the canon, it becomes evident that the crux of most anti-canonist complaints turns on the fact that the ‘all-inclusive’ story didn’t include them.

³⁶⁷ Said, *World* 155.

³⁶⁸ Said, *World* 26.

central role in their research than . . . classification.”³⁶⁹ In short, there are scientists who need a story line to tie their particular pursuits up with the world. Said claims this need has prompted a “major cultural convergence”³⁷⁰ around the status of “narrative” in the human and social sciences. Frye considers the primary creative human act to be a manifestation of the desire for meaning, a desire that translates into actuality as the need for a story -- a narrative -- which, as stories multiply and intersubjectively inform social order, provides humans with an individualized sense of place, of home. It is in such a capacity that the Bible, a story of all things, functions -- it provides a story frame, a typological paradigm with which to classify texts. To classify the need for home as universal, however, does not necessarily imply that one is a utopitarian. Frye doesn’t believe worldwide emancipation could occur completely, as he states at the close of *The Critical Path*. Instead, such ideas function as myths of concern which inform human endeavor, however realistic or idealistic such endeavor may choose to be. These myths are the troping forces behind the structures of the narratives that bind culture, stories whose traces form the Moha map which continually points towards home. “To be human is to tell stories about ourselves and other human beings,” confirms Siebers after treadmilling through Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Girard, Foucault, Derrida, de Man, and others, as he concludes *The Ethics of Criticism*: “The finally human is literature.”³⁷¹

The general impulse of storytelling and homemaking is made specific, Lawrence theorizes, through polarizing contact (light/darkness, subject/object, male/female, eternal Origin--> <--eternal End, known/unknown, etc.). The individual becomes the cross, whose identity (story) unfolds as a power relation between the unknowable creative force and all other stories (history). Lawrence’s individualism, with its cosmo/ontological emphasis on ‘life itself’ and dependence on sexual otherness, is often dismissed or attacked for being escapist or sexist. But, as Joyce Carol Oates notices,

³⁶⁹ Said, “Colonized” 208.

³⁷⁰ Said, “Colonized” 221.

³⁷¹ Siebers, *Ethics* 240.

Lawrence's view of the progressive human landscape does not feature a flight into 'easy' paganism (as Eliot charged) or submission of the female will:

Like Connie Chatterly and her lover Mellors, the surviving couple of *Women in Love* must fashion their lives in a distinctly unmythic, unidyllic landscape, their fates to be bound up closely with that of their civilization. How are we to escape history? -- defy the death-process of our culture? With difficulty. In sorrow. So long as we live, even strengthened as we are by the "mystic conjunction," the "ultimate unison" between men and women, our lives are tempered by the ungovernable contingencies of the world that is no metaphor, but our only home.³⁷²

The poetics of Lawrence and Stevens dramatize male/female mutuality by assigning qualities to constructive energy as it moves from the unknown to the demonstrative arena of consciousness. At the center is primordial masculine energy, the red man, "glowing as of god, vermillion" (CP 689), who is surrounded by circumferential feminine dark otherness, "Night, the female,/ Obscure,/ Fragrant and supple" (CP 73). Broadly, reflection is feminine in that it holds and seeks completion; construction is masculine in that it proceeds blow by blow (image to image) valuing newness over resolution. Green is the color of successful complementation: "Against gold whipped reddened in big-shadowed black,/ Her vague 'Secrete me from reality,'/ His 'That reality secrete itself,'/ The choice is made. Green is the orator/ Of our passionate height. He wears a tufted green,/ And tosses green for those for whom green speaks" (CP 309). Green is adjectival power, as in "Poem Written at Morning" where Stevens states that the "senses paint by metaphor" and shows how description can intensify a pineapple to where its "juice was fragranter/ Than wettest cinnamon./ It was cribled pears/ Dripping a morning sap" as

The truth must be
That you do not see, you experience, you feel,

³⁷²Joyce Carol Oates, "Lawrence's Gotterdammerung: The Apocalyptic Vision of *Women in Love*," *Contraries: Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 169-70.

That the buxom eye brings merely its element
 To the total thing, a shapeless giant forced
 Upward.

Green were the curls upon that head.
 (CP 219)

The shapeless giant of creativity reappears in "A Primitive Like an Orb" where he "is an abstraction given head,/ A giant . . . / At the centre on the horizon . . . patron of origins" (CP 443). The poem's final summation presents the vibrational sense of Stevens's aesthetic -- language and the world mutually informing the curl of creation:

That's it. The lover writes, the believer hears,
 The poet mumbles and the painter sees,
 Each one, his fated eccentricity,
 As a part, but part, but tenacious particle,
 Of the skeleton of the ether, the total
 Of letters, prophecies, perceptions, clods
 Of color, the giant of nothingness, each one
 And the giant ever changing, living in change.
 (CP 443)

Green also signals connection in Lawrence. From atom to woman, the source of his creative power is denoted with organic imagery:

Peace I have from the core of the atom, from the core of space,
 and grace, if I don't lose it, from the same place.
 And I look shabby, yet my roots go beyond my knowing,
 deep beyond the world of man.
 And where my little leaves flutter highest
 there are no people, nor ever will be.

Yet my roots are in a woman too,
 and my leaves are green with the breath of human experience.
 (CP 499)

Among modernists, Stevens and Lawrence were more authentic as philosophers in the conscious sense of forcing their art to pursue ultimate ends of circumferentiality (*The*

Crown, "Primitive Like an Orb"). As artists their philosophies never achieve supreme consolidation due to their advantaging of feeling over reason which corresponds to their viewing history/culture as secondary (by-product) to the immediate holiness of the *present* sense of life itself. Life itself -- Stevens's "the real" and Lawrence's "living darkness" -- directs them to work out formal aesthetics in conjunction with life's green demonstrative child: nature. "Genius . . . advertises us that it flows out of a deeper source . . . because it is itself a mutation of the thing it describes," Emerson writes when considering "the method of nature. Let us see that, as nearly as we can, and try how far it is transferable to the literary life."³⁷³ Lawrence includes an examination of the reverse process in *St. Mawr*, where Louise Witt wonders if nature's methodology could be incorporated into the text of the body:

"But think, mother, if only we could get our lives from the source, as the animals do, and still be ourselves. . . A pure animal man would be as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath. And he'd be part of the unseen. . . And he'd never cease to wonder, he'd breathe silence and unseen wonder, as the partridges do, running in the stubble. . ."

"There are no such men," said Mrs. Witt, with a certain grim satisfaction.
(SM 50-51)

Lawrence would agree with Emerson's assessment that "We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of the birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and the tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine."³⁷⁴ Lawrence looks to the looks of animals for the testimonial gleam of entities in direct non-mental contact with the creative dark: "Only *St. Mawr* gave her some hint of the possibility . . . in his dark eye, that looked, with its cloudy brown pupil, a cloud within a dark fire, like a world beyond our world, there was a dark vitality glowing, and within the fire, another sort of wisdom" (SM 26). Lawrence's depiction of animals

³⁷³ Emerson, *Nature* 208, 189.

³⁷⁴ Emerson, *Nature* 69.

varies throughout his work; from the contrived analogies of *The Fox*, to the unanimously appreciated descriptive portraits in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, to the direct symbolism of *St. Maur*, to the little asides in *Kangaroo*³⁷⁵ and chapter motifs in *Women in Love* ("Mino", "Rabbit"), all serve to denote/connote an organicism based on being "in touch" with life itself as the "animals remain always in touch" (AP 173). Typically cast against animal awareness are "the men that sit in machines/ among spinning wheels. . ./ going which goes not/ and doing which does not/ and being which is not" (CP 711). Lawrence calls mechanical action "grey evil, which has no path, and shows neither light nor dark,/ and has no home" (CP 712). Lawrence re-intones his highest charge against the machine age for rendering man's labor away from its most primal impulse -- to build a home -- and for encasing mankind in spaces that have no human-animal sense of a dwelling: "Evil has no home,/ only evil has no home" (CP 711). Lawrence's organicism, while sharing the natural process wonder of Emerson and Thoreau, is more strident because it insists on developing a *felt* relationship with the cosmos. Stevens is more Emersonian in his preference for merely transferring nature (real) into literary sublimation (unreal): "Whistle/ For me, grow green for me and, as you whistle and grown green,/ Intangible arrows quiver and stick in the skin/ And I taste at the root of the tongue the unreal of what is real" (CP 313). For Lawrence, to grow green, is to accept the sun, for real:

My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. . . So that my individualism is really an illusion. I am a part of the great whole, and I can

³⁷⁵ "A girl he had met, a steamer-acquaintance, had given him a packet of little white extra-strong peppermint sweets. The animals liked them. The grizzly bear caught them and ate them with excitement, panting after the hotness of the strong peppermint, and opening his mouth wide, wide, for more. And one golden brown old-man kangaroo, with his great earth-cleaving tail and his little hanging hands, hopped up to the fence and lifted his sensitive nose quivering, and gently nibbled the sweet between Richard's finger. So gently, so determinedly nibbled the sweet, but never hurting the fingers that held it. And looking up with the big, dark, prominent Australian eyes, so aged in consciousness, with a fathomless, dark, fern-age gentleness and gloom. . . The gentle kangaroos, with their weight in heavy blood on the ground, in their great tail! It wasn't love he felt for them, but a dark, animal tenderness, and another sort of consciousness, deeper than human" (KG 380-81).

never escape. But I can deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched.

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen. (AP 110-11)

Knud Merrild, the Danish painter who lived and traveled with the Lawrences during their days in Taos, records that Lawrence "believed deeply that he was 'telling the truth, not merely an aesthetic truth that would satisfy any creative artist, but a truth that would solve all human problems at their source.'"³⁷⁶ But, as Lawrence details in "Prologue to *Women in Love*," such saviour-headedness could be trouble: "For once he decided a thing, it became a reigning universal truth to him, and he was completely inhuman. . . But every man has his own truths, and is honest with himself according to them" (PHII 101-02). The truths current with Lawrence in his last works were living off the land (small farm at the end of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*) and living off the sun (the cosmology of *Apocalypse*). Regarding the visionary aspect of *Apocalypse*, Abrams comments:

What Lawrence has done, in his unique and haunting rhetoric, is to revise the Scriptural account of the fall and apocalypse, as Blake had done before him, by accepting, as a literal truth of the imagination, the myth of the catastrophic division of the Primal Man who once did, and will again, incorporate heaven and earth and god and man -- a myth from which the metaphysics, psychology, aesthetics, economics, and sociology of alienation has been an elaborate but, as human history goes, a quite recent derivative.³⁷⁷

Lawrence, noting how "the three states of man, cosmic-religious, god-religious, and philosophic-scientific" have succeeded one another to arrive "at the end of the philosophic state," is not quite sure what form consciousness will incorporate itself

³⁷⁶ Knud Merrild, *A Poet and Two Painters: A Memoir of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Viking, 1939) 237.

³⁷⁷ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1973) 324.

into: "What next? We don't know" (AP 151). Lawrence suggests leaving "the way of question, and try to take again the older way of affirmation. We shall find that our mind now definitely moves in images, from image to image, and no longer is there a logical process, but a curious flitting motion from image to image according to some power of attraction, some sensuous association between images" (AP 166). For culture-making storytellers, the movement of images is how one controls the story line . . .

The processing of images is another phenomenon the machine age has overtaken -- no one contests the fact that television and cinema have 'rewired' consciousness. Theorists from McLuhan to Baudrillard have presented theories of the hyper-real in which a phrase like "human in the largest humane sense" could only be dimensioned in degrees of touchlessness. Lawrence also "went to the film, and saw all the black-and-white feelings that nobody felt,

and heard the audience sighing and sobbing with all the
emotions they none of them felt . . .
and caught them moaning from close-up kisses, black-and-white
kisses that could not be felt
It was like being in heaven, which I am sure has a white atmosphere
upon which shadows of people, pure personalities
are cast in black and white, and move
in flat ecstasy, supremely unfelt,
and heavenly. (CP 443-44)

Like Thoreau needing only to see the effects of one locomotive to sense the country-wide calamity it would spread, Lawrence sketches in 1922 -- decades before cineplexes or cable TV -- the modern effect of desensitization due to image overexposure in *Aaron's Rod*:

Then he clicked his way back to his bedroom, changed his shirt and combed his hair in the blue silk bedroom with the Greuze picture, and felt a little dim and superficial surprise. He had fallen into country house parties before, but never quite such a plushy sense of riches. He felt he ought to have his breath taken away. But alas, the cinema has taken our breath away so often, investing us in all the splendours of the splendidest American millionaire, or

all the heroics and marvels of the Somme or the North Pole, that life has now no magnate richer than we, no hero nobler than we have been, on the film. *Connu! Connu!* Everything life has to offer is known to us, couldn't be known better, from the film. (AR 163)

To have life as lived made secondary by exposure to images is Baudrillard's story line for his philosophy of simulacra. Pound's complaint that "philosophy produces no images" is reversed by Baudrillard's all-is-surface hyperreal thesis which works through previous orders of appearance (Renaissance and industrial revolution) to arrive in the present order, which he argues is ruled by the DNA code. Baudrillard provides an endpoint of sorts for Nietzsche's 'genetic' progression of cultural mediocrity by casting cultural fate in literal terms of the genetic code:

The religious, metaphysical or philosophical definition of being has given way to an operational definition in terms of the genetic code (DNA) and cerebral organization (the informational code and billions of neurons). We are in a system where there is no more soul, no more metaphor of the body -- the fable of the unconscious itself has lost most of its resonance. No narrative can come to metaphorize our presence; no transcendence can play a role in our definition; our being is exhausting itself in molecular linkings and neuronic convolutions.

This having been established, there are no more individuals, but only potential mutants. From a biological, genetic and cybernetic point of view, we are all mutants. Now, for mutants there can no longer be any Last Judgement, or resurrection, for what what body will one resurrect? It will have changed formula, chromosomes . . . it will no longer have any claim on its own image.³⁷⁸

Baudrillard thereby proclaims the final fall of the transcendental individual (noble man) into an Ulro of immanent commonality: "Transcendence has drawn its last breath. All that remains is the tension of immanence."³⁷⁹ Baudrillard's utter spectralization of the subject into the "hyperreal" of simulation might be -- even for

³⁷⁸ Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1988) 51.

³⁷⁹ Baudrillard, *Ecstasy* 55.

Nietzsche -- overdoing prophecy. Steve Shavero considers Baudrillard shallow and derivative of Benjamin, Bataille and McLuhan,³⁸⁰ yet, this would be taken as a compliment by Baudrillard for that is his precise cultural point: the more derivative (genetically progressed) the cultural product, the more immanently shallow (pure surface) it will be. Baudrillard in one sense could be construed a logical extension of 19th-century vegetable genius organicism in that he rewires "natural laws" with the DNA code. Schlegel's claim that the true philosopher sees everything "as an eternal becoming, an unintermitted process of creation" made intelligible as "a product which produces itself" in an "endless reciprocation, in which each effect becomes a cause of its cause,"³⁸¹ becomes the demonic transcendentalism of Baudrillard wherein human will is cast as a form of negative mutuality: "If the world is indifferent, let us be more indifferent. We must conquer the world and seduce it through an indifference that is at least equal to the world's."³⁸² Baudrillard's positing of causative power in the telos of "the code" and its attendant correlatives of "image immanence" and "seduction" would result in nothing more than panoptic idolatry according to Coleridge:

He [that] is inevitably tempted to misinterpret a constant precedence into positive causation, and thus to break and scatter the one divine and invisible life of nature into countless idols of the sense; and falling prostrate before lifeless images, the creatures of his own abstraction, is himself sensualized, and becomes a slave to the things of which he was formed to be the conqueror and sovereign.³⁸³

To be sovereign or slave was a Romantic question that became the modernist scuffle between noble action and the inevitable rise of mediocre man. Postmodernist posings of the question favor lop-sided approaches (deconstruction, Feminism, New historicism, Marxism, etc.) which cast human subjectivity in terms of systems whose

³⁸⁰ Steve Shavero, Padelford hallway conversation, UW, Seattle, 1988.

³⁸¹ August Wilhelm Schlegel, qtd. in Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Condition* (New York: Oxford UP, 1953) 212.

³⁸² Baudrillard, *Ecstasy* 101.

³⁸³ Coleridge, "Existence," *SPP* 522-23.

teleologies do not include 'noble' action as a possible permutation, rather, super-hybrid forms of irony or 'rigorous' de-personalized Formalism are keyed in as the only sites available for ascendant intellectual expression. The eclipse of the 'natural' human subject by the new historical man of mediocrity seems consolidated by the fact that the image-controlled worship of mere surface and its attendant short attention span presently control mainstream culture. Baudrillard provides the few notes necessary to inscribe the principles upon which float the Warholian soup cans and famous people's faces -- replicating images -- simulacra against which there is now no recognizable self to be shored up. Lawrence comments on modern 2-D compression in the poem "When I Went to the Circus" (which directly follows "When I Went to the Film"):

Modern people feel themselves at a disadvantage. They know they have no bodies that could play among the elements. They have only their personalites, that are best seen flat, on the film, flat personalities in two dimensions, imponderable and touchless. . .

Yet the strange, almost frightened shout of delight that comes now and then
from the children
shows that the children vaguely know how cheated they are
of their birthright
in the bright wild circus flesh.
(CP 446)

But Baudrillard's theory of simulation falsely leverages itself by claiming nature (DNA) to be mechanical, a machine he uses for the 'evil' purpose of proclaiming mankind subjectless (homeless). DNA is just a molecular form of the creative force, it is not ontological proof that life is ceilinged by a binomial (0/1) paradigm of two-dimensional expression. Stevens agrees: "Nature is not mechanical . . . its universe of reproduction is not an assembly line but an incessant creation" (NA 73). Altieri, when considering how "variety itself threatens any claims we might want to make for imaginative powers,"³⁸⁴ works through elaborate demonstrations of the imagination's abstractive

³⁸⁴ Altieri, *Painterly* 367.

ability to arrive at a Nietzschean acceptance of creative power (ultimately identifiable only as "strange and various forces") to where what "seemed fragments become elements for new constructive syntheses, and what seemed the denial of the mind's synthetic powers a means of recognizing the strange and various forces that in fact connect sensibilities to their objects and to other people."³⁸⁵ Like Lawrence's supra-rational affirmation of moving from image to image, sovereignty is determined through the exercise of powers which enslave those not intense enough to know the subset difference between necessity (history) and the creative unknown (nature). The interiorized individual vs the spectralized surface-only drudge -- a question of survival upon which Lawrence comments in "Self-Protection":

When science starts to be interpretive
it is more unscientific even than mysticism.

To make self-preservation and self-protection the first law
of existence
is about as scientific as making suicide the first law of existence,
and amounts to very much the same thing.

A nightingale singing at the top of his voice
is neither hiding himself nor preserving himself nor propagating his
species;
he is giving himself away in every sense of the word;
and obviously, it is the culmination point of his existence.

A tiger is striped and golden for his own glory.
He would certainly be much more invisible if he were grey-green.

And I don't suppose the ichthyosaurus sparkled like the
humming-bird,
no doubt he was khaki-coloured with muddy protective coloration,
so why didn't he survive?

As a matter of fact, the only creatures that seem to survive
are those that give themselves away in flash and sparkle
and gay flicker of joyful life;

³⁸⁵ Altieri, *Painterly* 370.

those that go glittering abroad
with a bit of splendour.

Even mice play quite beautifully at shadows,
and some of them are brilliantly piebald.

I expect the dodo looked like a clod,
a drab and dingy bird.

(CP 523)

The struggles between object/subject, real/unreal, feeling/thought, content/form, body/mind, etc., permutate into the greater 'between' of individual/community whose relation is the human story in its largest humane sense. Art offers space to those 'intense' enough to harness the 'unknowable' creative force who wish to transform (make new) Tradition or redress the mediocre commonality of transferrable culture (spent images). The drive to establish absolutes (Law, Truth, Beauty, etc.) resolves itself into systematic formulations, a drive which can be absolutized itself by reducing it to the assumption that everything is nothing more than an act of description. The cataloguing of description necessitates the critic's job; a primary task of criticism being how to ascertain the correctness/legality/veracity of description (feeling vs rational markers). All description folds into the cultural drive to create home through the art of telling stories (home is where the art is). How one tells a story is the 'how' which necessitates aesthetics, how one administers social orders is the 'how' which necessitates ethics. To be is to note difference, to be 'self-realized' is to impel difference to accept the hegemonic voice of personal passionate utterance. Heroics/ethics -- how should one act? Art is exemplifier; writing, an act of testifying which presents the manifold of possibilities of what is available to human agency. This agency/power is unknowable in terms of ontologically fixing it; it lives only in the creative mode on the tropological edge of the present upon the stage where imagination presents the stuff that we are made of: the ephemeral and tragically mutable, the ephemeral and eternally fixed traces of the purely human, the subject which always has been the

center of intellectual energy -- the audience -- the subject whose only objective is to hear the story of itself:

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
 It has to face the men of the time and to meet
 The women of the time. It has to think about war
 And it has to find what will suffice. It has
 To construct a new stage. It has to be on that stage
 And, like an insatiable actor, slowly and
 With meditation, speak words that in the ear,
 In the delicatest ear of the mind, repeat,
 Exactly, that which it wants to hear, at the sound
 Of which, an invisible audience listens,
 Not to the play, but to itself, expressed
 In an emotion as of two people, as of two
 Emotions becoming one. The actor is
 A metaphysician in the dark. . .
 (CP 240)

Stevens's "Of Modern Poetry" relates what he considers to be the active element of modernity of any age -- an audience listening to itself. This listening in the "delicatest ear of the mind" requires a plasticity which Altieri identifies (via Wittgenstein) as that "model of agency that cannot be represented by any form of rational or perspectival thought . . . the self . . . [that] can described only by the life that is lived in the scenes that it composes."³⁸⁶ Life as it was lived by Stevens and Lawrence can be tracked as Romantic in that the subject of their art remained organically bound to "Life itself", a process that belongs to "the Romantic tradition obsessed with defining a 'reality' that is inseparable from the qualities of voice that apprehend it,"³⁸⁷ an aesthetic which operates idealistically on the reality of feeling. Ideality, if not necessarily a movement towards freedom, is at least a maneuvering of intentionality towards greater scopes of 'realizations', of choices to construct meaning, of championing the primordial work/desire/energy center of basic human activity as that constitutive power which

³⁸⁶ Altieri, *Painterly* 349-50.

³⁸⁷ Altieri, *Painterly* 63.

determines the limits of its home or reality such that coercive/oppressive systems which efface the human subject are not invariable givens of existence but rather manifestations of the weak/corrupt/fallen side of human abilities to deliver themselves into the world of their own choosing. Choice remains the valued/privileged variable in either system.

The life of the artist and life as lived -- in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell in the fateful year of 1915, Lawrence offers a beautiful summation:

I see Van Gogh so sadly. If he could only have set the angel of himself clear in relation to the animal of himself, clear and distinct but always truly related, in harmony and union, he need not have cut off his ear and gone mad. But he said, do you remember -- about "in the midst of an artistic life the yearning for real life remains -- *one offers no resistance, neither does one resign oneself*" -- he means to the yearning to procreate oneself "with other horses, also free." This is why he went mad. He should either have resigned himself and lived his animal "other horses" -- and have *seen if his art would have come out of that* -- or he should have resisted, like Fra Angelico. But best of all, if he could have known a great humanity, where to live one's animal would be to create oneself, *in fact, be the artist creating a man in living fact* (not like Christ, as he wrongly said) -- and where the art was the final expression of the created animal or man -- not the be-all and being of man -- but the end, the climax. And some men would end in artistic utterance, and some wouldn't. But each one would create the work of art, the living man, achieve that piece of supreme art, a man's life.³⁸⁸

(L, Vol. II, 298-99)

³⁸⁸ Lawrence quotes from the following statement by Van Gogh: "In the midst of an artistic life there arises again and again the yearning for *real* life, which remains an unrealizable ideal. . . . One feels exactly like an old cab horse, and one knows that one must always return to the same old shafts when all the while one would so love to live in the fields, in the sun, near the river, in the country, with other horses, also free, and have the right to procreate one's kind. And I should not be at all surprised if this were whence the heart trouble comes. One offers no resistance, neither does one resign one's self." Qtd. in (L, Vol. II, 298).

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