

⁴ For a discussion of Stevens' seasonal cycle, see Kenmode, pp. 34-37.

⁵ Section IX of this poem, however, reaches in the opposite direction, toward order.

⁶ See Northrop Frye, "The Realistic Oriole," *Hudson Review*, X (Fall 1957), 363, who comments that Stevens' poetry tries to annihilate "the sense of contrast or great gulf fixed between subject and object, consciousness and existence." N. P. Stallknecht, "Absence in Reality," *Kenyon Review*, XXI (Fall 1959), 545, notes that Stevens celebrates the unity of mind and nature as in the Romantic tradition.

⁷ *Philosophy, The Journal of the British Institute of Philosophy*, XXI (July 1946), 147-66. Essentially the same statement is found in NA, p. 96. See Joseph N. Riddel, "The Authorship of Wallace Stevens' 'On Poetic Truth,'" *MLN*, LXXVI (Feb. 1961), 126-29.

⁸ Abstracted by Stevens from H. D. Lewis' "On Poetic Truth." See n. 7. The passage is exactly apposite to Stevens.

⁹ "Man Carrying Thing." The same thought with slight variation is found in the "Adagia" (*OP*, p. 171).

¹⁰ See Yvor Winters, "The Hedonist's Progress," *In Defense of Reason* (Denver, no date), pp. 453-54, for a discussion of the history of this distinction in connection with Stevens.

¹¹ Stevens in *Explicator*, VII (Nov. 1948), Item 18.

¹² *Form and Value in Modern Poetry* (Garden City and New York, 1957), p. 222.

¹³ "Wallace Stevens: The World as Meditation," *Yale Review*, XLVII (Summer 1958), 517-36.

¹⁴ In terms of his theory Stevens uses abstraction to mean "a quality of being taken out, abstracted in the root sense" (Martz, "The World as Meditation," p. 531); "artificial in its proper sense, something constructed rather than generalized" (Frye, p. 365). An abstraction in this sense is an artificial construction of elements selected from reality.

¹⁵ Stevens uses the phrase in relation to section XX. See my analysis of that section.

¹⁶ The attempt to define this experience was suggested by J. V. Cunningham, who took note of it in "Tradition and Modernity: Wallace Stevens" (formerly published in *Poetry*, LXXV [Dec. 1949], 149-65), *Tradition and Poetic Structure* (Denver, 1960), pp. 122-23.

¹⁷ See Miller, pp. 157-61, for a discussion of Stevens' perception of being.

¹⁸ For an account of the dynamic relation between these two terms of the experience, see above, section iv.

II. Readings*

"The Paltry Nude Starts on a Spring Voyage" (*CP*, p. 5)

The nude is an emblematic figure of spring. There is a comparison between spring, in the first part of the poem, and a similar figure representing summer, in the latter part. Thus spring is "paltry," especially early spring, spring at the start of her voyage, as compared with the fullness of summer described later on. She, early spring, is without pomp—she is not imagined, like Botticelli's Venus, with a shell, but rather embarks on "the first-found weed"; nor is she imposing like an archaic deity, but silent, insubstantial. She, as we with the sparsity of spring, is discontent with her own paltriness: she desires the pomp of "purple stuff" (cloth), and is impatient with the staleness of winter ("salty harbors" as opposed to the excitement of the high sea—"bellowing," and "high interiors" with its suggestion of being enclosed by the sea and by high waves). The goddess of spring, she dominates everything ("touches the clouds") as she runs her seasonal course. But this is still meager compared to the fullness of summer, the nude of "a later day," who is "goldener," a center of pomp. The season is the servant of fate, and summer in particular is a servant who follows spring inexorably, tidying up its "scurry" ("scurry" in *Collected Poems* is a misprint) and comparatively wilder, lighter motion, making it "spick."

* The readings follow the order of *Collected Poems and Opus Posthumous*