

Stevens's Vision of Order
in
Ideas of Order

by

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After more than a decade since the publication of *Harmonium* (1923), Wallace Stevens published his next collection of poetry *Ideas of Order* in 1936. As the title indicates, *Ideas of Order* contains poems which particularly investigate various aspects of the ideas of order that Stevens thinks exist in human life and society. Influenced by the social and political anxiety and chaos of his age, Stevens's poetry reveals his persistent search for the ideal state of order. His search, however, is not focused on discovering any ideal order of society and politics. His attention is on investigating the meaning of imaginative order and revealing the original potentiality of human order. On the dust jacket of the 1936 Knopf edition of *Ideas of Order*, Stevens explains his idea of order:

We think of changes occurring today as economic changes, involving political and social changes. Such changes raise questions of political and social order.

While it is inevitable that a poet should be concerned with such questions, this book, although it reflects them, is primarily concerned with ideas of order of a different nature, as, for example, the dependence of the individual, confronting the elimination of established ideas, on the general sense of order; the idea of order created by individual concepts, as of the poet, in "The Idea of Order at Key West"; the idea of order arising from the practice of any art, as of poetry in "Sailing after Lunch."

The book is essentially a book of pure poetry. I believe that, in any society, the poet should be the exponent of the imagination of that society. *Ideas of Order* attempts to illustrate the role of the imagination in life, and particularly in life at present. The more realistic life may be, the more it needs the stimulus of the imagination. (997)

According to Stevens, *Ideas of Order* shows the conditions of established order, original order, and imaginative (aesthetic) order. In particular, for Stevens the role of the imagination in life is a central matter, and he tries to examine how it can help to produce the fresh vision of life. Actually, like T. S. Eliot, who put the conditions of contemporary ruinous society and culture into shards of images and tried to recombine them to discover any possibility for a recreation, Stevens examines how the ideas of imaginative order can be helpful in reforming and redefining the ideas of individuals, society, and culture. This essay will investigate these imaginative attempts of Stevens and try to show how Stevens bases his ideas of order on the ideas of poetic order.

The prototype of Stevens's ideas of order can be seen in *Harmonium*. For instance, "Anecdote of the Jar" (61) treats the problem of possible order in the orderless space of the wilderness. A jar, imaginatively viewed, can be the centerpiece of new order:

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

The jar becomes "a port in air," a space which is imaginative but has aesthetic order. It is a unique domain of imagination intact from any solid reality of facts. The jar can be a recreative center with its own order.

When Stevens decided to form *Ideas of Order*, he could not ignore the real aspects of established social and political order. In reality, what he tried most to do is to examine the true nature of the reality of the world and human life in search of potential order. He did not intend to look for moral or ethical order, but instead attempted to discover and describe the possibility of poetic order that is created imaginatively.

Ideas of Order deals, mainly, with several ideas of order: the order of history, religion, human life, the universe, and the imagination. The following discussion will examine each idea of order. It will be shown that Stevens's ideas of

order cannot be correctly viewed without considering the close relationship with the role of poetic imagination.

First, the idea of the order of history. Stevens was sensitive to the significance of history and tradition, and he tried to show how the past engaged in the present. Of course, no one can be free from a historical consciousness. The established order of the past has its own structure of order, which imposes itself on the present order, and Stevens feels it absolutely necessary to abolish it imaginatively and create a fresh vision of reality. His struggle with the past is described, for instance, in his words: "the past is dead" (97). A good example that shows Stevens's sense of the past is "Like Decorations in a Nigger Cemetery" (99). This poem presents in a incantatory tone the vision of the past and the birth of new order. Viewing the Whitmanesque unity of universal life, Stevens tries to discover the way to recreate his own imaginative world:

I

In the far South the sun of autumn is passing
 Like Walt Whitman walking along a ruddy shore.
 He is singing and chanting the things that a part of him,
 The words that were and will be, death and day.
 Nothing is final, he chants. No man shall see the end.
 His beard is of fire and his staff is a leaping flame . . .

V

If ever the search for a tranquil belief should end,
 The future might stop emerging out of the past,
 Out of what is full of us; yet the search
 And the future emerging out of us seem to be one.

Whitman's world is fertile and endless with the unity of all lives which are fused into the gigantic flow of the universal life. The sense of eternity lies in Whitman's world, but it is basically active, because it is always changing. Fundamentally, Whitman is a universal absorber, and for him the past and the future are united in the eternal flow of time. On the other hand, though attracted to Whitman, Stevens is more interested in the solid reality of individual life. Stevens is basically an individualist. Though he tries to expand his imagination to the extent that an individual's imagination becomes an attribute of a race, he does not aim to unite all people as almost erotically as Whitman. Fundamentally, Stevens tries to recreate a world with his pure and naked vision and to find, if

necessary, the germ of the future by revisioning the past. Stevens pays attention to the revelation of the spiritual and imaginative power of individuals:

VIII

Out of the spirit of the holy temples,
Empty and grandiose, let us make hymns
And sing them in secrecy as lovers do.

IX

In a world of universal poverty
The philosophers alone will be fat
Against the autumn winds
In an autumn that will be perpetual.

The world of the spirit is purified, and it will create a new world. From the “universal poverty,” Stevens’s poetic world is genuinely born.

Stevens’s understanding of the past and tradition is close to Eliot’s. In the essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), Eliot says that the past and tradition must be regained through efforts to make them alive for the future. The past must be learned constantly, and Stevens agrees that poetry is one of the ways to redeem the past. Eliot explains the relationship between the past and the future, touching on the relationship of order between the forms of the old and new arts:

... what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments from an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conforming between the old and the new. (15)

The mutual interaction between the old and the new is a constant process particularly in the development of art, and even the old order is modified to be incorporated into the new order. Stevens holds the same idea. In “Sailing After Lunch” (99), for example, comparing the old and new ideas of the romantic, he attempts a modification of the romantic imagination:

Mon Dieu, hear the poet's prayer.
The romantic should be here.
The romantic should be there.
It ought to be everywhere.
But the romantic must never remain,

Mon Dieu, and must never again return.
This heavy historical sail
Through the mustiest blue of the lake
In a really vertiginous boat
Is wholly the vapidest fake . . .

“Mon Dieu” probably refers to a muse of art, and Stevens prays in order to regain the true importance of the romantic. The past conventional idea of the romantic is dull and meaning less, and he insists on the true imaginative use of the romantic. The “heavy historical sail” is a fake, and the fresh romantic idea is needed to enhance the new imagination.

Besides the historical idea of order, Stevens has particular ideas about religious order. First, Stevens is critical of the orthodox and established order of Christianity. He fears most that the innate spiritual nature of human beings will be blinded or impaired by the bias of religion. In “Gray Stones and Gray Pigeons,” for instance, Stevens reveals his criticism of the despotic establishment of religion;

The archbishop is away. The church is gray.
He has left his robes folded in camphor
And, dressed in black, he walks
Among fireflies.

The bony buttresses, the bony spires
Arranged under the stony clouds
Stand in a fixed light.
The bishop rests.

He is away. The church is gray.
This is his holiday.
The sexton moves with a sexton's stare
In the air.

A dithery gold falls everywhere.
It wets the pigeons,

It goes and the birds go,
Turn dry,

Birds that never fly
Except when the bishop passes by,
Globed in today and tomorrow,
Dressed in his colored robes. (113-14)

Like W. B. Yeats's "Crazy Jane and the Bishop," the hardened bias of religion is contrasted with the innocent purity of nature. The light of heaven falls on the gray church, which, however, remains unchanging. Emily Dickinson likewise expressed her yearning yet fearful emotion toward the heavenly light: "There's a certain Slant of light" (#258). Stevens suggests that it is at least definitely important to open one's mind and be aware of the beauty of nature.

Living in the age that the Nietzschean concept of the death of God and the Darwinian deterministic idea of evolution were prevalent, Stevens followed the modern view of rationalism and could not believe in God. The rigid order of religion seemed to him to stifle the true and natural imaginative life of human beings. What is important is that instead of the religious order that he considered irrelevant to his age and himself, Stevens tried to find some other order that could replace the religious order. Stevens's idea of new order comes from the spiritual power of the mind, by which he believed that he could rebuild his world imaginatively. The following poem, "Waving Adieu, Adieu, Adieu" (104), is an example to show his idea:

That would be waving and that would be crying,
Crying and shouting and meaning farewell,
Farewell in the eyes and farewell at the centre,
Just to stand still without moving a hand.

In a world without heaven to follow, the stops
Would be endings, more poignant than partings, profounder,
And that would be saying farewell, repeating farewell,
Just to be there and just to behold.

To be one's singular self, to despise
The being that yielded so little, acquired
So little, too little to care, to turn
To the ever-jubilant weather, to sip

One's cup and never to say a world,
Or to sleep or just to lie there still,
Just to be there, just to be beheld,
That would be bidding farewell, be bidding farewell.

One likes to practice the thing. They practice,
Enough, for heaven. Ever-jubilant,
What is there here but weather, what spirit
Have I except it comes from the sun?

In an assertive and solemn tone, the poem brilliantly describes the situation of the mind that will become self-reliant in the godless world. The world must be rebuilt from the naked imagination of the mind. In "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" (444), a poem which appears in *The Rock* (1954), Stevens asserts that "God and the imagination are one." This equation of the imagination with God is Stevens's ultimate idea of poetry.

In "Botanist on Alp (No. 2)," likewise, Stevens displays the possibility of the birth of new order beyond the religious conflict between earth and heaven. From the servitude of orthodox traditions, how can a man be freed?:

The crosses on the convent roofs
Gleam sharply as the sun comes up.

What's down below is in the past
Like last night's crickets, far below.

And what's above is in the past
As sure as all the angels are.

Why should the future leap the clouds
The bays of heaven, brighted, blued?

Chant, O ye faithful, in your paths
The poem of long celestial death;

For who could tolerate the earth
Without that poem, or without

An earthier one, tum, tum-ti-tum,
As of those crosses, glittering,

And merely of their glittering,
A mirror of a mere delight? (110)

What reality will appear after the terrestrial and celestial ideas are discarded? The poem shows the possibility of the human order beyond the religious order; and the human order, Stevens believes, can replace religion. As Stevens says in "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" (47), "Poetry is the supreme fiction," and poetry can be the new order of salvation.

Stevens's idea of order also concerns the order of human life. According to Stevens, the idea of order is created by "individual concepts" (997), which, of course, includes the ideas of the basic nature of human desire and conditions. Above all, Stevens thinks that the human life is in constant changes, sometimes in order and at other times in disorder. And in these changes, man can assert his will and reason to organize his world. Stevens views that the human life contains the original power of self-reliance, which will help to outgrow bias and fixed ideas, and can acquire a fresh vision to recreate the world. "Evening Without Angels" (111-112), for instance, displays a possibility of such power:

Why seraphim like lutanists arranged
Above the trees? And why the poet as
Eternal *chef d'orchestre*?

Air is air.
Its vacancy glitters round us everywhere.
Its sounds are not angelic syllables
But our unfashioned spirits realized
More sharply in more furious selves.

And light
That fosters seraphim and is to them
Coiffeur of haloes, fecund jeweller
Was the sun concoct for angels or for men?
Sad men made angels of the sun, and of
The moon they made their own attendant ghosts,
Which led them back to angels, after death.

Let this be clear that we are men of sun
And men of day and never of pointed night,
Men that repeat antiques sounds of air
In an accord of repetitions. Yet,
If we repeat, it is because the wind
Encircling us, speaks always with our speech.

Light, too, encrusts us making visible
The motions of the mind and giving form
To moodiest nothings, as, desire for day
Accomplished in the immensely flashing East,
Desire for rest, in that descending sea
Of dark, which in its very darkening
Is rest and silence spreading into sleep.

. . . Evening, when the measure skips a beat
And then another, one by one, and all
To a seething minor swiftly modulate.
Bare night is best. Bare earth is best. Bare, bare,
Except for our own houses, huddled low
Beneath the arches and their spangled air,
Beneath the rhapsodies of fire and and fire,
Where the voice that is in us makes a true response,
Where the voice that is great within us rises up,
As we stand gazing at the rounded moon.

It is crucial to recognize that humans have the spiritual and independent power to reestablish their world. With the true naked vision of the reality of life, they can display their original spiritual power.

The most celebrated poem that illustrates the great idea of spiritual order is "The Idea of Order at Key West" (106). In this poem the outside natural and chaotic world is functionally viewed and reorganized with the formative power of the human spirit. In the profound gap between the human and inhuman worlds a woman's spirit moves and creates her own pure imaginative world through reorganizing her vision of the universe:

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing.
She measured to the hour its solitude.
She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker. Then we,
As we beheld her striding there alone,
Knew that there never was a world for her
Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
Why, when the singing ended and we turned

Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As the night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

The solitary singer creates her own world, singing in harmony with the voice of the sea, and she is the "single artificer of the world." The world is created only when it is imaginatively revisioned. What is important is that the created world has its own order, which originates from the spiritual order of the human will. Stevens pays attention to the point that a man has the original will or desire to organize the order of an imaginative world. The spirit in itself contains a "rage for order." And, for Stevens there is "order in neither sea nor sun" (100); likewise, "How full of exhalations of the sea . . . / All this is older than its oldest hymn, / Has no more meaning than tomorrow's bread" (117).

Whatever his perception of the universe may be, Stevens considers it important to have a particular relationship with it. He thinks that a sort of imaginative correspondence is necessary, and some universal order is possible to be created. This idea of correspondence, however, is different from the Romantic or Symbolistic proposition of correspondence, and for Stevens there is a clear division between the poetic spirit and the universe. Here is an example from "Academic Discourse at Havana" (115) to explain this matter:

But let the poet on his balcony
Speak and he sleepers in their sleep shall move,
Waken, and watch the moonlight on their floors.
This may be benediction, sepulcher,
And epitaph. It may, however, be
An incantation that the moon defines
By mere example opulently clear.
And the old casino likewise may define
An infinite incantation of our selves
In the grand decadence of the perished swans.

The incantation of the moon, though it changes its meaning according to a viewer, defines his imaginative vision. The moon shines as it does and influences the viewer to create a world. What is crucial is to have the imaginative power to be an originator of the world.

For Stevens the revelation of the naked self and its imaginative power is very important. The new world and the future must be created out of the truth of the mind, and the originality of imagination is most requisite in this creation. In "Mozart, 1935," for instance, Stevens displays the importance of the true voice of self:

Poet, be seated at the piano.
Play the present, its hoo-hoo-hoo,
Its shoo-shoo-shoo, its ric-a-nic,
Its envious cachinnation.

If they throw stones upon the roof
While you practice arpeggios,
It is because they carry down the stairs
A body in rags.
Be seated at the piano.

That lucid souvenir of the past,
The divertimento;
That airy dream of the future,
The unclouded concerto . . .
The snow is falling.
Strike the piercing chord.

Be thou the voice,
Not you. Be thou, be thou
The voice of angry fear,
The voice of this besieging pain.

Be thou that wintry sound
As of the great wind howling,
By which sorrow is released,
Dismayed, absolved
In a starry placating.

We may return to Mozart.
He was young, and we, we are old.

The snow is falling
And the streets are full of cries.
Be seated, thou.

The second stanza is difficult: does it evoke some kind of ritual procession or does it simply symbolize ushering the past outside to welcome the present inside? In any case, the point is that Stevens considers that the revelation of the personal voice is crucial in sloughing off the past and creating the future. "Be thou the voice," of course, reminds one of the voice of Shelleyan spiritual prophecy in "Ode to the West Wind": "Be thou, Spirit fierce, / My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!" (579). The great spiritual and true voice of self becomes the original center of the new world.

Thus, *Ideas of Order* presents various ideas of order; however, the most important idea of order for Stevens is the order of imagination. What is exactly the order of imagination? For Stevens it concerns the order of poetry. On the dust jacket of the Alcestis Press edition of *Ideas of Order* in 1935, Stevens touched on the role of imagination, saying: "I believe that, in any society, the poet should be the exponent of the imagination of that society. *Ideas of Order* attempts to illustrate the role of the imagination in life, and particularly in life at present. The more realistic life may be, the more it needs the stimulus of the imagination." The important point of this statement is that Stevens thinks it valid and ideal that a poet becomes the "exponent of the imagination" of a society. This means that the poetic order can be the order of society. The poetic order can be the standard of any art, such music, sculpture, painting. As Stevens says, *Ideas of Order* contains the "idea of order arising from the practice of any art."

Stevens's idea of the order of poetic imagination is multidimensional. He thinks that it exists in every aspect of the human life. The poetic imagination has its own aesthetic order, and Stevens tries to examine it. "Botanist on Alp (No. 1)," for instance, reveals his investigation of the order of the poetic imagination in connection with the order of painting:

Panoramas are not what they used to be.
Claude has been dead a long time
And apostrophes are forbidden on the funicular.
Marx has ruined Nature,
For the moment.

For myself, I live by leaves,
So that corridors of clouds,

Corridors of cloudy thoughts,
Seem pretty much one:
I don't know what.

But in Claude how near one was
(In a world that was resting on pillars,
That was seen through arches)
To the central composition,
The essential theme.

What composition is there in all this:
Stockholm slender in a slender light,
An adriatic *riva* rising,
Statues and stars,
Without a theme?

The pillars are prostrate, the arches are haggard,
The hotel is boarded and bare.
Yet the panorama of despair
Cannot be the specialty
Of this ecstatic air. (111)

Claude refers to Claude Lorraine (1600–82), a French painter, who is known for a unique and special use of light. Stevens was interested in the painter, who appears in Stevens's essay "The Relations between Poetry and Painting" (740; 743). In the essay, Stevens pays special attention to the role of the poetic imagination in arts, saying that there is "a universal poetry that is reflected in everything" (740) and that "there exists an unascertained and fundamental aesthetic, or order, of which poetry and painting are manifestations" (740). Claude's painting, Stevens believes, embodies this universal poetry. In the poem Claude aims at the "central composition" in his painting. The meaning of the composition is complex, though Stevens touches on it in "The Relations between Poetry and Painting": it refers to "the compositional use of words: the use of their existential meanings" (742). What he means is that either in painting or poetry it is very important to have the reality of existential significance. It is crucial whether a work of art contains the textual or verbal significance.

Stevens's idea of the order of poetic imagination is that poetry, imaginative as it may be, can be the real center of human life. Though it is already seen in the above that poetry can take the place of religion, Stevens also considers that poetry is possible to be the order of life. It can also be the order of belief and

peace. With respect to the idea of peace by art, Stevens writes in a letter to Ronald Lane Latimer (November 5, 1935), about the possible order of peace: "If poetry introduces order, and every competent poem introduces order, and if order means peace, even though that particular peace is an illusion, is it any less an illusion than a good many other things that everyone high and low now-a-days concedes to be no longer of any account?" (L. 293). The order of peace that poetry can provide, however illusive it may be, is very important and valuable. "Poetry is a finikin thing of air", but it is "radiantly beyond much lustier blurs" (125). The order of poetry is peace; and art creates peace.

Some of the modern poets who hold the same idea of peace by art are W. B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney. They are particularly interested in the function of art and in what poetry can do for society and culture. They believe that poetry can redeem the evils of society and that art brings peace. In the preface of his essays *Preoccupations*, Heaney cites Yeats's passage from *Explorations* in full agreement: "If we understand our own minds, and the things that are striving to utter themselves through our minds, we move others, not because we have understood or thought about those others, but because all life has the same root. Coventry Patmore has said, 'The end of art is peace,' and the following of art is little different from the following of religion in the intense preoccupation it demands" (14).

The other great point of Stevens's idea of the order of imagination is the order of the mythical imagination. In *Harmonium* the mythical imagination is not fully cultivated except the epic of personal myth "The Comedian as the Letter C." In this poem Crispin assumes a mythical grandeur, going through the voyage of the mythology of self. He reveals a colossal image of himself, becoming "an introspective voyager" (23), a "poetic hero" (28), "a sensualist" (29), and a "progenitor" of extensive scope (31). Crispin's grand image in the epic-like tale of his adventure truly evokes the splendor of mythology. Nevertheless, *Harmonium* does not focus on the cultivation of the mythological imagination. In *Ideas of Order*, however, the mythological imagination is well treated in a number of poems. Probably the most significant poem is "Academic Discourse at Havana." The third section of the poem will be quoted:

The toil
Of thought evoked a peace eccentric to
The eye and tinkling to the ear. Gruff drums
Could beat, yet not alarm the populace.

The indolent progressions of the swans
Made earth come right; a peanut parody
For peanut people.

And serener myth
Conceiving from its perfect plenitude,
Lusty as June, more fruitful than the weeks
Of ripest summer, always lingering
To touch again the hottest bloom, to strike
Once more the longest resonance, to cap
The clearest woman with apt weed, to mount
The thickest man on thickest stallion-back,
This urgent, competent, serener myth
Passed like a circus. (115-16)

In a beautiful resonant tone, the birth and change of a myth is depicted. The "serener myth," despite its airy but solid reality, affects the whole consciousness of the human world and disappears "like a circus," leaving the certitude of romantic joy and memory behind. A myth is a human creation, born out of the collective experiences of societal and cultural traditions. When the human experiences are narrated in allegorical stories, they tend to assume some kind of poetic aura. This poetic aura is real and influential. Roland Barthes says in his essay "Le Mythe, aujourd'hui" that a myth is "un système de communication, c'est un message" (a system of communication, it is a message) (685). For Barthes a myth has an independent structure of signification, which constantly influences a society and is simultaneously subject to change according to the transitions of the society. The relationship between the myth and society is mutual. Stevens's idea of myth, likewise, is formed through the verbalized structure of societal experiences, which he believes contains the order of poetry. The myth is a structure of poetic world, which conversely influences a society. Fundamentally, however, Stevens's idea of myth is distinctively romantic, and he tries to form the mythic order based on the romantic order of poetry.

A myth has a solid structure of ideas and is poetic, but it is not changeless. The poetic world of myth undergoes constant changes, and the order of poetry is likewise subject to change. Stevens believes that such changes are the necessities of life. In a letter to Ronald Lane Latimer (November 5, 1935), Stevens says, "The only possible order of life is one in which all order is incessantly changing" (*L.* 292). He asserts that order must be discovered in changes.

Stevens's concern with the ideas of order is persistent, and they are furthermore pursued in the collections after *Ideas of Order*. In *Parts of a World* (1942), he deals with the problems of order particularly in terms of the chaotic condition of modern human life. In "Connoisseur of Chaos" he says, for instance, "A violent order is disorder" and "A great disorder is an order" (194). This belief comes from his perception that life consists of changes in which a permanent order lies. What is particularly important is that he recognizes the chaotic disorder as a creative element. In other words, chaos is fertile in poetic imagination. In "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas," he says, "The law of chaos is the law of ideas, / Of improvisations and seasons of belief" (230). The chaos is a field where multiple ideas are fused, discarded, or transformed, and it functions as an incubator of poetic possibilities.

Stevens's ideas that disorder is order and that chaos is creative imply the enhancement of possibilities, reconstructing the deconstructed images of society and culture into a poetic myth. Unlike Eliot, however, Stevens's method focuses on the recreation of the imaginative realities of the world. He views the significance of the revision of the reality of the world, subverting the ordinary vision of the world, and tries to attain the ultimate pure and transparent vision for the recreation of the world. In Stevens's poetic world recreation is more emphasized than restructuring.

To conclude, Stevens's ideas of order in *Ideas of Order* divide into several groups: historical, religious, human, mythical, and imaginative. The historical order displays Stevens's sensitive perception of the contemporary world and tradition. Dealing with the established order of the past, he seeks for the possibility of fresh order. In the religious order, likewise, the fixed ideas of religions are reviewed and compared with the truth of the mind. Stevens believes that poetry as a supreme fiction can redeem what the modern sense of religion has lost.

As to the order of human life, Stevens's concern is not much with social or political order. What he is most interested in is to reveal the original, self-contained order of human capacity. In other words, the revelation of the true order of the human spirit and soul is Stevens's central matter. In the universe, he discovers the presence of what does not comply with the human life, but he tries to review and recreate imaginatively the reality of the universe.

In *Ideas of Order* the order of imagination is also a great subject. Stevens discovers the order of imagination that exists in the practice of any art. The

imagination is basically romantic, yet not fanciful, and it reveals the almost mythical power to redefine the reality of life, to create the order of peace, and to envision the future. Reexamining the meaning of the imagination, Stevens tries to show that the fresh order of the imagination will be exemplar to reform the modern world. Stevens is a genuine innovator.

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