

Stanley Cavell

Edited by

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Introduction: Between Acknowledgment and Avoidance

RICHARD ELDRIDGE

In an early essay, Stanley Cavell writes that the problem of the ordinary language philosopher – a problem from which he himself takes his bearings – is “to discover the specific plight of mind and circumstance within which a human being gives voice to his condition.”¹ What can this mean? What is a *plight of mind and circumstance*? How does *giving voice* constitute a response and address to a general human condition that is instanced in a specific way?

Since it is a *plight of mind* that is in question, it is already evident that Cavell must be concerned with something more than simply a physical or biological state of being a human being, even if the mind is itself inextricably lodged in both bodily and cultural circumstances. Nor is the problem of giving voice simply that of unburdening oneself of an idiosyncratic emotion: *giving voice* implies not brute discharge alone, but further a making intelligible of how the human condition is present in one who has been moved to speak. Nor will just any speech do; *giving voice* implies an achievement of expressiveness that is beyond the communication of bits of information about the material world.

Instead, to be moved to give voice to a plight of mind and circumstance – to manage that achievement – is to express a specific sense of just how, here and now, one’s human capacities for free and fluent voicing and action are somehow both enabled and inhibited by one’s culture and one’s life with others as they stand. One seeks, as Cavell elsewhere puts it, “freedom of consciousness, the beginning of freedom, . . . freedom of language, having the run of it, as if successfully claimed from it, as of a birthright.”² One seeks to have one’s performances – one’s uses of concepts in thought, in utterance, and in action, which are all internally related – be both one’s *own* as expressions of one’s independent personality and desire, against the sways of the common, and reasonably *endorsable*, by both others and oneself, as valuable expressions of common possibilities and necessities.

This is no small task, and Cavell emphasizes the persistence of the effort to achieve such expressiveness, as against both simpler, dogmatic recipes

for its achievement and (what he sees as) naturalist-quietist scantings of the adventure of the human. Rather than sketching and defending any definite account of human flourishing, Cavell notes that there are certain “arguments that must not be won” and that philosophy might be conceived of as “the achievement of the unpolemical, of the refusal to take sides in metaphysical positions.”³

This is not a refusal to take sides or to enact commitments as such, but rather “a refusal of, say, disobedient to, (a false) ascent, or transcendence”⁴ as a ground of commitment. Against false ascent, Cavell poses *philosophy as descent*, the necessary faithfulness of philosophy to the common and the ordinary, as the only available loci of repertoires of language, thought, conceptual life, and human action. But it is also true that “the (actual) everyday [is – or can be experienced as, for Cavell, following Wittgenstein –] . . . a scene of illusion and trance and artificiality (of need).”⁵ *Philosophy as ascent* is also called for. Hence what is pursued, in and through the pursuit of fully expressive action, aiming at exemplariness of voicing, is an eventual or transfigured ordinary, a fit common habitation for the human.

Since, however, one takes one’s own bearings and possibilities of thought, action, and expression from within the ordinary as it stands, as a scene of both possibilities and (false) necessities, of both affordances and inhibitions, it follows that philosophizing, the effort to enact more humanly expressive possibilities, will be “a spiritual struggle, specifically a struggle with the contrary depths of oneself.”⁶ One will find oneself, at times, pursuing a thought, vision, or course of action that is not generally shared, hence seeking abandonment of or departure from the common. But then one will also find oneself, at times, recoiling from the solipsistic madness of apocalyptic vision and returning to the common, accepting it as cure.⁷ Neither movement, in Cavell’s perception, can be complete or final. What is left, to adapt Dieter Henrich’s useful characterization of Friedrich Hölderlin’s stance, is the thought “that conscious life is at once shaped and unbalanced by the basic *conflicting* tendencies orienting it. And the formative process of life aims at finding a balance and a harmony amidst this strife, in which no one tendency is entirely suppressed or denied in its own right.”⁸ For Cavell, as for Hölderlin, these conflicting basic tendencies include at least the pursuit of independent selfhood and the pursuit of communion, community, love, and the common. Seeking both, one is left between *avoidance* (of others, of the common, of what is common with others in oneself, as decayed, vulgarized, inhibiting, and empty) and *acknowledgment* (of others, of the common, of what is common with others in oneself, as what alone enables thought, recovery, conversation, and restoration).

To find oneself in such a plight is, in Cavell's reading, central to what it is to be "a creature complicated or burdened enough to possess language at all."⁹ Not everyone will feel or accept this, will feel or accept the burden or complication of seeking expressive freedom and the run of language, thought, and action. The demands of daily life or of sheer survival are too pressing for some to notice this plight; others are reasonably distracted by scientific, political, artistic, intellectual, and other problems that are genuinely absorbing. But then it is also true that these problems themselves may include problems of human aspiration that touch on this plight of mind, that those who are pressed or absorbed in daily life may suffer from quiet desperation, silent melancholy, or distractedness, all covertly legible in their pursuits and entertainments, and that in certain nights of the soul a sense of this plight may come to consciousness, even if it is then often reasonably suppressed in the name of decency, work, or common life.

We come to language as something that is already there before us in the practices of our elders. The criteria for calling something what it is are there in practice before we are, and we cannot come to thought and linguistic practice without them. This fact has both positive and negative sides. "I have to accept [criteria], use them," if I am to enter into linguistic and conceptual practice at all, but "this itself makes my use of them seem arbitrary, or private – as though they were never shared, or as if our sharing of them is either a fantastic accident or a kind of mass folly."¹⁰ Their presence and availability in practice are not grounded for me in any kind of unmediated knowledge of ultimate realities and of the relation of words to them. If words and the criteria for their use then seem ungrounded or arbitrary, I can feel my own dawning powers in their exercise to be uncertain. My exercise of these powers may seem liable to drift away from others' and then to repudiation, and I can wish to do better. I can indulge in a fantasy of absolute power in my uses of (to me) primitive words, fully grounded in necessarily private acts of inner "recognition." Or I can indulge in a fantasy of powerlessness or "necessary inexpressiveness,"¹¹ in which my uses of words occur "according to laws of nature" in and through me, without implicating me in responsibility for their finding or missing understanding in any audience.

Yet these fantasies of cognitive omnipotence and of necessary inexpressiveness come to nothing, can't be worked out. "We cannot really imagine . . . , or rather . . . there is nothing of the sort to imagine, or rather . . . when we as it were try to imagine this we are imagining something other than we think."¹² The discovery of either private, perfect, absolute "inner recognitions" or fully law-governed natural processes in me cannot be stated

within ordinary language without returning us to the very scene of risks and responsibilities we had sought to escape. Ordinary criteria “*are* the terms in which *I relate what’s happening*,”¹³ and I must draw on them if I am to think and speak at all. This is not to deny that there can be innovations in language in the form of new technical terms or new turns of metaphor. It *is* to deny that language as such could have such bases in individual acts or events apart from the common. Public words and the criteria for their use *are* there before us, and they *are* the only things we have to go on. In Stephen Mulhall’s useful summary, Cavell’s thought is that

if the ground of the inheritability of language, the basis of the continued existence of the speech community and its members, is the capacity of human beings to see and hear themselves in the words and deeds of other human beings, then the continuance of that community cannot be guaranteed either by nature or by grammar; it rests solely upon our capacity to take and maintain an interest in one another and in ourselves.¹⁴

Though we can succeed in taking and maintaining such an interest, we can also fail, and we can feel the responsibility for success or failure to be an undue burden. Hence we live, in Cavell’s perception, in simultaneous satisfaction with and disappointment in criteria and the ordinary,¹⁵ engaged in “a continuous effort at balance,”¹⁶ between escape into independence and personal assertion, on the one hand, and return to accommodation, habit, and domestication on the other. The reason for this joint disappointment and satisfaction is that there is within us “the human drive to transcend itself, make itself inhuman.”¹⁷ “Nothing could be more human” than “the power of the motive to reject the human,”¹⁸ than to seek somehow – whether in perfect individual cognitive omnipotence (even if within a narrow domain) or in perfect submission to the ordinary and natural – to perfect one’s satisfactions and overcome one’s disappointments. “The threat, or the truth, of skepticism [is] that it names our wish (and the possibility of our wishing) to strip ourselves of the responsibility we have in meaning (or in failing to mean) one thing, or one way, rather than another.”¹⁹ There is inherent in the human and “inherent in philosophy a certain drive to the inhuman . . . [that is] somehow itself the most inescapably human of motivations.”²⁰

For beings who are freighted with such wishes and responsibilities, arising in and through engagement with the ordinary, the ordinary itself is, in a phrasing Cavell adapts from Heidegger, “at bottom . . . not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny.”²¹ For Cavell, “the uncanniness of the ordinary is epitomized by . . . the capacity, even the desire, of ordinary language [that is, of we who use it] to repudiate itself.”²² Nothing within ordinary thinking

or linguistic practice *guarantees* its continuation; how it goes on is up to us, we who are initiated into it and go on within and from it, and this can seem terrifying. Yet ordinary thinking and linguistic practice are necessary media for the presence of things to discursively thinking, judgmental subjects, and we do not have the power to alter prior patterns of language and thought *tout court*. These patterns have a certain sway over us, and this too can seem terrifying. Both “the repudiation of the world” as a scene of perhaps false necessities, and of perennial risks, and “its revelation of the world” are “internal to” ordinary language.²³ As discursive, acting, judging subjects, we wish for more – more mastery, more grounding, more surety – from the ordinary. Yet the ordinary (together with its possible successors) remains the only scene for our lives as such subjects. We are hence in relation to the ordinary both at home and not at home; it is uncanny. “The human necessity of the quest for home and the human fact of immigrancy are seen together as aspects of the human as such.”²⁴

Inhabiting our relation to the ordinary, therefore, are opposed drives toward both its acceptance and its overcoming. The ordinary and our relation to it in turn enable – and may even present themselves as requiring – the working out of both drives. It is possible, and sometimes necessary if solipsistic madness is to be foregone and thought and reasonable action are to be continued at all, to consent “to become intelligible.”²⁵ Acknowledgment of the common – both the current common and the perfected common that can arise out of it alone – is possible. To refuse that acknowledgment altogether and instead to insist on pure independence of thought is to fall into skepticism not as insinuating possibility, but as mad discovery, or to fall even further into the all-too-human avoidances and rages of Othello and Lear. In Wittgenstein’s phrasing, “Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgment”²⁶ of the common, of what is among us. Acknowledgment is available, and there is no thought or reasonable action without it. Even genius, whatever departures from the common it enacts in an exemplary way, must be “the name of the promise that the private and the social will be achieved together,”²⁷ that a perfected ordinary will be the site of return and redemption. The remarrying pairs canvassed in *Pursuits of Happiness*²⁸ arrive at such an achievement, and it is – sometimes – a genuine possibility of significance for us.

But then too a certain avoidance – what Cavell, following Emerson, calls “aversiveness” or “daring to say”²⁹ – is also possible and sometimes necessary. “Emerson calls the mode of uncreated life,” in which we are dominated by a fallen social world and seem to ourselves not to be authors of our lives, “‘conformity.’ . . . Each of the modern prophets [– Cavell lists

Mill, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud as well as Emerson –] seems to have been driven to find some way of characterizing the threat to individual existence, to individuation, posed by the life to which their society is bringing itself.”³⁰ In the face of such threats, there are times to be “the one who goes first”³¹ to refigure what the ordinary might better be. In either case, in moments of either acknowledgment or avoidance on the path of thinking,

[w]hat I require is a convening of my culture’s criteria, in order to confront them with my words and life as I pursue them and as I may imagine them; and at the same time to confront my words and life as I pursue them with the life my culture’s words may imagine for me: to confront the culture with itself, along the lines in which it meets in me.

This seems to me a task that warrants the name of philosophy.³²

To undertake the task of philosophy is then to attempt to speak, in a phrase of Kant’s that Cavell adapts to describe the efforts of both the critic of the arts and the ordinary language philosopher, “with a universal voice.”³³ Centrally, this attempt will take the form of making what Cavell calls *a claim of reason*, a claim about what *our criteria are*. One will find oneself saying *what we would say when*: “this is what we call an accident as opposed to a mistake, or this is what we call justice, or love, or knowledge.” Such claims of reason are lodged as reminders and vehicles of reorientation – to and on behalf of both others and oneself – when the applications of the concepts expressed by these words are somehow both dimly available and yet attenuated or disputed. As Wittgenstein puts it, “When I think away the normal language-game with the expression . . . , then I need a criterion of identity for it.”³⁴ Such utterances are *claims* all at once to self-knowledge (of what one would say when), to community (to what *we* would say when), and to reason (to what it makes sense to say when).³⁵ “The philosophical appeal to what we say, and the search for our criteria on the basis of which we say what we say, are claims to community. And the claim to community is always a search for the basis upon which it can [be] or has been established. . . . The wish and search for community are the wish and search for reason.”³⁶

Such claims to reason that embody efforts at reorientation of both self and community are distinctive of philosophy and philosophical criticism: the heirs, one might say, of necessary truths as constituting what is distinctive about philosophy. Unlike, however, necessary truths as traditionally conceived – that is, as objects of a fixed intellectual discovery that is always ratifiable by anyone – these claims, for Cavell, can fail in their

inherent aim of refiguring rational community. “It may prove to be the case that I am wrong [in making such a claim], that my conviction isolates me from all others, from myself.”³⁷ This is a standing risk for the modernist philosopher – affiliated with the modernist artist’s risk of fraudulence in seeking new routes of artistic work³⁸ – as one who lives in a modern community “in which history and its conventions can no longer be taken for granted,”³⁹ if they ever quite wholly could.

But such claims can also succeed, as Austin’s treatments of accidents versus mistakes and losing control of oneself versus succumbing to temptation perhaps above all demonstrate. We can then find ourselves, with ourselves and one another, possessing our own criteria and knowing what we would say when. The magic of philosophy (and of art) lies in the achievement of this reorientation in practice, where and when it can be achieved, and in acceptance of the thought that here or there it will, always, have to be re-achieved again. Without their relation to subjectivity, its standing possibilities of disorientation and inexpressiveness, its standing risks of fraudulence and trust,

art and the criticism of art [– and, given the analogies, philosophy and the criticism of philosophy –] would not have their special importance nor elicit their own forms of distrust and gratitude. The problem of the critic, as of the artist [– and the philosopher (of a certain kind) –], is not to discount his subjectivity [– and need for new routes of expressiveness and perception –] but to include it; not to overcome it in agreement, but to master it in exemplary ways. Then his work outlasts the fashions and arguments of a particular age. That is the beauty of it.⁴⁰

In a justly famous, perhaps even notorious, passage at the end of the opening section of Chapter 4, “Self-Consciousness,” of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel writes that we have reached a great “turning point.” Our thinking about who and what we are at this point “leaves behind it the colourful show of the sensuous here-and-now and the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight of the present.”⁴¹ What this turning point turns out to involve, very roughly, is the absorption of essentially epistemological questions by essentially political, historical, artistic, and religious questions. Allowing for the foreignness of the idiom, in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the *Phenomenology* the topics are all ones that would be familiar to contemporary analytic epistemologists and philosophers of mind. How do we apprehend particulars? What is the experience of qualia? In what ways might our consciousness of objects be law-governed? Beginning with Chapter 4, however, things are very different.

The topics now center around forms of worldly practice in pursuit of the public satisfaction of desire. What is it to live freely? How might agents achieve recognition? What political institutions, forms of art, and religious conceptions that have been developed historically will help us to live freely and to achieve recognition?

Hegel's argument in moving from Chapter 3 to Chapter 4 is that answering the latter set of questions will settle all the epistemological problems that were raised in the first three chapters, and that nothing else will. But *that* stretch of argument – the treatment of “Force and the Understanding” and then of “life” – is as notoriously obscure and difficult as anything Hegel ever wrote.

So is the absorption of the epistemological by the practical a good idea? Ignoring Hegel's own argument, there are considerations that point both ways, and it is at least possible to understand contemporary analytic philosophy and contemporary Continental philosophy as taking one of these sets of considerations to have decisive force against the other.

In favor of the practical turn, it might be said that our knowing and our epistemological inquiries into the nature of our knowing arise only when we have already managed some cognitive successes and then begun to reflect on the differences between cognitive success and failure. That reflection must involve historical awareness of alternatives, and it must itself be supported by a certain amount of leisure for reflection, over and above a continuous struggle for bare subsistence. Hence knowing and reflection on knowing seem to take place within historical and practical contexts in which people – embodied human agents, with social relations and social interests – are already trying to do something. Much of Continental philosophy since Hegel has been centrally interested in the histories of human cognitive and social practices, taking it for granted that these practices are deeply interrelated. Satisfaction of our aims – including our cognitive aims – if it is to be achieved must be at least in part also a social and practical achievement.

Against the practical turn, it might be said that language, culture, and sociopolitical life – at least in the richly articulated forms in which we humans have them – are all species-specific. Other animals just don't do what we do, linguistically, cognitively, or sociopolitically. If we are the linguistic, cultural, and political animals that we are, this must somehow be because we are the mind/brain endowed animals we are. Surely, further, we have succeeded in knowing some things about our environment by taking in objects in the right way and doing so independently of and often in the face of any political developments. Mathematics and modern scientific knowledge

may be evolving and contested, but they are at least more independent of political considerations than are other regions of cultural life. The science and mathematics of China and the United States look a lot more alike than do their paintings or politics or religious rituals. Surely it is reasonable to try to give some culture-independent account of at least our most basic cognitive achievements. Perhaps it is best to leave political philosophy on its own as a set of problems of social organization, without tendentious, quasi-religious essentialisms: political, not metaphysical. Much of contemporary analytic epistemology and philosophy of mind and language has been centrally interested in explaining the roots of culture in given human endowments and in characterizing our cognitive successes by reference to our species-specific powers.

Rough and tendentious though these sketches of argument are, and granting that there are numbers of interesting and important philosophers who are working somehow between them, these two paradigms do map two large and largely divergent routes of current philosophical imagination. For Cavell, by contrast, the argument between these two paradigms is centrally one of those that cannot and must not be won. Our practical and cognitive lives *are* intertwined – it is no accident that one of Cavell's central terms, *acknowledgment*, is a transcription of Hegel's *Anerkennung* – but neither full satisfaction in shared social practices nor full and self-standing absolute knowing of 'the' way things are, free of practical commitment and risk, is possible. In both social and cognitive practice, there are always resistances and remainders, both socially and within oneself. These resistances and remainders will call for and enable departures from what is already done, either cognitively or socially. New regions of interest and ways of pursuing them will emerge out of them, and these will have to be and can (sometimes) be articulated on behalf of a more perfect ordinary. Investigation into how individuals, by drawing on the capacities of the species, manage this feat will always be invited. Yet these regions of interest and ways of pursuing them can establish their sense – for oneself as well as for others – only insofar as they are acknowledged: taken up and lived out, yet also setting up their own resistances and remainders. We live between acknowledgment and avoidance.

To come to discursive consciousness of self in relation to a set of existent and evolving practices, together with their distinctive resistances and remainders, is to participate, in Cavell's formulation, in "a self's judgmental forming of itself, as something to be further possessed *or* to be overcome."⁴² One seeks unity with oneself and in relation to others in secure mastery of fully reasonable practice – sometimes through acknowledgment by

accepting the ordinary and one's legibility within it; sometimes through departure, daring to say, and gesturing toward an eventual, more perfect ordinary. Yet there is no escape from this seeking into either absolute knowing or absolute freedom.

Hence, in living within this condition – timidly or boldly; gracefully or assertively; cleverly, decently, or badly – “each life is exemplary of all, a parable of each; that is humanity's commonness, which is internal to its endless denials of commonness.”⁴³ To think philosophically about this condition, refusing either its abandonment or its absolute cure, in any region of practice, will be also to participate in it, in one way or another. It will involve aligning one's life and pursuits both with and against other lives and pursuits, as one moves oneself between acknowledgment and avoidance. Central to such alignments will be philosophizing as the work of reading:⁴⁴ hence Cavell's endless finding of aspects of himself, and of oppositions to himself, in Plato, Descartes, Emerson, Nietzsche, Luther, Rousseau, Wittgenstein, Poe, Shakespeare, Verdi, Hawks, and Capra. In these thinkers and in their works (and in others, without end), Cavell finds exemplary ways of responding to our “continuing task”⁴⁵ of finding and enacting our freedom, of “guiding the soul, or self, [together with its practices] from self-imprisonment toward the light or the instinct of freedom.”⁴⁶ Such findings and enactments, or such routes of self-creation, imply that in taking them up we both could and “would have to accept responsibility for ourselves, in particular have to consent to our present state as something we desire, or anyway desire more than we desire change,”⁴⁷ if we are to find satisfaction within them. This possibility and burden might, Cavell notes, further drive one mad, perhaps into Othello's or Lear's region of avoidance and of the refusal of legibility: anything but to have to consent again, and yet again, to the ordinary as it stands. Or this possibility and burden might, as in the remarryings of the pairs considered in *Pursuits of Happiness*, enable and motivate acknowledgment and a certain consent to one's state, where these might further sustain their own reachievement in a fit enough ordinary, experienced as these paired individuals' daily wit and romance with one another.

When each life is thus seen as a parable of each, whether exemplary or admonitory, there will be no single perfect way of human life, individual or social, even while possibilities of further perfection make themselves available and haunt us. Hence philosophers' “solutions” to “problems” – whether of knowing or of social life – will present themselves not so much or so centrally as “answers” to be accepted or rejected, but as bound up with available styles of response – all of them partial, some of them exemplary

or admonitory – to the condition of the human, styles themselves legible as involving both acknowledgment and avoidance. What would it be to deny that human life and mindedness should be so seen? Is such a denial quite coherently possible? Cavell's articulation of the human would imply that it is not. Through the work of reading, carried out in relation to life, this articulation can sustain itself as encompassing, generous, perceptive, nuanced, and deep, as fitly so as any it is possible to imagine. In this it offers a style of philosophical thinking – the reading of each life as a parable of each – that may well stand comparison with the visions of the human of the analytic and Continental traditions, or of any of the other visionaries upon whom Cavell has touched. One will have to read to see.

The contributors to this volume were asked to address Cavell's work in relation to some more or less standard subfields in philosophy and to some not so standard. Taken in order, they are ethics; the theory of action; the philosophy of mind and language; aesthetics and modernism; Romanticism and German Idealism; American philosophy and the idea of America; Shakespeare; and movies, opera, and the problem of voice. As each contributor is at pains to make clear, however, the sense of what the topic or problem at hand *is* is quite often deeply transfigured by Cavell's handling of it, as that handling draws upon his larger vision of the human. Hence readers of this volume will find essays that begin with sketches of more or less standard problems or readings and then go on to show how in Cavell's hands mindedness, performativity, ethics, aesthetics, poetry, drama, citizenship, and movies inform and draw on one another. The pleasures and insights of following these handlings are in the end the best argument – inseparable from reading, from criticism, from exemplification, and from invitation – on behalf of Cavell's account of the human.

Notes

1. Stanley Cavell, "Knowing and Acknowledging," in his *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 240.
2. Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures After Emerson After Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989), p. 55.
3. Stanley Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy: Autobiographical Exercises* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 22.
4. Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America*, p. 46.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

7. Cavell's sense of the perennial availability and necessity of movements of both departure and return might usefully be compared to Geoffrey Hartman's reading of Romanticism as involving alternating moments of apocalypse (the unbinding of creative imagination) and *akedah* (rebinding to earth and the common). See Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1814*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964, 1971), esp. pp. ix–xx, 225–42. See also Richard Eldridge, "Internal Transcendentalism: Wordsworth and 'A New Condition of Philosophy,'" in his *The Persistence of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 107–13.
8. Dieter Henrich, "Hölderlin in Jena," trans. Taylor Carman, in his *The Course of Remembrance and Other Essays on Hölderlin*, ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 112, emphasis added. Eldridge develops a comparison between Hölderlin and Cavell along these lines in "Cavell and Hölderlin on Human Immigrancy," in *The Persistence of Romanticism*, pp. 229–45.
9. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 140.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
14. Stephen Mulhall, *Stanley Cavell: Philosophy's Recounting of the Ordinary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 68.
15. See Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 83, 92.
16. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 44.
17. Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America*, p. 57.
18. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 207.
19. Stanley Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even," in his *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 135.
20. Cavell, "An Interview with Stanley Cavell," conducted by James Conant, in *The Senses of Stanley Cavell*, ed. Richard Fleming and Michael Payne [*Bucknell Review* 32 (1)] (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1989), p. 50.
21. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," trans. Albert Hofstadter, in his *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 54.
22. Cavell, "The Uncanniness of the Ordinary," in *In Quest of the Ordinary*, p. 154.
23. Stanley Cavell, "The Politics of Interpretation (Politics as Opposed to What?)," in his *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), p. 34.
24. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, p. 47.
25. Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even," p. 114.

26. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. Von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), §378, p. 49e.
27. Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even," p. 114.
28. Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
29. See Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even," p. 112.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
32. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 125.
33. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 56. Cf. Cavell, "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, p. 94; and Richard Eldridge, "Philosophy and the Achievement of Community: Rorty, Cavell, and Criticism," *Metaphilosophy* 14 (April 1983), pp. 107–25, at p. 121 n.13.
34. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1953, 1958), §288, p. 99, my translation.
35. See Richard Eldridge, "The Normal and the Normative: Wittgenstein's Legacy, Kripke, and Cavell," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (June 1986), pp. 555–75, at pp. 570–75; and Richard Eldridge, *Leading a Human Life: Wittgenstein, Intentionality, and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 107–8.
36. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 20.
37. *Ibid.*
38. See Cavell, "Music Discomposed," in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, pp. 188–9: "the dangers of fraudulence, and of trust, are essential to the experience of [modern] art," and "modernism only makes explicit and bare what has always been true of art."
39. Cavell, "Foreward: An Audience for Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, p. xxii.
40. Cavell, "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," p. 94.
41. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), para. 177, pp. 110–11.
42. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, p. 150; emphasis added. Compare also Stanley Cavell, *The Senses of Walden* (New York: Viking, 1972), pp. 107–8: "Our first resolve should be towards the nextness of the self to the self; it is the capacity not to deny either of its positions or attitudes – that it is the watchman or guardian of itself; and hence demands of itself transparency, settling, clearing, constancy; and that it is the workman, whose eye cannot see to the end of its labours, but whose answerability is endless for the constructions in which it houses itself. The answerability of the self to itself is its possibility of awakening."
43. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, p. 11.

44. Cf. Cavell, "The Philosopher in American Life," in *In Quest of the Ordinary*, pp. 14–15; and Timothy Gould, *Hearing Things: Voice and Method in the Writing of Stanley Cavell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. Chapter 4, "The Model of Reading."
45. Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even," p. 111; cf. Eldridge, "'A Continuing Task:' Cavell and the Truth of Skepticism," in *The Persistence of Romanticism*.
46. Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, p. 4.
47. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 465.