

the operatic barber, or Sir Politic Would-Be stepping on a ship to America, but none of these characters are broad enough to sustain the ten pages of shocks that Stevens administers to his hero. To do all that Crispin would need the changability of a lamia, and even in the comic atmosphere it would be hard to accept as an agreeable conclusion to have such a grotesqueness personified settling down in a nice shady home. The simple concept of the missionary Crispin, full of the spiritual freedom of Christianity, or of a modernistic national imagination, attempting to apply his utopian principles to the geography of the New World will supply a certain coherency to Crispin's character, which can be symbolized as the pioneering the poetic imagination, or the Cristian nation state of Eliot's "Choruses from 'The Rock'".

Whatever powers Stevens meant to endow his hero with in the symbolic guise of Crispin it is a certainty that Stevens brings him to light as stripped as possible in "The World without Imagination". He is placed in a state where

It was not so much the lost terrestrial
The snug hibernal from that sea and salt,
That century of wind in a single puff.
What counted was mythology of self,
Blotched out beyond unblotching.

The highly connotatively named hero is not only enraptured by Stevens romantic seas, but immediately of an allegorical status as Stevens sweeps him clean in a "century of wind". He is a figure of some mystery as well since Stevens rhetorically asks us to name "this short-shanks", this "skinny sailor". After the previously identified allusion to Jonson's porpoises, the second stanza is concluded with another Elizabethan reference from "The Tempest", as a crusading Crispin is disenfranchised by the sea's "Polphony beyond his baton's thrust." Crispin's failure to master the sea is not the dilemma of Prospero however, since Crispin is abdicating nothing, merely at a loss at sea, and with his imaginings of the New World he will encounter. Unimaginatively pushing forward Crispin senses but fails to realize the mythological figure of Triton. Stevens feels Crispin is "dissolved" along with the floundering figure from mythology, but his drowning is figurative and relates to Crispin's inability to cope with the vastness of his imagination, i.e. the sea. The familiar objects of Crispin's are not at sea, his original "barber's eye" is at a loss:

The imagination, here, could not evade,
In poems of plums, the strict austerity
Of one vast, subjugating, final tone.

The changes in personality wrought by the crossing momentarily expell from Crispin's mind his ruses and visions of "salad beds", he must confront himself on the blank plane of sea and face imagination devoid of his familiar reality. Stevens leaves his sea in the first section one of mystery, something questioned and unmeditated toward any finality.

Although Stevens language could be considered harsh enough in the first section to have irrevocably changed the hero's perception and reality, and destroy him, we find Crispin revived within nine lines into "Concerning the Thunderstorms of Yucatan". Crispin still has his eye on the "salad beds", only now he has been "made vivid by the sea", with a renewed belief in himself; "Into a savage color he went on." At this point the comic resiliency of Crispin is first revealed, and it is no doubt due to his original acquisitive intents. He pays no mind to the "Maya sonneteers", who Harold Bloom theorizes to have been the Harvard poets of Stevens' time: Stickney, Lodge, and Santayana, "...who