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On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World
Masters of Fine Arts Written Report
April 2011

INTRODUCTION

In that forest where the spirits used to speak to us, we sought them again. We wondered if they had forgotten us after all these years. While he climbed the strong cliffs, I sat on the stone staring at the landscape, searching for the sweetness that I held in my memory. My eyes scanned the surroundings, moving like shallow water streaming across a pebbled creek bed. In these mountains, the streaming never ceases. Here, all things that appear to the eye appear alive. The only place to rest is in contemplation of the blue sky which peeks through above the blunted old peaks of the Appalachians. I understand now, it is from these mountains that I learned my aesthetic.

He is climbing the cliff as I remember the sunlit day in this place when I stood, shoes abandoned on the shore, in the shallows with toes exploring smooth stones. “There is a snake at your feet,” retreat! The snake battles the crawdad for the little sliver of a fish, wrapped around my ankles like finery. I recall swimming, down the way, in the deep cool pool rescuing the orange-winged cicadas from watery graves. They rose, resurrected, from my palms with joyful wailing. The rattlesnake rattled from the rock we approached. The bear sweat smelled heavy as the spirits whispered to us, retreat. Immanuel Kant understood, “[T]o take a direct interest in the beauty of nature (not merely to have the taste needed to judge it) is always a mark of a good soul.”¹ I wonder now what he might have thought of this place taking such a direct interest in us.

People living in the Appalachian Mountains, especially the artists born in that region, have consistently been interested in the beauty of nature. In *O Appalachia*, Millard Lampell writes, “In the works of self-taught Appalachian artists, two themes dominate: nature and morality. Attuned to wild creatures and the quirks of nature, mountain people possess an abiding faith in the force that created them. ‘*I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from which cometh my help.*’”² This concept of attunement not only emphasizes the importance of nature, and its beauty, for the people of this region, but it also stresses the important belief that it is from this nature, or the hills, from which the people are receiving their guidance.

Millard Lampell’s suggested themes in Appalachian art of nature and morality also relate to Kant’s ideas of the connection between beauty and the morally good. Kant writes, “Now I maintain that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good; and only because we refer the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so naturally and require all others also to do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else’s assent, while the mind is also conscious of being ennobled...”³ If we take into account Kant’s position that nature possesses the highest form of beauty, then we may look at this passage as directly relating to Lampell’s proposed themes of nature and morality in Appalachian art. Although Kant does not equate the beautiful with the morally good absolutely, he suggests that the union between the two “enables us to use the beautiful as an instrument for our aim regarding the good...”⁴ Thus, the beauty of nature may be used to express ideas of the morally good, such as which is dominant in Appalachian art.

Mircea Eliade reminds us, “For religious man, nature is never only ‘natural’; it is always fraught with a religious value. ...[T]he world is impregnated with sacredness.”⁵ He continues: “We must not forget that for religious man the supernatural is

indissolubly connected with the natural, that nature always expresses something that transcends it... [F]or it is 'supernature' that the religious man apprehends through the natural aspects of the world."⁶ Perhaps this helps elucidate why so many unseen beings in nature, of both religious and mythical origins, inhabit the Appalachian Mountain homeland. There exists an entrenched belief in the region that just because one does not see something, this does not prove it is not there. The idea that there is an unseen other is an outstanding belief in the Appalachians, emphasized both in the dominant religion and in the traditional folktales.

In *Eye and Mind*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty quotes the artist Paul Klee: "In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me ... I was there, listening ..."⁷ Similar to an experience that might be described in an Appalachian forest, Klee alludes to the feeling that the unseen others were present around him. Merleau-Ponty calls for a return of thought to both the actual body and to the associated bodies, or to "the others who haunt me and whom I haunt."⁸ These others, unseen or unrecognized, are the ones with which I am the most deeply fascinated.

My interest in the unseen other was sparked at an early age, growing up in the Appalachian Mountains, where tales of spirits, specters, sprites and angels abound. What further encouraged my devotion to the unseen was a series of savings brought to my attention by that which I have previously called the "whisper". These savings have served as the constant reminder of the unseen forces that are at work in the world. I have been pondering the days that brought the first savings for over a decade. In the recent years, I have sought to depict the unseen reality with particular emphasis on these often unnoticed presences in the lives of humans.

My mother said a prayer before my birth, mysteriously asking that her only daughter be born with large eyes. It is my belief that this prayer, rather than merely altering my physiognomy, determined my interests and ultimately my life's work.

Darkness brought my greatest fears in childhood, for forms unseen were ones that could not be overcome. Shadows, seen with my imagination in the darkness, caused more distress than anything my eyes could discover. The black puma* of the Appalachian forest slept every night at the foot of my mother's bed and the ghosts of the darkness lived in the crevice between my small bed and the wall in the two bedroom duplex apartment where I lived with my parents, my two brothers, and my grandmother. Only if I made myself small enough, under the bundle of my bedding, could I be safe from the unseen seeing me.

Fear subsided to fascination as the years passed and I find myself delving into the mysteries of the unseen. Now I know that what may not be seen with the outward eye may be made visible to the mind's eye. The Appalachian Mountains taught these truths to me. In the words of Lampell, "The mountains nurture visionaries. And visions are the seeds of art."⁹ In a land of no cities, how much easier it must become to find expanses to fill with the imagination, and with visions. And, oh, the beautiful that is found in those uncontainable expanses.

Muhyiddin ibn al-'Arabi's conception of the imagination describes it as an entire presence, or world, which can be "faced" by the different faculties, including eyesight:

God appointed for human spirits natural instruments, such as the eye, the ear, the nose, and the palate. He placed within them faculties that He called "hearing," "eyesight," and so forth. He created for these faculties two faces, a face toward the sensory things, the world of the witnessed; and a face toward the Presence of Imagination. He made the Presence of Imagination an all-embracing locus, more all-embracing than the world of

* They say that pumas, or mountain lions, still haunt the Appalachian wilderness. Although scientists have failed to confirm this, and seem rather skeptical, locals will swear the large cats are still those in the forests.

the witnessed. Within this Presence, He assigned a faculty named “imagination” to many faculties, such as form-giving, reflection, memory, fantasy, reason, and so on. Through these faculties the human soul perceives all the objects of knowledge given by the realities of these faculties.

Through eyesight’s face toward the world of the witnessed, the soul perceives all sensory things and lifts them up to imagination. It preserves them in imagination through the preserving faculty [memory] after the form-giving faculty has given form to them. The form-giving faculty may take affairs from diverse existent things, all of which are sensory, and compound from them an alien shape, the totality of which the soul has never seen in the sensory domain. However, there is no part of it that it has not seen.¹⁰

This conception of the imagination as expressed by ibn al-‘Arabi is one in which the Presence of Imagination becomes the means to gain knowledge after processing perceptions from the sensory world. In the realm of the imagination, the unseen world can be given a visible form. Ibn al-‘Arabi explains, “Part of the reality of imagination is that it embodies and gives form to that which is not a body or a form, for imagination perceives only in this manner. Hence it is a sensation that is nonmanifest and bound between the intelligible and the sensory.”¹¹ Here, the imagination becomes that through which things that exist beyond the visible world are given bodies; it is the faculty which allows for the seeing of the unseen.

Years spent in the depths of the forests, nestled in the hills in a town full of nothing but churches and gas stations I found myself always in imagination. Living in a town of 900 people, there were no trends, no fashions, no commercialism; just vast spaces to fill with thoughts. Millard Lampell writes of artists in Appalachian: “Starting out, painting and sculpture are just something they try because they feel a need to make a statement that words cannot express. There are no rules to intimidate them. There is no one to tell them how it should be done.”¹² In the backwoods homeland, the imagination is free to roam without the handicapping mechanism of expectations, competitions, and institutions.

The development of the art practice in such isolated regions encourages in the artist what Kant might describe as “the inimitable in the momentum of his spirit [which] would be impaired by timorous caution.”¹³ The making of works of art in such an insulated region is prompted almost entirely by the spirit, fueled by the lack of restraint, which is permitted by the freedom that is granted through isolation. The resulting work is that which is inspired, not in mimicry of other art, but rather as an imitation of the complex beauty of the mountain wilderness coupled with an attempt to express deep moral ideas nurtured by the religious ethos predominant in the region. Although in the past the Appalachian region has been mocked for such isolation, I maintain that this was done in ignorance and ethnocentricity. For, without some isolation or idiosyncrasy, culture could never combat the ever-increasing homogenization of the world. It is from such isolated regions with specific environmental factors that new forms can emerge, such as in the story of two finches that were separated onto different islands where the descendants of one bird developed a long thin bill for the eating of insects and the other’s developed a short, strong bill for the cracking of seeds.¹⁴ Hence, like a Galapagos finch, although I have since left my homeland, I still carry the form of that region.

Sir Walter Raleigh, holder of the royal patent to found the Virginia Colony, writes, “There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”¹⁵ Kant, similarly states, “The standard idea [of beauty] is by no means the entire *archetype of beauty*...The exhibition is merely academically correct.”¹⁶ Both Sir Walter Raleigh and Immanuel Kant here seem to be acknowledging the importance of something beyond the *merely* academically correct, beyond the correctness of proportion and beyond the homogenization of standards of beauty.

Despite pursued training in the fine arts, I maintain a deep kinship to the aesthetic, and moreover to the sentiment, of those who have been named “untrained Appalachian artists”. Here, I must emphasize that training and education cannot strip someone of their cultural temperament. Hence the separation between ‘trained’ and ‘untrained’ Appalachian artists should be seriously questioned. Such ideology only propagates the antiquated concept of Appalachian culture as an ignorance that can be educated away, without understanding any of the important beliefs in the region that are outstanding of educational factors. Since being separated from the source of freedom offered by the seclusion of my homeland, I have come to understand the importance of the development of the imagination that was allowed by the years of cultivation in the empty spaces and beautiful landscapes of my youth. There, the soul is not altered by the pollution of expansion, but enlivened by unending expanse. Those empty spaces promote the imagination.

Our eyes are weak, our bodies are frail but, have I understood, I understand that the eyes of our souls can see the unseen world. Ibn al-‘Arabi emphasizes the significance of imagination in understanding the spiritual world: “The spirit becomes corporealized to eyesight through imagination, so halt not with it, for the affair is a misguidance.”¹⁷ The imagination, for the Sufi mystic and philosopher, is not predominantly a product of a psychological narcissism in which one’s *own world* is given prominence, but it is a faculty of the soul that plays a crucial role in the understanding of the Real. He writes, “The form of imagination is between intellect and sensation, and imagination has no locus save the soul.”¹⁸ Therefore, since the imagination is centered in the soul, it has the remarkable potential to aid humans in the understanding of the Truth.

My works of art are an exploration of the imagination that presents the Real. Paintings, in particular, have the ability to capture what is beyond the immediate visibility of reality by allowing for reinterpretation of forms that lead toward a symbolic presentation of the Real discovered through imagination. This Real beyond reality is the unseen, for it must be looked upon by the mind's eye as the gaze is turned inward from the real world of the physical toward the Real of the soul. Paintings can simulate the form of imagination, causing the eye to see in a way that mimics the vision of dreams. Hence, they can speak of the envisioned world within while overcoming visual obstacles that allude only to seen reality such as perspective, naturalistic color, weight, proportion, *et cetera*. While paintings may electively include such forms as realistically believable perspective or proportion as well as naturalistic color and the like, they may also dispense of all these things, gravity included, in order to depict an inner state.

In the same way that poetic language is a marked degree more successful than journalism at conveying Truth, despite the fact that journalism deals with what are often called the *facts of reality*, so is painting more inclined toward displaying the Real than anything that is entirely grounded in the physical world. The distinction is between things as we see them, as we know them, or as we experience them in the physical world, and things as they are.

Immanuel Kant writes of the aim of the fine arts:

It seems that for all fine art, insofar as we aim at its highest degree of perfection, the propaedeutic does not consist in precepts but in cultivating our mental powers by exposing ourselves beforehand to what we call *humaniora* [*the humanities*]; they are called that presumably because *humanity* means both the universal *feeling of sympathy*, and the ability to engage universally in very intimate *communication*.¹⁹

Kant alludes here to the fact that one of the highest aims of the fine arts is to strengthen our humanity in communication with other humans. Further, this intimate

communication initiated by the arts with other humans can be a communication of a deeply spiritual nature, addressing issues of the soul, and showing to them things they may not see otherwise.

Twelfth-century Persian theologian Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, writes, “The world of imagination is the embodied lights that signify what is beyond them, for imagination bring intelligible meaning down into sensory molds[.]”²⁰ Hence, works of art must take on the role of beacons of the light which is imagination whose center is the soul. Through the imagination, the visible world may be translated symbolically in order to illuminate unseen aspects of the beyond.

My work in the visual arts originates from a desire to depict the Reality, discovered through the imagination, which exists beyond the immediately visible, beyond the world of the sensory and beyond the self. These worlds discovered through imagination do not belong to me, nor did I conjure them of my own devices. They are the worlds discovered in the Presence of Imagination; they are the worlds that are created, not by myself as artist, but by the One who creates all worlds. To paint is to say a prayer to be given large eyes.

PROLOGUE

On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World is an attempt to reveal the unseen world I have encountered. The visible things in this world are but a veil for the true existence. There is truth and light beneath the veil; beneath the veil, the unseen. This unseen world does not lie dormant, but interacts, intertwines, initiates savings.

On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World is a series of mirrors, in which the physical reflects the spiritual, the spiritual reflects the physical. The physical world is left of the center; the spiritual world is right of the center. The centermost panel is the *barzakh*, the realm of the imagination; the *barzakh* is the space between where the world of the spiritual and the world of the physical converge, but in which they do not merge. The salt water sits against the mountain stream; the water is potable on the right yet saline on the left. The *barzakh* separates them. Ibn al-‘Arabi writes, “The knowledge of imagination and of its contiguous and discontiguous worlds is a magnificent pillar among the pillars of true knowledge. It is the knowledge of the *barzakh* and the knowledge of the world of corporeous bodies within which spiritual things become manifest.”²¹ The bodies of the physical world and the bodies of the spiritual world are corporeous. The *barzakh* is the centermost region, the point of origin and the point of return.

Mircea Eliade refers to a similar concept to the *barzakh* in his conception of the Center: “[I]f we remember that the Center is precisely the place where a break in plane occurs, where space becomes sacred, hence pre-eminently *real*. A creation implies a superabundance of reality, in other words an irruption of the sacred into the world.”²² The Center, where the plane is broken, the sacred space, is the real. From this Center,

an irruption of the sacred pours into the world; just as in *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World*, the center is the place of origin for the sacred, which is the unseen among us. Eliade elucidates the idea of the Center in religious mythological thought, quoting from the Hebrew tradition: “The Most Holy One created the world like an embryo. As the embryo grows from the navel, so God began to create the world by the navel and from there it spread out in all directions.”²³ He goes on to reveal, “The creation of the world becomes the archetype of every creative human gesture. ... Now that the cosmogonic value of the Center has become clear, we can still better understand why every human establishment repeats the creation of the world from a central point (the navel).”²⁴ Hence, *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World* likewise follows this model of the Center which expands outward.

From the center comes the unseen reality, which erupts into the world. All parts are moving from darkness to light. The physical and the spiritual are moving from darkness to light. Beneath all, the unseen; outwards come the whispers. The origin of the unseen is the pool of light in the center, into which eyes are too weak to see. The pool of light must be viewed with the portion of the soul named imagination; eyes of the imagination can see what is beyond. The centermost panel is the beyond.

Like Mircea Eliade, Hans Blumenberg emphasizes the importance of a central axis, “Thus the fundamental myth occupies, if one may put it this way, a special position. It is located precisely on the axis of symmetry between where we come from and where we are going, between what comes to be and what ought to be, between fall and ascent.”²⁵ The center which is beyond is the axis of symmetry between the physical and the spiritual. The physical is where we come from; the spiritual is where we are going. The physical is what comes to be; the spiritual is what ought to be; the physical is the

fall; the spiritual is the ascent. The path of the fall and the path of the ascent all lead back to the center. Throughout, there are those that are unseen, leading us to the return to the homeland.

Eliade writes:

For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no *orientation* can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center.²⁶

This realization of this center, for Eliade, reveals absolute reality beyond what he calls the “vast surrounding expanse”, which is the world. The manifestation of the holy reveals the Center around which the world is fixed.

Blumenberg urges, “To create space for a different explanation, we must free ourselves from an illusion of temporal perspective.”²⁷ This freedom from the temporal is crucial for the understanding of *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World*. Unlike the narrative that modern man seeks to grasp of the self in the landscape of time, the series dispenses with the concept of timeline. The paintings strive to capture a single moment and simultaneously a vast expanse of symbolic moments which spread out in time with no particular attention to any order of events. In this way, the series, *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World*, is not a narrative. The time and place of the event of the images is meant to be ambiguous, concurrently referencing what will come to be and what has already been. This can be related directly to Blumenberg’s conception of the myth. He explains, “Myth is always anxious about what one might call integration; it abhors a vacuum (as was still to be said for a long time, in a half-mythical proposition, of nature). Its stories are seldom localized in space,

and never in time.”²⁸ The abandonment of timeline is the key to understanding the events that occur.

The two outermost mirrors are the panels of knowing. Farthest to the right of the center is *Spiritual Knowing, the Revelation*, addressing the knowledge that is gained through prayer and revelation. In the revelation, persons sit on tops of protruding cliffs for such an expanse of eras that their bodies merge with rock above the vast sea speckled with swimming swans. Above them are the black holes that lead to the eternal. Farthest to the left of the center is *Worldly Knowing, the Exploration*, which indicates the search for knowledge gained through science and exploration. In the exploration, shadow swans swagger with halos of light as books build foundations for computers with graphs detailing all things discovered. Scientists search the ground for traces, becoming androgynous as the years sever bonds with sensuality and the transhuman appeal leads them onward.

In Turkish, there are two words for knowledge: *ilim* and *bilim*²⁹. *Ilm* is spiritual or intellectual knowledge, and comes from the concept of ‘*ilm*’ in Arabic. *Bilim*, on the other hand, is a Modern Turkish word meaning knowledge gained through experience or experimentation, such as through the sciences. Hence, the concepts of *ilim* and *bilim* may also be applied to the two outermost panels of *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World*, in that to the right of the center is *ilim* and to the left is *bilim*.

Inward from the outermost are the two mirrors which are the panels of love. To the right of the center is *Spiritual Love, the Heart*, which is concerned with the pure love found in the spirit. Water covers a land where luscious trees grow with roots made from beards of thoughtful men and branches bearing the sweetest fruits for the enjoyment of the women who bear fruits and flowers of their own. To the left of the

center is *Worldly Love, the Tongue*, which examines the love of the physical world.

Televisions produce false sensations as persons sit until limbs lose functionality which leads to empty trunks from the misuse of the gift.

Closest to the core are the panels of the pilgrimage, leading back toward the light of the center. Directly to the right of the center is *Pilgrimage in the Spirit, the Return*. In the return, persons emerge from the water onto the golden sandy beaching leading toward the homeland while long lost loved ones wait for them on the shore. Directly to the left of the center is *Pilgrimage in the Flesh, the Turn*. In the turn, figures abandon the love of the world and emerge onto the golden rocks of the land that leads back toward the homeland; as they abandon medical equipment, they find they need no such support to maintain being.

At the core, is the Center of light, the barzakh, the place of the origin and the place of the return, from whence all beings unseen originate. The core is *Toward the Light, the Beyond*. It is the space where the spiritual world meets the physical world; the place of departure; the place of return; the infinite space composed of infinite light that breaks into colors beyond the visibility of human eyes, only able to be explored through the eyes of the soul, which is imagination.

Throughout all of these is the unseen in the form of small amorphous beings composed of line and light and color. I have not seen these with my own eyes of my own face, but rather have known them with the inner eyes to which they have been revealed. In my delight of them I have sought to know them, and to show them again, through the intervention that occurs as I lose the concept of my own self as creator and give way to the changing tides of inspiration. I am not the Creator, but just a vessel, a hand, a

fleeting breath at this moment breathing in and moments later, breathing out, and one day disappearing in body but living still in spirit, in imagination, in light.

Hence the series *On the Strange Predicament of the Being in the World* explores what is visible through the eyes of a physical human searching, ever searching, for that which is beyond. It is an investigation of the real that is beneath the veil of the everyday and beyond the visible, by seeking sight through the eyes of the imagination which may see the real. Through these reflections, I have been seeking.

Spiritual Knowing, the Revelation



long twining trail,
lead past the twilight,
toward the infinite,
prismatic passages,
toward unfathomable depths.
all the skies filled with longings
sent forth from hearths of rock,
over expansive ocean.
steady bodies merge with stone,
swans swam toward home.
follow twining trail,
moonlight pale,
spirit reflect the light,
tomorrow marrow ignite,
leading toward the infinite.
follow twinkling apparition
to lands of recognition
of the unforgotten home,
to land of derivation,
return.

Spiritual Love, the Heart



whispering branches, fruits delighting,
growing from trunk of sweetest sapling
as the nectar never ceases.
the golden day brings another golden hour
as the silent reflections pray protection,
all thoughts are led by doves.
voices call out in the wilderness
and each confession hears reply.
everywhere golden light apparition fly,
as roots never hunger for moisture
and none need to long for light.
all alight, save night.
darkness passes quickly into dawn,
as lanterns chase night away,
awaiting the bridegroom to return.
dawn heralds dawning of more than day
and sweet water runs with nectar
beneath the surface mirror.
these in the golden land waiting,
as vision clears, aware.

Pilgrimage in the Spirit, the Return



breath leaves lungs.
beneath the surface of the water, trembles.
sprinkled stars drift skyward,
eyes struggle to hold the surface,
as the glistening light turns to golden.
what a blessing breath once was.
emerge and submerge
life like a dream, wake to the light,
morning light becomes flood.
eyes toward skies of splendor
as the light of day does bud,
move onward past dawn,
breathe marrow into flood,
anointed by radiant plunge,
cleansed by loss in lungs.
depths of sweet ascend
toward the infinite.
the surface mirror shifts,
the parted water mends.
breath returns.

Toward the Light, the Beyond



eyes too weak to perceive the light,
forms of light shifting in and out of light.
prismatic exclamations as color
converges and diverges
to and from the white.
forthward inward toward the light,
receding or proceeding,
perspective loses objective
as all turns to light.
delusion or illusion, or truth.
eyes too weak to know
what lives beyond the light.
all does not return to dust,
for spirit alights too swift for dust,
and marrow streams
too pure for soot.
dust the heart to reveal,
flooded with nectar,
marrow pure enough to trust
what lives beyond the light.

Pilgrimage in the Flesh, the Turn



breath leaves lungs,
beneath the surface of the skin, needles.
trailing behind, the artificial lung,
clear plastic tubes
with bubbling clear plastic oxygen.
what a blessing breath once was.
all items losing pigmentation,
save marmalade popsicle,
soothing swollen tonsils, and that red.
the wooden stick turns back to tree
with the old bones.
plastic artificial limbs required,
let invisible veins reunite
with invisible sensation,
twisting rainbow wires
bring tidings to the home.
plastic mansions
in landfill wonderland
while all else turns, to earth.
breath returns.

Worldly Love, the Tongue



whispering drone failed delighting
 high-pitched squeals, switch igniting,
 as the parts all struggle to run.
 the golden coin buys another yellow hour,
 injections stir reflections, of smoke.
 the jet stream is trailed by gun.
 many voices rise and fall, but the descent
 offers no descendant of reply.
 talking boxes cry,
 canned momentary pleasure flashing
 like lightning, then passing, away.
 nothing alights, save night.
 the moments in between pitch-black
 but with that dull ache of a flicker
 begging to burn.
 these lights never shine steady.
 if the screen goes black at the return,
 the shadows will show no tears,
 of these in the wasted land waiting,
 yet near fully unaware.

Worldly Knowing, the Exploration



long twining trail
lead past particles of dust
toward fireballs,
carefully counted stars,
distant dwindling lights,
each named from bounded texts
of those who have died.
hundreds of years passing,
blue giant, bright giant, white
dwarf, carbon star, yellow hypergiant
caught in yellow evolutionary void.
constellations shifting,
but body never drifting,
the wilderness keeps her secrets.
unfathomed nova recorded in text,
vanished back to the finite,
magi following disappearing star.
soft dawn always leads back,
to carbon black night,
return.

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- ¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 165.
- ² Millard Lampell, Introduction, *O, Appalachia: Artists of the Southern Mountains*. By Ramona Lampell, Millard Lampell, David Larkin, Michael Freeman, and Paul Rocheleau (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1989), 13. Further source of Lampell quoting from the Bible, Ps.121: 1.
- ³ Kant, 228.
- ⁴ Kant, 78.
- ⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959), 116.
- ⁶ Eliade, 117-8.
- ⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" in *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics (SPEP)*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 167.
- ⁸ Merleau-Ponty, 161.
- ⁹ O app. 12
- ¹⁰ Ibn al-'Arabi quoted in source III 38.12 in William C Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Al-'Arabi's Cosmology*. (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 338.
- ¹¹ Chittick, III 377.11, 332.
- ¹² Lampell, 13
- ¹³ Kant, 187.
- ¹⁴ Original initiation of this study by Charles Darwin when visiting the Galapagos Islands in 1835. At least 13 species of finch developed on these islands from what is believed to have been a single ancestor. Brief overview of topic may be found on website by Beth Daley and Richard Saltus, "Adaptive Radiation: Darwin's Finches," *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/01/6/I_016_02.html>. (09 Apr. 2011).
- ¹⁵ Sir Walter Raleigh quote found on opening page of Lampell *O Appalachia*.
- ¹⁶ Kant, 83.
- ¹⁷ Ibn al-'Arabi in Chittick, IV 328.26, 333.
- ¹⁸ Ibn al-'Arabi in Chittick, IV 393.10, 332.
- ¹⁹ Kant, 231.
- ²⁰ Fakhr al-Din al-Razi 3 in Chittick, 332.
- ²¹ Ibn al-'Arabi in Chittick, II 309.13, 332-333.
- ²² Eliade, 45.
- ²³ *Ibid.* 44.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* 45.
- ²⁵ Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*. Trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT, 1985), 188.
- ²⁶ The term *hierophany* here refers to the idea of the manifestation of the holy, Eliade, 21.
- ²⁷ Blumenberg, 151.
- ²⁸ Blumenberg, 39.
- ²⁹ Further information can be found in online Turkish language dictionary <http://www.nisanyansozluk.com/>.