

**Rachael Goodyer: Necessity and the Experience of Tragedy in Stanley Cavell
Harvard University**

Stanley Cavell closes 'Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy' with the reflection that 'philosophy concerns those necessities we cannot, being human, fail to know.' The plural 'necessities' immediately guards us against interpreting Cavell in the standard metaphysical sense. He is not speaking of those propositions which are true in every possible world. But if not these necessities, which? This paper aims to give a unified account of necessity in Cavell's work: one which points up how he saw philosophy and literature communing with each other. I argue that the necessities of which Cavell speaks are the deeply entrenched conventions which regulate human life. It is the deep-rootedness of these conventions that makes them hard to attend to as conventions – as communally produced rules subject to change.