

THE CRITICAL THEORIES OF BROOKS AND FRYE

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For Peter New

Vanity is so deeply rooted in the heart of man that a soldier, a camp follower, a cook, a common porter will brag to gain the admiration of the public. Even philosophers covet it, and critics, who adopt a hostile attitude to most writers, still desire the reputation of writing well themselves; while those who read the critics hope to enhance their own reputation by such reading; and it may well be that I who write these words am moved by the same desire; . . .

Pascal, Pensées, ft. 137.

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INTRODUCTION

In the following pages an attempt is made to examine the critical theories of Cleanth Brooks and Northrop Frye. Evaluative accounts of their theoretical standpoints are followed by close consideration of the essays they have written on The Waste Land. This procedure has been adopted on the grounds that the value of a theory depends upon the quality of the practical criticism which results from its application or upon which it is based.

The choice of Brooks and Frye is not arbitrary. Hazard Adams' comment that Frye's is "the most influential body of critical theory since the New Critics"¹ suggests that the consideration of Brooks and Frye will raise most of the important issues that twentieth century criticism had discussed. Among these are questions of the relation of belief and of science to criticism. Both these problems are dealt with explicitly by the two critics. Since Frye is sometimes thought of as representing "a reversal of the dominant movement of early twentieth century criticism"² attention is given to the relationship between the theories of Brooks and of Frye.

A poem was taken as a focus because it is "relatively manageable"³ and because it "raises the basic questions of literary theory".³ The Waste Land was chosen for a number

of reasons: it is one of the most discussed poems of the century; it has been evaluated very differently and continues to arouse widely diverging responses. Furthermore, its structure lends itself to varying interpretations in a way in which Ben Jonson's "To Heaven", for instance, does not. Because it is surrounded by no critical orthodoxy, its critics are able to take the stance they wish without inhibition.

The fact that the poem was written by a poet influenced by symbolisme also recommended it for the present purpose. An attempt is made to show that because Brooks and Frye share some basic convictions of the symbolist movement they are not moved to ask questions which to a critic of a different persuasion such as, say, Yvor Winters, seem crucial.

CHAPTER I

CHANGING EMPHASIS

In the following pages an attempt is made to give a brief account of the development of Brooks' critical theory. The object is to demonstrate the fact that The Hidden God is chiefly about the novel whereas Modern Poetry and the Tradition and The Well-Wrought Urn concern themselves only with poetry and to show that it relates to Brooks' growing willingness to relate the statement of the poem or novel to his own experience.

In the original Preface to The Well-Wrought Urn we read: "The positivists have tended to explain the miracle [of the survival of art] away in a general process of reduction which hardly stops short of reducing the 'poem' to the ink itself".¹ When we recall the climate of intellectual opinion in the thirties and forties we can understand Brooks' ridicule. We may take as typical Rudolph Carnap's statement that "poetry does not contain knowledge".² Poetry was under attack from a point of view which asserted that any statement of value was merely an emotive utterance. The "facts" established by science claimed a superior authority to the tendentious statements and equivalences of poetry.

Brooks' debt to I. A. Richards is self-confessed³ and he frequently quotes from Richards' work. Richards was

a critic who had been strongly influenced both by the positivists and by scientific psychology. The influence was strong enough for Richards to be convinced "that literature is not to be judged by the statement it makes --- by the truth of what it says. Probably it says nothing; if it does say something it is probably false; and since true statement is the prerogative of science, criticism must have no concern with it".⁴ Richards, therefore, developed the idea of literature as pseudo-statement. Brooks, however, was able to find a theory of perception which enabled him to remove poetry to a realm where it was autonomous.

It is evident in Brooks' numerous discussions of the relationship between science and poetry⁵ that he believed poetry to be threatened by science. The following passage is typical:

For poetic symbols are not true. The statement that they are true is in itself a metaphor. The didactic view of poetry, with its emphasis on the illustrative function of metaphor, assumes that poetic symbols are to stand for ideas, and naturally true ideas are to be preferred to false. Under such a theory the goodness of a poem is to a great extent determined by its truth. This, however, is to bring poetry into a competition with science, which falsifies their real relationship.⁶

The jarring effect of the final sentence is immediately notable. It at least hints that the competition is one which poetry will inevitably lose. Brooks is hampered by the narrowness of his conception of truth. He capitulates too easily by confusing truth about the physical world and

what may inadequately be termed moral truth. But the result for Brooks' criticism was that he turned, following his mentors Tate and Ransom, to Kant for a theory of perception which would lift the burden of proof from poetic communication.

As William J. Handy puts it: "Kant called for a distinction to be made between the understanding, the faculty which reduces its object to a concept in order to classify it, and the imagination, the faculty which maintains the object in a presentation in order to know it as it is, undistorted by logical reduction, Kant insisted that the kinds of being represented by the two forms of the judgement were ontologically distinct".⁷ Thus Brooks writes "science gives always an abstract description and because abstract, powerful; whereas poetry attempts a complete, a total description of the object . . .".⁸ He talks of "two modes of perception, that of analytic reason and that of the synthesizing imagination",⁹ and shows his suspicion of any theory which does not establish the unique importance of poetic communication: ". . .one is jealous for the autonomy of poetry: one shrinks from the notion that philosophical positions are so far determinative of poetic value as to require no more than adequate expression for the production of good poetry, or else could not, however adequately expressed, possibly

yield good poetry".¹⁰ The separation between philosophical communication and poetic communication becomes complete; the difference is not merely of degree but of type. Poetry is autonomous because it offers a sort of knowledge not elsewhere available; it reassembles the fragmented world which is the legacy that science has left us.

The stage is now set for the appearance of the close reading method for which Brooks is best known. Warrant for it is again to be found in Kant. William J. Handy quotes the following from The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement:

"And by an Aesthetical Idea I understand the representation of the Imagination which occasions much thought without; however, any definite thought, i.e. any concept being adequate to it; it consequently cannot be completely compassed and made intelligible by language".¹¹

The following passage in The Well-Wrought Urn, in which Brooks draws a conclusion from his practical criticism, is remarkably similar to the preceding passage from The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement.

Brooks merely uses the word "idea" in place of Kant's translator's "concept": "To sum up our examination of the poem has not resulted in our locating an idea or set of ideas which the poet has communicated with certain appropriate decorations. Rather, our examination has carried us further and further into the poem itself in a process of explanation".¹²

This passage is not exceptional: it could be replaced by

numerous similar ones in Brooks' work. The communication made by a poem is irreducible. The critic can never paraphrase a poem perfectly because "no concept" can be "adequate to it". The Well-Wrought Urn can be considered as an attempt to demonstrate at length "the inseparability of intuition and expression".¹³

The critic's attention must therefore be concentrated on the poem as a unique object. René Wellek argues that "Kant did suggest or rather revive a very important criterion for the judgement of art: the analogy of the organism".¹⁴ Relying upon Kant's distinctions, Romantic critics such as Coleridge also came to view the poem as an organism. Hazard Adams refers to the "metaphors of organism that developed among Romantic critics to describe poems. Poems are seen according to this metaphor, as objects that generate their own principles of order".¹⁵ It is only necessary to glance at the indexes of Brooks' publications to recognize his debt to Coleridge. The debt is especially evident in this connection. A few quotations will adequately illustrate this: "[to be content with reductions and substitutions] is to take the root or the blossom of the tree for the tree itself".¹⁶ The beauty of a poem is: "the flowering of the whole plant, and needs the stalk, the leaf and the hidden roots".¹⁷ "[The poem] represents an organic structure."¹⁸ "We must examine the bole and the roots, and most of all,

their organic interrelations."¹⁹ Early in The Well-Wrought Urn Brooks quotes the passage in Coleridge which emphasises: "the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader . . .to the rapid flow, the quick change, and the playful nature of the thoughts and images [in . . . Shakespeare]".²⁰ The hold it exercised on Brooks' mind can be judged from the fact that he repeats it three times in as many pages in a passage in which he is discussing his methodology. He clearly believed in its essential truth and followed its directive.

This suggestion would have been reinforced by what he had read in Richards, who we remember had written a book on Coleridge. John Holloway suggests that the method was established by analogy with scientific method: "A poem, for example, being rather like a scientific specimen, the complex structure of which needs to be laid bare, and a critic requiring the detachment, fine discrimination, patient persistence, and sharp cutting-edge of a biologist".²¹ But it is not necessary to pause longer on this point; whatever analogy most influenced Brooks, the result was a renewed sense of the unity of the poem. He writes of the "union which the creative imagination effects".²² The discovery of the principle of order amidst complexity becomes the critic's task. In The Well-Wrought Urn we find that Brooks' initial premises have lead him to the following conclusion:

"the common goodness which the poems share will have to be stated, not in terms of 'content' or 'subject matter' in the usual sense in which we use these items but rather in terms of structure".²³ There follows the usual cautious qualification that Brooks usually supplies: "the term 'structure' is certainly not altogether satisfactory as a term",²⁴ but it is evident that the emphasis in Brooks' most influential work has inevitably been upon certain rhetorical and structural devices such as irony, paradox and ambiguity. It is also quite consistent that the criteria which Brooks invokes for judgement is often simply success or failure: "the poem is an undoubted success",²⁵ the emphasis, as has been seen, being upon construction rather than communication. We can also recognise the significance of the statement: ". . .the poet is most truthfully described as a poietes or maker, not as an expositor or communicator"²⁶ for Brooks' approach.

Some of the terms which are most familiar to a reader of Brooks' work: irony, paradox, complex of attitudes, and ambiguity, have already been mentioned. If they are compared with the key terms of a critic such as Leavis, "discrimination, centrality, poise, responsibility", for instance, their abstract and technical ring is unmistakable; and what is also striking is the fact that none of them can be a criterion of value in itself. It has been seen that, for

Brooks, the poetic artefact is perceived by the faculty of the imagination which is distinct from logical perception. It is possible to extend this point and to say that whatever is perceived by the imagination cannot be evaluated by the faculty of reason. This is what is suggested by Handy when he writes that "the singular advance made by modern philosophy . . . is the insistence that the logical formulation of human experience is but one symbolic formulation and that other symbolic formulations are possible".²⁷ Brooks does not, however, direct his argument this way. He becomes increasingly willing to evaluate these "symbolic formulations". The belief that there is no way of evaluating different "symbolic formulations" of reality is tenable on the level of abstract theorising but, as has been seen from Brooks' practice, it would be crippling for the critic. In the following passage from The Well-Wrought Urn we find Brooks bravely trying to face the consequence of his premises. He first contrasts two distinct uses of language: that of science and that of art: "The terms of science are abstract symbols which do not change under the pressure of the context. They are pure (or aspire to be pure) denotations; they are defined in advance. They are not warped into new meanings. But where is the dictionary which contains the terms of a poem?".²⁸ The language of science has been stripped of its resonance so that it may precisely classify

aspects of reality. The language of poetry, on the contrary, uses all the inherent capacities of language for meaning in order to constitute reality:

It is not enough for the poet to analyse his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts. His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it is to be a true poem, is a simulacrum of reality -- in this sense, at least, it is an "imitation" -- by being an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience.²⁹

The use of the phrase "simulacrum of reality" demonstrates that Brooks inevitably compared the account of experience in the poem to his own account and secondly it hints at Brooks' aforementioned deference to science. To be pedantic to a purpose, we may reproduce the O.E.D. definition of "simulacrum":

- 1) A material image made a representation of some deity, person or thing.
- 2) Something having merely the form or appearance of a certain thing, without possessing its substance or proper qualities.
- 3) A mere image, a specious imitation or likeness of something.

The undertone which makes the poem "a mere image" of reality rather than another "symbolic formulation" of it is unavoidable. There is a tacit acceptance of the rule of science and positivism. Thus we see that the autonomy guaranteed for art by the statement -- "The artistic con-

sciousness [is] different in kind from the rational consciousness"³⁰ -- could leave the poem in a sort of limbo.

In practice, however, we find Brooks moving between an analysis which emphasizes the unique quality of poetic communication and an evaluation dependent on such terms as "maturity" for which his system gives him no warrant. The movement is between the convictions and technique displayed in The Well-Wrought Urn and those displayed in The Hidden God. Brooks wrote only of poetry in his first two books which were written when the Kantian influence was strongest. This is understandable because it is extremely difficult to demonstrate the unique quality of the communication made by the novel which is usually written in language which is closer to prose than poetry. It follows that Brooks begins to write about the novel only when his emphasis is upon the "maturity" of what is communicated and not its unique nature. In the following passage from the first chapter of The Hidden God we are immediately conscious of the shift: "The genuine artist presumably undertakes to set forth some vision of life -- some imaginative apprehension of it which he hopes will engage our imagination. He give us his own intuition and his own insight into the human situation. It may prove to be a paltry insight; it may constitute a trivial view".³¹ Here the emphasis is clearly on communication, not on structure; and the final sentence shows no hesitation to evaluate what is communicated. In the rest of the book

Brooks' standards are explicitly Christian.

But since the chief concern is with an essay from the earlier period, an examination of Brooks' discussions of some of the techniques of poetry is necessary. An attempt is made in what follows to show the way in which they illustrate the tension between the differing emphases which have been discerned in Brooks' criticism. In Modern Poetry and the Tradition, Brooks is unequivocal about the centrality of metaphor to poetry: "Metaphor is not to be considered, then, as an alternative of the poet, which he may elect to use or not, since he may state the matter directly or straightforwardly if he chooses. It is frequently the only means available if he is to write at all".³² But while Brooks can claim that metaphor makes poetic communication unique he cannot claim that it makes it valuable. How, then, is the figure to be judged? Our only test for the validity of any figure must be an appeal to the whole context in which it occurs: Does it contribute to the "total effect or not"?³³ It is not evident what sort of "total effect" Brooks would approve. He believes that "the poet's attitude is a highly important element of what is communicated; and figurative language is continually used to indicate shadings of attitude".³⁴ The phrase "shadings of attitude" merits particular notice. Such an equation of complexity with maturity as is found established in the following quotation

is not, therefore, unexpected: "The ability to be tender and, at the same time, alert and aware intellectually is a complex attitude, a mature attitude".³⁵ The argument can be reduced to the following: metaphor best communicates complex attitudes; complexity of attitude leads to the maturity which is embodied in great poetry; metaphor is therefore the language of great poetry. Brooks is having it both ways: by the virtual equation of metaphor, complexity and maturity (metaphor guarantees complexity; complexity guarantees maturity) he derives his evaluative criteria from the unique quality of the object. But the criterion established is really a very narrow one which best fits the types of poetry which formed Brooks' tastes -- metaphysical and modern. Conviction and the subsequent exploration of one substantial "world-view" can as well be the basis of great poetry as the sort of scepticism with which Brooks associates maturity in the following: "nearly all mature attitudes represent some sort of mingling of the approbative and the satirical".³⁶ The danger of this attitude is that it will become prescriptive. At the close of the chapter "Wit and High Seriousness" in Modern Poetry and the Tradition Brooks writes: "One is even tempted to indulge in the following paradox: namely, that wit, far from being a playful aspect of the mind, is the most serious aspect, and that the only poetry which possesses high seriousness in the deepest sense is the poetry of wit".³⁷ Brooks' criti-

cises Frost as follows: "The poetry is diluted and diffuse. A significant symptom of the diffuseness is the absence of metaphor. The very minimum of imagery is used."³⁸ and succumbs to the temptation of requiring certain favourite devices to be present in poetry. In The Well-Wrought Urn Brooks writes: "[The poet] must work by contradiction and qualification."³⁹ and "All the subtler states of emotion . . . necessarily demand metaphor for their expression".⁴⁰ This does seem to be the rationalization of a limited taste. The attitudes established in Jonson's "On my first Sonne" or "To Heaven" are surely mature but they are achieved largely by exploring one account of experience in depth rather than by the inclusion of other conflicting accounts. Precision of statement is achieved through the careful use of verse form and syntax, rhythm and stress. The objection is finally to Brooks' view of maturity, and this objection will be made explicit after a consideration of several poetic techniques which are valued because they substantiate such a view.

The first of these is an idea which Brooks borrows from Richards that poetry must include ironic attitudes in order to preclude ironic readings. Brooks quotes Richards: "Irony . . . consists in the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses; this is why poetry which is exposed to it is not of the highest order, and why irony itself is

so constantly a characteristic of poetry which is".⁴¹ Brooks remarks that the "sentimental poet makes us feel that he is sacrificing the totality of his vision in favour of a particular interpretation".⁴² In the poetry he admires: "[There] is a lively awareness of the fact that the obvious attitude toward a given situation is not the only possible attitude".⁴³ This is clearly connected with Brooks' sense of the dramatic nature of poetry which will soon be discussed but it is first necessary to ask whether or not the process which Brooks describes has the effect he assumes it has. Can any poem ever guard against its being summarily dismissed? Surely an ironic attitude to an ironic poem is always a possibility.

In Modern Poetry and the Tradition Brooks asks the reader to "consider the poetry of wit as a dramatization of the lyric".⁴⁴ He continues: "Donne's poems are dramatic -- not only fundamentally but on the most obvious level. [They] are . . . dialogues".⁴⁴ He censures the Romantic poet for not being dramatic enough; and finally argues that: "The principles of poetic organization, developed to their logical conclusion, . . . carry the poem over into drama".⁴⁵ The dramatic is not just considered as a technique in poetry but as an aspect of its essential nature. This seems once again to be a rationalization of a taste for the metaphysicals. But there is another reason why the analogy is so welcome

to Brooks: it enables poetry to evade the responsibility of direct statement. A number of views of a situation are expressed in Antony and Cleopatra but none of them can be extracted as the view of the poet. There is theoretically no necessity of centrality of evaluation and attitude to be embodied in the poem. Again Brooks' theory is such that poetry escapes from the competition with science. A poem is not required to conclude with a statement which would have to justify itself in the world of analytic philosophy and empiricism: "The poem does not merely eventuate in a logical conclusion".⁴⁶ It embodies "the unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude".⁴⁷ Brooks adopts Richards' psychological account of art in the following:

The conclusion of the poem is the working out of the various tensions -- set up by whatever means -- by propositions, metaphors, symbols. The unity is achieved by a dramatic process not a logical; it represents an equilibrium of forces, not a formula. It is 'proved' as a dramatic conclusion is proved: by its ability to resolve the conflicts which have been accepted as the *données* of the drama.⁴⁸

The analogy of the drama can be a helpful one; but when every poem is explored dramatically we inevitably get such perverse readings as Brooks' of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" upon which Lee T. Lemon comments ironically but with good reason: "not even romantic poets speak to urns and expect answers".⁴⁹

It also leads to his unquestioning acceptance of the organization of The Waste Land. He is prepared for, perhaps

prejudiced in favour of a type of poetry in which widely differing evaluative attitudes are taken. The analogy with the drama allows him to write his essay on The Waste Land without seriously considering whether or not the lack of a central evaluative stance results in irresponsibility.

In the passage just quoted the terminology "tensions", "equilibrium of forces" could almost have been deliberately chosen to evade any reference to the meaning of the poem. Here Brooks is at the pole of his criticism which is concerned with structure. But, as has been shown, at his best he is continually aware of the fact that "form" and "content" are inseparable. What, therefore, can the critic say about the poem? Most modern critics would agree that no paraphrase can give the exact equivalent of its meaning. Brooks is obviously among them but as he himself points out:

"There is . . . a very serious question whether the paraphrasable elements have primacy".⁵⁰ He concedes that the critic can usefully and accurately say "what the general effect of the poem is: The Rape of the Lock is about the foibles of an eighteenth century belle"⁵¹ and he continues:

"We can very properly use paraphrases as pointers and as short-hand references provided that we know what we are doing and that we see plainly that the paraphrase is not the real core of meaning which constitutes the essence of the poem".

Brooks realises that the theoretical implication of his

position taken to its extreme would render criticism impossible. The only response the critic could consistently make to a question about a poem would be to repeat the whole poem. "The poem says what the poem says."⁵² But this is more than "a graceless bit of tautology". It is the testimony of experience that criticism often leads to a greater understanding of a poem. The statement is a deliberate denial of what Lee T. Lemon calls the "congruence" of a poem; its relationship to the world of experience. Brooks is, however, left with the problem of vindicating his own critical comments; after an ingenious and elaborate criticism of The Waste Land, he writes: "The account given above is a statement merely of the 'prose meaning' and bares the same relation to the poem as does the 'prose meaning' of any other poem".⁵³ The style of the rest of the essay, however, is hardly diffident enough to keep this in the reader's mind. Brooks' most reasonable statement of his position is to be found in the essay on Yeats in The Well-Wrought Urn, where he writes: "any statement which we attempt to abstract from the whole context as the 'meaning' of the poem is seen to be qualified and modified by the context of the poem as a whole".⁵⁴ Here the phrasing, probably contrary to Brooks' intention, suggests that what is said can be, by a process of abstraction, isolated from its qualifications and modifications adequately enough, at least, to refer it to the rest of our experience. There

seems no other way to read Blake's "A Poison Tree", for example, than as a suggestion that the expression of passionate anger is preferable to its repression, whatever qualifications and modifications the stanza form, rhythm, metre and imagery convey. But Brooks does not generally advocate such an approach. The next paragraph is more typical: "the unifying principle of the organisation which is the poem is an attitude or complex of attitudes. We can discover, to be sure, propositions which seem to characterise, more or less accurately, the unifying attitude. But if we take such propositions to be the core of the poem, we are contenting ourselves with reductions and substitutions". The last sentence again seems to be an evasion; it is notable that in Brooks' reading, Keats' Urn ends up saying something about aesthetics which Brooks fully approves; and that despite his protestations, the paraphrase he gives of The Waste Land is a statement with which Brooks agrees. It is frequently impossible to tell whether Brooks' comments on a poem are his own assertions or paraphrases.⁵⁵

Brooks is willing to grant that: "['Among School Children'] seems to celebrate 'natural' beauty, the world of becoming; ['Sailing to Byzantium'] intellectual beauty, the world of pure being";⁵⁶ which is about as simplified a statement as one could make about the two poems. Brooks continues as follows: "To which world is Yeats committed? Which does he choose?"⁵⁷ and answers his own question rather

abruptly: "The question is idle ---".⁵⁷ He demonstrates in his succeeding remarks that, for him, the question is vital: "One cannot know the world of being save through the world of becoming (though one must remember that the world of becoming is a meaningless flux apart from the world of being which it implies)".⁵⁸ This is Brooks' belief, then. It is interesting to guess how he would respond to a play by Beckett in which language is used meaningfully to point to the "meaningless flux". Surely he would not be able merely to say that Beckett has developed "an attitude to the situation"⁵⁹ and to leave it at that; implicit in Beckett's play would be substantial assumptions about the quality of existence which Brooks himself would not share. He would be faced with the possibility of judging the governing attitude towards the situation. This is what he does continually in the essay on Hemingway in The Hidden God: "Even men and women who do not have God must try to make up for him in some sense, quixotic as that gesture will seem and, in ultimate terms at least, desperate as that gesture must be. The Christian will feel that it is ultimately desperate in that man can never find anything that will prove a substitute for God".⁶⁰ It is the strength of the book that the reader knows where Brooks stands; he takes up a position just as solidly in his earlier books, but he disguises it and, at times, seems to disguise it so successfully that he

does not recognize it himself. Consider the following sentences:

If the last sentence seems to make Yeats more of a metaphysician than we feel he really was, one can appeal to the poems themselves. Both of them are shot through and through with a recognition of the problem which the reflective human being can never escape -- the dilemma which is the ground of the philosophic problem; and the solution which is reached in neither case solves the problem. The poet in both cases comes to terms with the situation which everywhere witnesses to the insolubility of the problem.⁶¹

Brooks assumes that the truth can never be known about such questions; and in view of his own narrow conception of "truth" at this stage he certainly could not know it. But this scepticism is just as much a belief as any dogma. The centrality which Brooks attempts to guarantee by being uncommitted is a commitment in itself; and it is arguable that such a position is philosophically untenable.⁶² Whether or not this is so, Brooks believes that profound questioning will always lead to a paradox: "almost any insight important enough to warrant a great poem apparently has to be stated in . . . terms [of paradox]".⁶³ But the limitation of this view is pointed out by Erich Heller's comment that: "ambiguity and paradox are the manner of speaking when reality and symbol, man's mind and his soul, are at cross-purposes".⁶⁴ For anyone attempting to transcend these conflicts, be he Christian, Nietzschean or Platonist, Brooks' view will seem inadequate, and the criteria of evaluation

invoked by each of the aforementioned unlikely Triumvirate will consequently be quite different.

CHAPTER II

BROOKS' APPROACH TO THE WASTE LAND

In The Well-Wrought Urn, Brooks discusses the peculiar problems posed by modern poetry: "some modern poetry is difficult because it is bad -- the total experience remains chaotic and incoherent because the poet could not master his material and give it a form".¹ This sentence implies that, while experience, by its very nature is "chaotic and incoherent", the poet's task is to organise it, "to give it a form". Throughout his criticism he insists on the necessity of poetic unity and in the final chapter of The Well-Wrought Urn he defines more precisely the essence of this unity: "The characteristic unity of a poem . . . lies in the unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total governing attitude".²

In his criticism of The Waste Land it is clear that Brooks finds the "total governing attitude" to be that of the "protagonist". It is significant that this was originally a dramatic term. It is not, therefore, surprising that Brooks gives an account of the protagonist's characterization: "The function of the conversation [in the Hofgarten] is to establish the class and character of the protagonist".³ The first eighteen lines of the poem⁴ are "a reverie on the part of the protagonist in which specu-

lation on life glides off into memory of an actual conversation". The protagonist is thus included in the "us" of the phrase: "summer surprised us", and the "we" of the phrase: "And when we were children". Brooks account of the character of the protagonist may be extended as follows:

ll. 8-11 and ll. 13-18 establish the protagonist as someone who has travelled in Europe and as a relation of the aristocracy. Line 12, since it is in the first person and not in quotation marks, at first presents some difficulty, especially since the bad German contrasts with the protagonist's aristocratic connections. In view of the feminine "Russian" and Eliot's own statement that the hermaphrodite Tiresias "sees . . . the substance of the poem", however, we may guess that this is an attempt to universalise the protagonist. The bad German would thus make him/her, in a sense, classless and would thus tend to give his judgements authority since he would be invulnerable to any allegations of prejudice.

It is clear that Brooks accepts the authority of the central consciousness of the poem. After quoting from Eliot's essay on Baudelaire "it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least we exist.", Brooks writes: "The last statement is highly important for an understanding of The Waste Land. The fact that men have lost the knowledge of good and evil, keeps them from being alive, and is the justification for viewing the modern waste

land as a realm in which the inhabitants do not even exist".⁵ There is no way of distinguishing whether Brooks is engaging in exegesis and saying: "This is what the poem says" or whether it is a statement of his own belief that what the poem says is true. We find this confusion frequently in his essay: "even love cannot exist in the waste land.",⁶ and "Our contemporary waste land is in large part the result of our scientific attitude --- of our complete secularization".⁷ Since these statements are so sweeping and so pessimistic we may rightly ask what warrant the poet gives us to accept their authority.

We may first examine the justly praised hyacinth passage. Brooks says that it "states the opposite half of the paradox which underlines the poem: namely, the life at its highest moments of meaning and intensity resembles death".⁸ In view of the lines which Brooks himself quotes "I was neither/Living nor dead", it is evident that the paradox has been imported into this context to fit his scheme. Later there is reference to the "ecstasy-of-love passage".⁹ But is this ecstasy really conveyed by the poetry? The snatch of conversation which passes through the protagonist's mind: "You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;/They called me the hyacinth girl!" certainly recalls a poignant moment. In the next two lines: "Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,/Your arms full, and your hair wet,"

delicate touches such as the lateness of the hour, the hint of the full shape of the girl's arms, and her wet hair combine to present a breathtaking erotic moment. But what is the protagonist's response:

I could not
 Speak, my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer.

He may have been deeply affected but remembrance of the moment is associated with desolation. That the reference is not to consummation but to impotence is later confirmed:

Damyata: The boat responded
 Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
 The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
 Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
 To controlling hands (ll. 418-22)

The protagonist has come to understand his own failure but in the earlier passage he was a sufferer in The Waste Land unable to give, sympathise or control. His own spiritual poverty at that stage is shown by his visit to Madame Sosostris of whom Brooks writes: "Madame Sosostris has fallen a long way from the high function of her predecessors".¹⁰ Brooks, however, does not note the protagonist's own awareness of the degraded aspect of the pseudo-religious appetites which Madame Sosostris serves. But this awareness is clearly shown by the bathos of the phrase: "Had a bad cold", and the antithesis between "wisest" and "wicked". It is, therefore, significant that the protagonist involves himself in the

degradation by making his visit. Brooks does not notice that in ll. 60-68 the protagonist is no longer involved in the degradation but is its judge. This change in perspective is proved by the invocation of the authority of Dante in the line "I had not thought death had undone so many", of which William Myers says: "[This allusion] suggests the possibility of achieving, with the assistance of a guide such as Vergil or Tiresias, a sane, objective viewpoint. In the 'Inferno', Dante may be a sinner, but he is not one of the damned".¹¹ But the surrealist shock of the exclamations in ll. 69-75, hardly assures us of the company of such a guide. Brooks gives an account of the secondary effects of allusion in these lines in great detail but surely by his minute analysis he misses their overwhelming impact which is one of hysteria. The final line, alluding to Baudelaire: "You! hypocrite lecteur -- mon semblable -- mon frère" involves the reader in this hysteria. As William Myers points out: "Baudelaire . . . savagely and unreservedly traps himself and us in the horror of ennui which he is raging against".¹² We see the character of the protagonist being handled arbitrarily by the poet. We must assume that the description of the pub scene is conveyed through the protagonist's consciousness if we are to have any way at all of placing it. Thus the sneer in the lines: "Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,/And

they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot" is the protagonist's and its effect is to make us suspect the quality of his attitudes. Brooks is sensitive enough to tone to be uneasy with l. 172 and his attempt to defend it takes its usual form: he ignores the effect which would be obvious to the reader who did not even know it is an allusion and concentrates on the secondary effects:

. . .the only matter which calls for comment is the line spoken by Ophelia in 'Hamlet', which ends the passage. Ophelia, too, was very much concerned about love, the theme of conversation between the women in the pub. As a matter of fact, she was in very much the same position as that of the woman who has been the topic of conversation between the two ladies whom we have just heard. And her poetry, like Philomela's, had come out of suffering. We are probably to look for the relevance of the allusion to her here rather than in an easy satiric contrast between Elizabethan glories and modern sordidness.¹³

Exactly where the "here" is we are not able to ascertain. Surely the dominant effect of the line arises from the word "sweet" which, in context is heavily ironic. The cumbrous irony arises from the fact that the ladies have hardly been characterised as "sweet". But because the irony in this line is that of the observer the attitude is felt to be one of revulsion. There is no hint of human sympathy. We become increasingly unwilling to accept the evaluations of this consciousness; although at times there is an implicit call for us to do so. It could be argued that the protagonist

displays a consistent development in the course of the poem until he has left the "arid plain" behind. But how are we to take the line: "Shall I at least set my lands in order?". Brooks comments: "Even if the civilization is breaking up . . . there remains the person obligation".¹⁴ This reading depends on a contrast between the assumed chaos of the civilization and the possibility of personal stability. Brooks glosses the lines with a passage from "Thoughts After Lambeth" which fits the theme of the dangers of secularization which he has isolated. He ignores the allusion to Isaiah 38:1, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die and not live". Williamson comments on it as follows: "awareness is not will, and so he thinks of preparing for death".¹⁵ If we rely on the tone of the allusion itself, this comment is clearly apt. We are faced, therefore, with two diametrically opposed interpretations: resolution or resignation. Once again we are unable to decide whether the protagonist is the judge of the situation or its victim. As Brooks himself says: "vagueness is not the same thing as the rich multiplicity of the greatest poetry".¹⁶ In his thematic criticism of the poem, he pays no attention to the "distinctions between self and society and between health and sickness, which must be made if the poem is to have value".¹⁷

Brooks' blindness on this point may be attributable

to his belief in the essentially dramatic nature of poetry. He is only too willing to accept the presence of complexity of attitude and is, as we have seen, willing to accept it as a guarantee of maturity. No one can doubt that the initial problem for the reader is epitomised in the question "Who says what?" and it is a question which Brooks does not adequately answer. His claim that: "Eliot's criticism of the present world is not merely the sentimental one, that this happens to be the twentieth century after Christ and not the seventeenth"¹⁸ is not substantiated by many parts of the poem.

One of the severe limitations of Brooks' account is suggested by his own comment early in his essay: "In view of the state of criticism with regard to the poem, it is best for us to approach it frankly on the basis of theme".¹⁹ The poem is, we are told, "based on a major contrast" and we are not surprised to find that this contrast is a paradox: "The contrast is between two kinds of life and two kinds of death. Life devoid of meaning is death; sacrifice, even the sacrificial death, may be life-giving, an awakening to life. The poem occupies itself to a great extent with this paradox, and with a number of variations upon it".²⁰

We have already seen in the earlier analysis of the hyacinth passage that despite the unequivocal "I was neither/Living nor dead", Brooks is able to read it as an illustration: "that life at its highest moments of meaning and

intensity resembles death".²¹ When we read the comment on the Philomela passage, however, we begin to suspect an almost arbitrary interpretation of the symbolism to make it fit into the critic's scheme: "The Philomela passage, has another importance, however. It is a commentary on how the waste land became waste, it also repeats the theme of the death which is the door to life, the theme of the dying god. The raped woman becomes transformed through suffering into the nightingale: through the violation comes the 'inviolable voice'".²² Brooks' other account of the symbol is just as personal; he writes: "the violation of a woman makes a very good symbol for the process of secularization".²³ It is only after he has decided what the poem is about that he could interpret this symbol in these ways. The glosses are in terms of Brooks' own diagnoses of the problems of the modern world rather than Eliot's. This is amply demonstrated by the quotations he adduces from Tate and Ransom; from Tate: "And rich experience of the great tradition depicted in the room receives a violent shock in contrast with a game that symbolises the inhuman abstraction of the modern mind".²⁴ Thus we read in Brooks: "The abstract game in being used in the contemporary waste land, as in the play, to cover up a rape and is a description of the rape itself".²⁵ But this can, ironically, only be true on a very abstract level. The poem is, we find, being read in terms of Brooks' belief that:

"Our contemporary waste land is in large part the result of our scientific attitude -- of our complete secularization".²⁶

But the other limitation of this sort of thematic criticism is that it blinds Brooks to the tone of the poem.

It is ironic that a rhetorical critic who has written:

"[The poet] can do no more than to try by various devices -- intimation, dramatic shock, change of tone, ironic confrontation, and all the other rhetorical and poetic devices -- to wheedle or bludgeon his audience into attending to what he has to say and, by bringing their faculties to alertness, putting themselves in a position to apprehend his meaning."²⁷

should remain at such a distance from the surface of the poetry. It is as if he is deliberately ignoring the debased parody of Shakespearian blank verse which makes up the first part of "A Game of Chess" in order to enlarge upon Tate's comment: "The woman . . . is, I believe, the symbol of man at the present time".²⁸

But an examination of the tone would suggest that the incident is dramatically presented by a sensibility which we distrust. The allusion to Antony and Cleopatra reminds us of Enobarbus' account of her splendour and makes us contrast it with the vulgarity of the scene with which we are presented. But in the context, the word "synthetic" is a sneer and we wonder whether the rest of the protagonist's judgements are based on such trivia. The verse itself in its imprecision reflects the decadence it attempts

to criticize. The butt of the following lines may be expensive tastelessness but the effect of bathos characterizes the presenting consciousness as effete:

Huge sea-wood fed with copper
 Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
 In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.²⁹

We had seen how Brooks makes much of the significance of the decorative myth but surely the assertion that "still the world pursues" is a statement by the protagonist; and the sneer (there is no other word for it) in the following line: "'Jug, Jug' to dirty ears." reminds us, if we had been able to forget, that we must question his evaluations. The presentation of an exceptionally neurotic altercation in unusually vulgar surroundings by a protagonist who, because he has lost faith in the "withered stumps of time" is full of despair: "I think we are in rats' alley", has been taken by Brooks as a definitive account of the "modern world". He is so intent upon thematic exegesis, e.g. "But the protagonist, [reflects] that in the waste land of modern life even death is sterile -- 'I think we are in rats' alley/Where the dead men lost their bones'",³⁰ that he does not question the warrant for such evaluations.

In the essay on The Waste Land, then, there is little of the close criticism which is the strength of The Well-Wrought Urn. The account of the passage about the typist and the young man carbuncular begins with a total

acceptance of the evaluation which, in Brooks' own terms, it should concretely illustrate. "In the modern waste land however even the relation between man and woman is also sterile."³¹ "The incident between the typist and the carbuncular young man is a picture of 'love' so exclusively and practically pursued that it is not love at all."³² We immediately remark the introduction of one of Brooks' taboo ideas, practicality. The next sentence demonstrates Brooks' cavalier disregard for distinctions that must be made: "The tragic chorus to the scene is Tiresias, into whom perhaps Mr. Eugenides may be said to modulate".³³ But Brooks has just pointed out that Eugenides is a debauchee, whereas Tiresias is "the historical 'expert' on the relation between the sexes". It is clearly of the utmost importance to know who is presenting the incident. But, in fact, the presentation is so biased that we could accept Eugenides as the narrator. The atmosphere is established by the suggestion that the human has been reduced to the mechanical in the phrase "the human engine". The sordidness of the typist's life is stressed in the lines:

At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime,

The juxtaposition emphasizes the prosaic nature of the typist's homecoming as against the romance of a sailor home from the sea. The protagonist displays an extraordinary

aversion to her way of life: "clears her breakfast, lights/
Her stove, and lays out food in tins." The mock heroic in:
"Out of the window perilously spread/Her drying combinations
touched by the sun's last rays", leads to a bathos which
after years of acquaintance with the poem never fails to jar.
As William Myers says, the line "has all the subtlety of a
pre-pubescent schoolboy's dirty joke".³⁴ The choice of the
detail indicates a pubescent sensibility. The snobbish
attitude of:

A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

is one which the reader rejects for its outmoded class pre-
judice. It is not the degradation of the incident which is
in doubt; we question the attitude towards it which we are
encouraged to share. The phrase "half-formed thought"
implies that their automatic conduct is almost fitting; the
presentation tends to deprive the couple of their humanity.
Brooks would seem to be unaware of this; his comment is a
simple moral one which makes the incident fit into his
schematization of the poem: "The essential horror of the act
which Tiresias witnesses in the poem is that it is not
regarded as a sin at all -- is perfectly casual, is merely
the copulation of beasts".³⁵ The act is not nearly so
horrible as Brooks seems to think; what is most disturbing
in the passage is the disgust which the protagonist feels
and which makes him see these sufferers in the waste land

as mere machines: "She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,/And puts a record on the gramophone". We may return to the earlier quotation from Tate and question whether the assumption that the scene can be taken as representative of the relations between man and woman in the modern world. Brooks' comment: "The reminiscence of the lines from Goldsmith's song . . . gives concretely and ironically the utter break-down of traditional standards"³⁶ shows again his total acceptance of the position of the biased observer. This is, we suppose, one of the examples of the typical method of the poem which he describes at the end of his essay: ". . .the statement of beliefs emerges through confusion and cynicism -- not in spite of them".³⁷ But it is quite clear that in this passage the tone is itself cynical.

It is now perhaps time to discuss the question which is most urgently raised by Brooks' essay. We find in the brief theoretical discussions which begin and end it an implicit recognition that his method is diametrically opposed to the principles of contextualism. He writes: "I prefer, however, not to raise just here the question of how important it is for the reader to have an explicit intellectual account of the various symbols and a logical account of their relationship".³⁸ He recognises that some such account is necessary as is shown in his hesitation to assert that the "scaffolding" can be torn down with subsequent rereadings:

"It may well be [my italics] that such rationalization is no more than a scaffolding to be got out of the way before we contemplate the poem itself as poem".³⁹ The phrase "poem itself as poem" represents the formalist pole of Brooks' theory. In the following passage in The Well-Wrought Urn, we find him complaining in similar terms about the quality of the reading public: ". . . a great deal of modern poetry is difficult for the reader simply because so few people, relatively speaking, are accustomed to reading poetry as poetry". He continues by pointing to the limitations of the idea of poetry as communication: "The theory of communication throws the burden of proof upon the poet, overwhelmingly and at once".⁴⁰

But Brooks himself has hardly been able to give us an exemplary criticism of the poem as poem. We have already shown that he does not sufficiently distinguish between his own views and what he considers the view of the poem. This can reach absurd lengths as in the comment on the lines: "O Keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men, / Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!" Brooks writes: "I am inclined to take the Dog (the capital letter is Eliot's) as Humanitarianism and the related philosophies which, in their concern, extirpate the supernatural -- dig up the corpse of the buried god and thus prevent the rebirth of life. For the general idea, see Eliot's essay, 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt'".⁴¹

As if realising that this account of the "Dog" is really quite arbitrary he adds in a footnote: "The reference is perhaps more general still: it may include Naturalism, and Science is the popular conception as the new magic which will enable man to conquer his environment completely".⁴²

But in broadening his account of the "symbol" he only makes it clearer to us that he is investing it with his own meaning; and that he sees the poem referring directly to the world of experience. In view of this we cannot accept the disclaimer which we find near the end of the essay on The Waste Land that: "The account given above is a statement merely of the 'prose meaning' and bears the same relation to the poem as does the 'prose meaning' of any other poem".⁴³

Because of the movement in his emphasis from the earlier books to The Hidden God, however, the way in which he uses The Waste Land in his Retrospective Introduction to Modern Poetry and the Tradition becomes quite acceptable. We can see that he still shares the view of modernity which he believes the poem expresses:

[Tidings of the spanning of the chasm between the life of the emotions and attitudes within the poet, and the universe outside him] might signal an end to the waste-land experience, for if men could now find in their own subjective life something that corresponds to what Mr. Hall calls the "old objective life of shared experience" then they would have re-established a rapport with nature and restored the community of values, the loss of which wasted the land. The quickening rain for which the protagonist in "The Waste Land" yearned would at last have begun to fall.⁴⁴

But there is none of the sleight of hand which first isolates a theme and then precludes criticism of it by the suggestion that we should really read "the poem as poem". The interpretation of the poem and the poem itself are honestly opened to the sort of criticism we find in David Craig's essay, "The Defeatism of The Waste Land".⁴⁵

One chief limitation of Brooks' approach to The Waste Land is that he is not contextualist enough to pay attention to the tone and texture of the verse. He is not, therefore, led to doubt the quality of the sensibility which presents the material. He does not come to terms with the poetic duplicity which invokes mythic structures, Dante, Augustine, etc. as warrants for what is often a superficial analysis of modernity. Another is that he gives an account of the poem as communication while implicitly denying that the communication is made. In view of his agreement: "that poetry is a 'natural' activity, one of the fundamental human activities and not as esoteric one",⁴⁶ the reader could perhaps fairly have expected a discussion of the peculiar problems raised in reading this most esoteric poem but all we get is another disclaimer, already quoted: "I prefer, however, not to raise just here the question of how important it is for the reader to have an explicit intellectual account of the various symbols and a logical account of their relationships".⁴⁷ Brooks' account of the "bundle of quotations with which the poem ends"⁴⁸ is ingenious but who

can hold them together as he reads the last part of the poem? Does he really face the question of whether the reader can bear the weight of responsibility which has been thrown upon him?⁴⁹

The most valuable aspect of Brooks' approach is the emphasis on close reading. It is easily separated from the idea of poem as unique object from which it arose. John Holloway has pointed to the common genealogy of poetic language and of ordinary language: "Literature, of course, is more highly organized, more animated, more subtle than anything in ordinary speech -- sometimes incomparably so -- and it both demands a more intent, trained attention, and can penetrate the quality of experience with greater, with even explosive force. But its germ, its monocellular prototype is one of the familiar modes of ordinary speech".⁵⁰ Brooks has given The Well-Wrought Urn a good example of the working of "intent, trained attention" on lyric poetry. His practice is a continual reminder that we should doubt the adequacy of paraphrase. We should pay infinite attention to the poetic object before we are willing, as he is in The Hidden God, to compare it finally to our own view of experience. It is this comparison which makes the reading of poetry vital. Anything less is mere antiquarianism. As Brooks himself says: "If poetry exists as poetry in any meaningful sense, the attempt [to view it 'sub specie aeternitatis'] must be made".⁵⁷

CHAPTER III

DUBIOUS SYNTHESIS

Frye's work arouses passionate response. Philip Hallie ends his review of four of Frye's books thus: "It seems plain that Frye's supreme system cannot be taught or learned, let alone further developed, because it is made up of impenetrable paradox, profound incoherence, and a bold but ultimately arbitrary disregard for the facts of literary experience".¹ At the close of his article: "Mr. Frye and Evaluation", John Frazer refers to Frye as "someone who is probably doing more to bring discredit upon literary studies than anyone else now writing".² W. K. Wimsatt writes near the beginning of his essay on Frye: "I always write respectfully of literary theorists"³ but by the end it is impossible to agree with him: "Poetry itself is nowadays conceived, at least by some of our more progressive thinkers, as a kind of forgery, that is, a bold visionary mistake".⁴

It is not difficult to see why Frye is so controversial. He proposes a structure for literary criticism which will include within its conceptual scheme all the efforts of other men. Despite his disclaimers he clearly intends to provide "a conceptual framework which criticism alone possesses"⁵ with the system described in the Anatomy. As many of his critics have pointed out Frye is an over-

reacher, a man of hubris. His proclivity for establishing categories is seen from the early Anatomy to his recent article in Daedalus in which he talks of the "myth of concern",⁶ the "myth of freedom"⁷ and the "educational contract".⁸ It often makes his work almost incomprehensible without a glossary. Wimsatt has shown that Frye recently does not use his own terms with consistency.⁹ Frye may be right in believing that the language lacks terms for some of his distinctions; but it is arguable that the obscure terminology is sometimes used as a disguise. Ultimately, as definition succeeds definition, the reader begins to suspect Frye of creating an imaginative universe of his own. The reiterated argument that criticism is not parasitic clears the ground for such creation. Frye tells us that the Menippean satire or anatomy "At its most concentrated . . . presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern. The intellectual structure built up from the story makes for violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative, though the appearance of carelessness that results reflects only the carelessness of the reader or his tendency to judge by a novel-centered conception of fiction".¹⁰ While delivering a sharp rap on the knuckles to his critics, Frye is also identifying his own "intellectual structure" as, in a certain sense, a "vision". The careful reader will not, therefore, be surprised when he reads in the recent article in Daedalus that: "The

function of criticism is to go on doing what literature itself does".¹¹ The reader's annoyance at finding that what is proclaimed as "an impersonal body of consolidating knowledge"¹² is really a Neo-Blakean construct, is surely quite comprehensible.

Equally disturbing are the brief world histories of the imagination which Frye introduces into the Anatomy, The Educated Imagination and the recent Daedalus article. They skate over so many issues which to others seem crucial that they tend to provoke derision. More infuriating is the patronising attitude adopted to those who isolate as crucial the issues which Frye ignores: "belief [associated with historical fact] is really a voluntarily induced schizophrenia, and is probably a fruitful source of the infantilism and the hysterical anxieties about belief which are so frequently found in the neighbourhood of religion, at least in its more uncritical areas".¹³ Had Frye been around to inform Nietzsche that the modern crisis of belief "is really a crisis in understanding the language of belief"¹⁴ the latter would not perhaps have spent the last year of his life in an asylum.

On the following passage from The Morality of Scholarship those who differ from Frye are rhetorically deprived of responsibility: "Today, most responsible theologians would agree that the statement 'There is a God' is of very little religious and no moral significance".¹⁵

The rancor such statements provoke will not, however, lead to a greater understanding of Frye, though it is often an aspect of the response his work occasions. It will be more profitable to examine his article: "Criticism, Visible and Invisible"¹⁶ in order to show how his rhetoric is used to avoid making essential distinctions between good and bad evaluative criticism.

In this article Frye distinguishes between knowledge and wisdom, for which he uses the terms dianoia and nous: "nous is . . . the same knowledge as dianoia: it is the relation between knower and known that is different. The difference is that something conceptual has become existential".¹⁷ Since "literature presents the same distinction"¹⁸ only the dianoia of literature can be directly taught. As in the Polemical Introduction to the Anatomy the experience of literature and the body of knowledge which for Frye constitutes "criticism" are rigorously distinguished. While Frye does not deny the existence of the nous of literature and puts a high price on it -- "Nothing we can teach a student is an acceptable substitute for the faith that a higher kind of contact with literature is possible"¹⁹ -- criticism is always cut off from it. Literary criticism cannot, therefore, be concerned with wisdom.

He then goes on to give his reasons for the conviction that evaluation can have no place in his pubescent social science: "Criticism [which sees Skelton and Wyatt

as 'lesser' poets] had to be superceded by a democratising of literary experience, not merely to do justice to under-rated poets, but to revise the whole attitude to literature in which a poet could be judged by standards derived from another poet, however much 'greater'".²⁰ This is clearly no substantial criticism of evaluation in itself but only of its weaker examples where a poet is judged "by standards derived from another poet". Evaluative criticism, Frye continues, depends on the idea of taste: "The conception of taste is a popular one because it confers great social prestige on the critic".²¹ In view of the earlier emphasis on the word "democratising" it becomes clear that this is by no means an objective argument; it is, rather, the playing of one social prejudice against another. Frye would be quite right to censure the stand of "taste" if it were merely being used by a critic to increase his "social prestige"²¹ but if this is so, Frye convicts himself of the same malpractice: what is the following sentence if it is not an evaluative comment? "Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Middleton Murray, F. R. Leavis, are only a few of the eminent critics who have abused Milton. Milton's greatness as a poet is unaffected by this. . . ." ²² It is evaluation, furthermore, which admits no questioning. Whatever may be said of the inappropriateness of Leavis' attempt in his work on Paradise Lost, to apply the criteria of lyric poetry to epic poetry, he did at least argue his point. In Frye there

is evaluation masquerading as final statement. The evaluative stance is usually caricatured in Frye as one which only permits purely negative or positive judgements. But one of the characteristic terms in the critical vocabulary of Leavis, whom Frye implicitly attacks in most of his discussions of evaluation, is the word "placing". This word suggests that the procedure is far more discriminating and subtle than Frye allows. Frye goes on to caricature further. A Talking of the "X is a failure because" formula, he writes: "nothing can follow 'because' except some kind of pseudo-critical moral anxiety".²³ For Frye the critical sphere is one in which only demonstrable factual knowledge is permitted. Intangibles such as wisdom, intangible because based on subjective preference, can have no place there. Wise and foolish value judgements are, therefore, dismissed en bloc as the products of "pseudo-critical moral anxiety".²³ After another judgement -- "Eliot's 'Prufrock' [is] one of the most penetrating poems of our time"²⁴ -- Frye writes: ". . . as one goes on [reading through the recent reprint of Scrutiny] one has the feeling that . . . concern, which is there and is a very real virtue, gets deflected at some crucial point, and is prevented from fully emerging out of the shadow-battle of anxieties".²⁵ Frye does not tell us precisely where this crucial point is; but more important is the way in which the issues which concerned the Scrutiny critics are dismissed as mere "shadow-battle[s]". Apparently

Scrutiny's diagnosis of modernity was merely a superficial one, probably based on a castration complex.

Consider the following passage:

There are two contexts in which a work of literature is potential, an internal context and an external one. Internally, the writer has a potential theme and tries to actualise it in what he writes. Externally, the literary work, actualised in itself, becomes a potential experience for student, critic, or reader. A "bad" poem or novel is one in which, so the critic feels, a potential literary experience has not been actualised. Such a judgement implies a consensus: the critic speaks for all critics, even if he happens to be wrong. But an actualised work of literature may still fail to become an actualised experience for its reader. The judgement here implies withdrawal from a consensus: however many critics may like this I don't. The first type of judgement belongs primarily to the critical reaction to contemporary literature, reviewing and the like, where a variety of new authors are struggling to establish their authority. The second type belongs primarily to the tactics of critical pressure groups that attempt to redistribute the traditional valuations of the writers of the past in order to display certain new writers, usually including themselves, to better advantage. There is no genuinely critical reason for "revaluation". Both activities correspond in the sexual life to what Freud calls the "polymorphous perverse", the preliminaries of contact with the object. Judicial criticism, or reviewing, is necessarily incomplete: it can never free itself from historical variables such as the direct appeal of certain in-group conventions to the sophisticated critic.²⁶

Here again is the simplification which suggests that evaluation cannot progress beyond a grunt of "Good" or "Bad". There is also a reduction of the role of critic to an arbiter of the quality of literary technique. Henry B. Veatch's

irony is rather heavy-handed but this comment on a passage in Clarendon is to the point here:

. . . one can, if one wishes --- and perhaps one must, if one is a professor of English literature --- let oneself be transported into raptures over the excellence of Clarendon's literary art as displayed in this passage. Yet it would seem that the really significant thing about the piece is not merely that it is so well done, but that it is so undeniably informative and instructive. It tells something about the man, Thomas Wentworth, as well as something about man and human life --- and what it tells is true, is significant, and is of a sort that any human being needs to know.²⁷

The critic, even as Frye depicts him in his most recent writings, especially the article in Daedalus, is concerned with the way in which the knowledge he has accumulated can be related to the world around him. He is not just concerned with whether or not the experience is "actualised" but with the quality of the communication. Secondly the evaluative critic only becomes a dictator if he is read by uncritical minds: he presents an account of the work which he has tried to strip of eccentricity; and agreement on the account obviously precedes agreement as to value. He does not categorise works into the actualised or the non-actualised; he attempts to show what is communicated and to evaluate that communication. The rhetoric in the sentence beginning: "The second type . . ." relies on the assumption that we find throughout Frye that "Judicial criticism . . . can never free itself from historical variables". Only a fool or a saint could claim that his standpoint was based securely upon a

complete comprehension of eternal verity. But some responses are more dependent on historical variables than others; some readings are more idiosyncratic than others. Frye himself has given, in The Well-Tempered Critic, an excellent account of the way in which he was able to purge his own response of an irrelevant association. He concludes: "This purely subjective and associative response did not interfere with my actual critical judgement".²⁸ It may be that, as Frye says: "Every deliberately constructed hierarchy of values in literature known to me is based on a concealed social, moral or intellectual analogy";²⁹ but this need be no reason to attempt to make criticism value-free. It is rather a spur to seek a standpoint based on an (inevitably dim) apprehension of truth. The fashionable cynicism of the final phrase: "in order to display certain new writers, usually including themselves, to better advantage" can be easily dismissed. It is based on the assumption that the worst practices of a small minority of poet-critics inevitably discredit the attempts of all others. The reference to Freud connects with Frye's present use of the word "anxiety".³⁰ The implicit suggestion is that any moral intensity must find its roots in maladjustment; and that the criticisms displaying it would be of more interest to the psychoanalyst than the seeker after knowledge. But finer distinctions than this can be made. It is possible to admire the early work of Yvor

Winters and to find his last book, Forms of Discovery, to be flawed by precisely the sort of anxieties that Frye suggests are an attribute of all evaluative criticism.

The attempt to displace evaluation from its central place in literary criticism is made by Frye with a view to enthroning his own method. His totalitarian claims are made to appear more modest in the following passage by the use of the innocent phrase "above all": "The central activity of criticism, which is the understanding of literature, is essentially one of establishing a context for the works of literature being studied. This means relating them to other things: to their context in the writer's life, in the writer's time, in the history of literature, and above all in the total structure of literature itself or what I call the order of words".³¹ But these claims are nevertheless there. The highest priority becomes relating rather than judging and the categories of the Anatomy are clearly intended to facilitate such relating. If Frye offered his method as a helpful handmaiden to the understanding of literature it would be acceptable. If he merely suggested that the postponement of evaluation can often lend to better comprehension his emphasis could be considered useful. His insistence on the central importance of the Bible and Classical mythology in literary education is obviously justified. His writings bring a daunting intelligence possessed of remarkable scholarship into the field of literary criticism.

His wish to purge criticism of prejudice and his wish to establish a value-free body of knowledge are both noble. But the claims he makes for his method must, nevertheless, be rejected. He believes that his system bypasses the troubling questions of belief about which all earlier critics have squabbled: "I do not believe that there are different 'schools' of criticism today, attached to different and irreconcilable metaphysical assumptionsIn particular, the notion that I belong to a school or have invented a school of mythical or archetypal criticism reflects nothing but confusion about me".³² This claim is quite unacceptable. Behind Frye's system is the fact/value distinction³³ which will be considered in the discussion of the Anatomy which follows. Frye also makes certain assumptions concerning the essentially religious nature of poetic production which are examined in the following paragraphs.

For Frye, as for Blake, "Inspiration is the artist's empirical proof of the divinity of his imagination".³⁴ Frye argues in the Anatomy that the poet is the "midwife"³⁵ of the poem. He deduces this from the fact that revision is possible. The fact "that a poet can make changes in a poem not because he likes them better but because they are better, shows clearly that the poet has to give birth to the poem as it passes through his mind".³⁶ But this is not a convincing argument. The poet may just as well revise in order to make his communication more precise. Frye mentions

Nietzsche as a modern example of an inspired creator. But Nietzsche was obviously far from believing that "all visionaries speak with the voice of God".³⁷ The passage to which Frye refers reads as follows: "If one had the slightest residue of superstition left in one's system, one could hardly reject altogether the idea that one is merely incarnation, merely mouthpiece, merely a medium of overpowering forces".³⁸ Nietzsche, however, had rejected every residue of superstition. Frye is clearly following Blake in "identifying God with human imagination".³⁹ This helps to explain the religious metaphors which abound in his writings. The title of the article that is being considered, "Criticism, Visible and Invisible" is such a metaphor; the last paragraph of the Daedalus article hints at one; in the Anatomy Frye talks of "the still center of the order of words".⁴⁰ This identification of literature in its variety with the Word is isolated in Frye's comment on Coleridge written in 1953, four years before the publication of the Anatomy. "[Coleridge is led] in criticism to the conception of all literature as contained within an order of words identical with one personal Word".⁴¹ This idea, writes Frye, is "perhaps his greater legacy to modern thought and one still unexplored".⁴² It can be profitably compared with Shelley's reference to "that great poem [of] all poets".⁴³ Frye explores this idea at length in his publications, largely suppressing the transcendental emphasis which is only

seldom allowed to peep through the secular fabric. He is, therefore, committed to what can be considered an extreme view of the nature of literature. It is a view, however, which guarantees the value of literary studies; they became the contemplation and systematisation of the Word. It is, likely, therefore, that the reader who does not accept this view will find difficulty in seeing the value of the programme for criticism which Frye delineates. An examination of the Anatomy will lead to a consideration of this problem and also to the other assumptions which underlie Frye's method.

The fact that Frye distinguishes criticism from literature has already been noted in the discussion of "Criticism, Visible and Invisible". In the Anatomy the distinction is made with the help of scientific analogy: "Physics is an organised body of knowledge about nature, and a student of it says he is learning physics, not nature. Art, like nature, has to be distinguished from the systematic study of it, which is criticism".⁴⁴ This analogy is misleading. The nature which physics studies and considers to be morally neutral cannot be compared with works of literature which by their very nature embody values. More notable is the fact that the critic who wishes to make literary criticism autonomous should look to other disciplines for a model for his methodology.

Frye ostensibly believes that the importation of

the principles of other subjects results in irrelevance and has been forced on criticism by a "power vacuum". "As literature is not itself an organised structure of knowledge, the critic has to turn to the conceptual framework of the historian for events, and to that of the philosopher for ideas."⁴⁵ This situation has resulted in the invocation of irrelevant criteria of judgement. This is because criticism had not progressed in the way in which the natural and social sciences have. If, therefore, criticism follows science's lead it will first need to regard the works of literature as "phenomena" to be explained in terms of a conceptual framework which criticism alone possesses.⁴⁶ It will, therefore, have to make "the assumption of total coherence. Simple as this assumption appears, it takes a very long time for a science to discover that it is in fact a totally intelligible body of knowledge".⁴⁷ Frye gives the example of "the birth of physics from 'natural philosophy' and of sociology from 'moral philosophy'".⁴⁸ But while sociology may be said to be "a totally intelligible body of knowledge" it can hardly be said to contain within itself the means to discuss what it is most important to know. It is only by stepping outside the boundaries of the subject that we can examine whether the knowledge which it is providing is valuable or not. We have already examined the way in which Cleanth Brooks is forced by an excessive and

misplaced regard for scientific achievement to accept science as the sublunary arbiter of truth. We find that in Frye the regard for scientific progress is, in one sense, the deepest motivation for his arguments. While Frye claims to be freeing criticism from the bondage of other disciplines he is, in fact, by choosing another discipline as a model for his methodology, merely changing the prison. Furthermore criticism is chained by Frye to disciplines within which the most important question man asks, "how to live?" cannot be discussed. He does not avoid moral commitments by this approach. For the determination to make a human activity value free is, in itself, a moral commitment.

The distinction between facts and values is clearly made in the following passage: "Shakespeare, we say was one of a group of English dramatists working around 1600, and also one of the great poets of the world. The first part of this is a statement of fact, the second a value judgement so generally accepted as to pass for a statement of fact. But it is not a statement of fact. It remains a value judgement, and not a shred of systematic criticism can ever be attached to it".⁴⁹ This is true only on Frye's premises. Consider Macbeth's speech which begins: "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well/It were done quickly,".

After enumerating some impossible conditions: "If it were done . . .if the assassination . . .that but this blow" Macbeth says that were they fulfilled, "We'd jump the life to come". But his mind, although it is fighting to throw off any moral fetters, is unable to do so:

this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips.

Despite his declared willingness to "jump the life to come" his use of the phrase "deep damnation" shows an internal acceptance of evaluations which his conscious mind is attempting to reject. He displays his awareness of the motive driving him to the deed:

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition

The unworthiness of the nature is emphasised by his own earlier invocation of moral criteria implicit in the words "trust", "meek", "clear". This speech presents us with certain facts about Macbeth which, while helping to illustrate his nature, also lead us to understand him and to evaluate his actions. Here is a man unable to cut himself loose from the moral strictures he is attempting to deny. When he goes against his nature as man, life becomes utterly meaningless for him, as we see in the speech beginning "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow": This tells us something which is undeniably true and important about human life. The fact that Shakespeare is, through the character of Macbeth

illustrating for us something "of a sort that any human being needs to know"⁵⁰ makes his writing valuable. The preceding account is no more than a crude summary of the passage; it is, however, not necessary for the present argument to show the way in which the poet avoids mere moralising commonplace by doing justice to the complexity of experience.⁵¹ Frye says that "all commentary is allegorical interpretation"⁵² and perhaps the commentary here offered is more crudely allegorical than it should be. But it has perhaps been shown that Shakespeare's greatness as a poet is not so indemonstrable as Frye believes.

Later in his introduction Frye refers to the modern progress in the study of ethics, which, he says, should be taken by criticism as an example:

Criticism, in short, and aesthetics generally, must learn to do what ethics has already done. There was a time when ethics could take the simple form of comparing what man does with what he ought to do, known as the good. The "good" invariably turned out to be whatever the author of the book was accustomed to and found sanctioned by his community. Ethical writers now, though they still have values, tend to look at their problems rather differently. But a procedure which is hopelessly outmoded in ethics is still in vogue among writers on aesthetic problems.⁵³

The third sentence is historicist in the sense in which George P. Grant defines historicism as "the belief that the values of any culture were relative to the absolute pre-suppositions of that culture which were themselves historically determined, and that therefore men could not in their

reasoning transcend their own epoch".⁵⁴ Secondly, what Frye assumes is a great leap forward in ethics has been referred to by Mary Warnock as "the increasing triviality of the subject".⁵⁵ We need not labour the point. It has become increasingly clear that Frye, for all his denials, is taking up a philosophical position. As George P. Grant puts it: ". . .the fact-value distinction is not self-evident, as is often claimed. It assumes a particular account of moral judgement, and a particular account of objectivity"⁵⁶ and he goes on to talk of the "metaphysical roots of the fact-value distinction".⁵⁷ It follows that by espousing Frye's critical method we are involved, perhaps unwittingly, in a metaphysical embrace with assumptions that, seen for what they are, could lose their attraction. Let us rehearse Frye's argument: literary values cannot be deduced from literary facts; such values are merely subjective preferences or the result of social prejudices; subjective preferences cannot constitute knowledge; criticism must, like science, constitute an ever-growing body of knowledge; such knowledge must, therefore, be gathered by a value-free inductive analysis of literary phenomena. But before this analysis can take place some account has to be taken of the fact that much of what is generally accepted as literature seems to be integrally involved with values. Some theory has, therefore, to be found which will minimise this aspect of literature.

Certain sentences in the Anatomy -- "a poem's meaning is literally its pattern or integrity as a verbal structure"⁵⁸ or "What the poem meant to say, then, is, literally the poem itself"⁵⁹ -- sound as if they were written by the young Cleanth Brooks. Such statements involve the reader in all the problems of formalism which were discussed in the essay on Brooks. Frye is quite unequivocal in asserting that "verbal structures may be classified according to whether the final direction of meaning is outward or inward. In descriptive or assertive writing the final direction is outwardIn all literary verbal structures the final direction of meaning is inward".⁶⁰ In literature it is foolish to demand a common-sense account of reality. "Literary meaning may best be described, perhaps, as hypothetical."⁶¹ Frye talks of "the great strength of symbolisme"⁶² and believes that "the achieving of an acceptable theory of literal meaning in criticism rests on a relatively recent development in literature".⁶³ He is accepting the idea, which was found in the earlier chapter on Brooks to stem from Kant, that literature offers different "symbolic formulations"⁶⁴ of reality which cannot be compared to any higher reality established by, say, logic. Frye follows Blake in believing that "the world we desire and create with our imaginations is both better and more real than the world we see".⁶⁵ It is true that Frye has written

that "Literature is clearly as much a technique of communication as associative verbal structures are".⁶⁶ But what is communicated is one man's vision or belief. Since as Blake puts it "Every thing possible to be believed is an image of truth",⁶⁷ every communication becomes unique and autonomous and cannot be compared to any absolute standard of truth. Criticism can do no more than seek formal parallels.

The analogies with music which occur throughout the Anatomy⁶⁸ also suggest that the emphasis, at this stage of Frye's criticism, is upon the formal aspects of literature. At the beginning of the third essay of the Anatomy we find an analogy with painting: "In the art of painting it is easy to see both structural and representational elements".⁶⁹ In the paragraph which takes this analogy further, Frye tells us that we must "stand back" from a work of literature to see the "archetypal organisation".⁷⁰ Granted such a formalism, the unifying conceptual framework of the discipline will necessarily be one which sets together the patterns which works have in common. As Frye put it in "Myth, Fiction and Displacement": "In literature, whatever has a shape has a mythical shape".⁷¹ The very fact that he tends to see literary works in space rather than in time demonstrates an insistence on the formal at the expense of the communicative.

Frye's denial of the essentially centrifugal aspect of literary works is essential for his frequent attacks on censorship⁷² which he associates with evaluative criticism

throughout his published work. He believes that the basis of censorship is "the belief that good and bad can be determined as inherent qualities in the literary work".⁷³ For Frye this is not so: "the difference between good and bad is not something inherent in literary works themselves but the difference between two ways of using literary experience".⁷⁴ Furthermore, to see any clear line of "connexion"⁷⁵ between literature and life is to pervert one's reading. All works exist in a world of possibility. To watch horror and cruelty on the stage is, for Frye, to experience "the exhilaration of standing apart from them and being able to see them for what they are".⁷⁶ The more we experience such imitations "the less likely we are to find an unthinking pleasure in cruel or evil things".⁷⁷ Frye is inconsistent; he first says that literature is neither good nor bad but can only be used well or ill; he goes on to point to the inevitability of moral improvement from the experience of literature. But Frye's is not the only way of seeing the effects of literature. A work offers an account of one aspect of our life, or, if it is a great one, of much that seems most important in life. The very fact that it is an account, an interpretation, prevents it from ever being purely negative. No work merely presents life. Because of the very nature of language it is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to avoid implicit evaluations

of the subject matter which is presented in any literary work. If this is so it is clear that literary works are inherently ethical. It is, therefore, possible to judge literary works from an ultimately ethical standpoint. But the judgement is never a simple beatification or excommunication. The critic is able, like Siddhartha in Hesse's novel, to see that there are different ways for different men. The Christian will, however, be unable to view the account of life given in Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer as the noblest and best life. While he may believe that the books of de Sade are essentially pernicious, he will not burn them because he has the highest regard for the individual's freedom to discriminate. All that is left to him is rational argument and comparison between works based upon rational argument. He could offer Tolstói's as an alternative view of human sexuality to de Sade's.⁷⁸ Frye heaps scorn on this position in his essay "Reflections in a Mirror".⁷⁹ He says that if students are taught Rimbaud or Kafka or Lawrence or Dostoyevsky "The result is that the students write more or less competent essays about the passion, power, anguish, etc., of these authors and go on about their business, while the teacher is in the position of saying, like a chairman at a lecture, 'I am sure we are all deeply grateful to Mr. Rimbaud (and the others) for having contributed such a distinctive note to our understanding of human life'".⁸⁰ This is a vulgar caricature of potentially

noble pedagogic endeavour. Frye does, however, despite quibbles later in the paragraph, concede that this manner of teaching literature is possible. Another conclusion from the facts which Frye details is therefore possible. He wants criticism to retreat from direct experience into a realm in which talk of "moral dignity, intensity and compassion"⁸¹ is merely irrelevant. Criticism would, on the contrary, do better to become more robust in its response to the works of modernity. It should not merely reflect; it should understand and evaluate. In Frye's own terms, the student he refers to are taking as true the evaluation of authors of the ironic age. It is significant that it is only authors of this age that he mentions. To put it at its most extreme, Plato should be taught beside Nietzsche. Criticism should first attempt to examine what Plato and Nietzsche say about human life. This examination would ideally take up many lifetimes; but meanwhile the critic has to live the only life he is certain of; and in order to do so as a thinking man he will have to make provisional judgements concerning the truth of what is said. He may choose to communicate such judgements; but argument should proceed from a vital awareness of the fact that we can do no more than "see through a glass, darkly". Some degree of agreement upon what is said must clearly precede any evaluation.

Having got centrifugal meaning safely out of the way Frye can proceed to lay the foundations of this new body of knowledge. He frequently denies that his chief purpose is mere classification: "The purpose of criticism by genres is not so much to classify as to clarify such traditions and affinities, thereby bringing out a large number of literary relationships that would not be noticed as long as there were no context established for them",⁸² or "the object is not to 'fit' poems into categories, but to show empirically how conventional archetypes get embodied in conventional genres".⁸³ But criticism has always recognised the relevance of knowledge of the genre of a work to the task of understanding its full meaning. What, then, is original about Frye's scheme if it not a more complete and thorough categorisation of literary works? Categorisation is not an end in itself and can only justify itself if it leads to fruitful comparison; but within Frye's non-evaluative system there is no room for such comparison. If we return for a moment to the analogy with the natural sciences we find that the mastery of a body of knowledge about nature, called physics can lead to technology which at least has potential value in improving human life. Mastery of a body of knowledge about literature, however, will lead to a criticism which can only be its own justification. Frye says that: "The original experience [of literature] is like the direct vision

of color, or the direct sensation of heat or cold, that physics 'explains' in what, from the point of view of the experience itself is a quite irrelevant way".⁸⁴ The analogy breaks down when we realise that seeing the color green and reading Macbeth are not really similar experiences. Sensation does not involve the rational mind in the same way as does a complex literary work. The explanation of Macbeth by a methodology derived from physics is therefore likely to prove ultimately "quite irrelevant".

Frye seems to realise that if values are deliberately ignored in the "phenomena", they will find no legitimate place in the conclusions derived from the study of those phenomena; so he tries to introduce them by the back door. He says that the Anatomy "takes certain literary values for granted as fully established by critical experience",⁸⁵ and taking their warrant from this assertion value-judgements are found scattered thick in the Anatomy. They can only be fitted into Frye's system by insisting on the distinction between experience and criticism. Criticism cannot have any business with value judgements but the experience itself in a mysterious way establishes them. The "direct experience which is central to criticism" is "forever excluded from it".⁸⁶ In the private realm we may find George Eliot better than Spillane, but we cannot say so in the public realm of criticism. Criticism is thus cut off from all that is most

urgent in our contact with literature. If, however, Frye stuck to his distinction, we could admire his consistency. But when he writes in the Anatomy -- "There is no reason why a sociologist should not work exclusively on literary material, but if he does he should pay no attention to literary values. In his field Horatio Alger and the writer of the Elsie books may well be more important than Hawthorne or Melville"⁸⁷ -- it is impossible to ignore the fact that Frye offers no warrant for these literary values. Since they have been relegated to the domain of subjective preference, there they must remain. Consequently the critic can give no intelligible reason in public for working on Milton rather than Blackmore.⁸⁸ This is obviously to create artificial distinctions which verge on the absurd. Frye's reluctance to abandon value-judgements completely is, however, understandable, because he is constantly aware of the need to justify the study of literature. The critic who will justify his study must first become totally catholic in taste: "He develops from hero-worship towards total and indiscriminate acceptance: there is nothing 'in his field' that he is not prepared to read with interest".⁸⁹ Frye's account is again essentially artificial because it is clearly impossible for anyone to read everything "in his field". As John Frazer ironically puts it: "Personally I have read, I suppose, almost all of the agreeable Australian

detective novels of Arthur Upfield, and there is certainly nothing quite like them, but I doubt that we shall ever see a course in them made compulsory for graduate students at Toronto".⁹⁰ But let us conceive of a voracious and energetic reader who has mastered his "field". He will turn to what Frye calls "ethical criticism": "We may call this ethical criticism, interpreting ethics not as a rhetorical comparison of social facts to predetermined values, but as the consciousness of the presence of society".⁹¹ This is exceptionally vague and the next sentence is no more precise: "As a critical category this would be the sense of the real presence of culture in the community".⁹² But Frye has told us neither what he understands by culture nor the manner in which the "real presence" will make itself felt. His system would seem to have made it impossible for the views of life embodied in the works of the past to be validly compared with the views of life in the works of the present. But we find that this is precisely what Frye desires: "Ethical criticism, then, deals with art as a communication from the past to the present, and is based on the conception of the total and simultaneous possession of past culture".⁹³ We are, we assume, to possess the imaginative, (in Frye's terms), views of life of Plato and Nietzsche but to make no judgement: "The dialectic axis of criticism, then, has as one pole the total acceptance of the data of literature, and as the other

the total acceptance of the potential values of that data".⁹⁴ Reality does not really intrude on Frye to make choice between mutually exclusive "potential values" impossible to avoid.

For the Frye of the Anatomy skepticism is imperative: "One's definite position is one's weakness, the source of one's liability to error and prejudice".⁹⁵ But one could as well say that one's definite position is one's strength, the source of one's liability to truth and tolerance. A fuller discussion of this point must however, be postponed until we have more fully examined Frye's development. He writes in the Anatomy of "the conception of art as having a relation to reality which is neither direct nor negative, but potential".⁹⁶ The ultimately Kantian basis of his convictions again becomes evident when he talks of "the conception of literature as existing in its own universe, no longer a commentary of life and reality, but containing life and reality in a system of verbal relationships".⁹⁷ There is no reality which can claim superior authority; the works of the imagination contain reality themselves. If all the the imaginative creations are set together they can be seen to offer infinite possibilities. We are back once again to Blake and to the earlier quotation from Coleridge. In the following passage Frye hardly suppresses the transcendental

emphasis: "The study of literature takes us toward seeing poetry as the imitation of infinite social action and infinite human thought, the mind of a man who is all men, the universal creative word which is all words".⁹⁸ It becomes clearer that for Frye the indiscriminating acceptance of all visions of life has religious significance although this significance is rigorously and artificially excluded from the shrinking body of the true criticism: "About this man and word we can, speaking as critics, say only one thing ontologically: we have no reason to suppose either that they exist or that they do not exist".⁹⁹ We shall now proceed to examine the way in which Frye develops this idea within the bounds of what he conceives as true criticism.

Frye believes that understanding of the arts has progressed and that this has led to a "refining of society".¹⁰⁰ While "there is no reason why a great poet should be a wise and good man, or even a tolerable human being . . . there is every reason why his reader should be improved in his humanity as a result of reading him".¹⁰¹ But how can criticism, as Frye conceives it, be involved in this amelioration of the individual? For the value-free body of knowledge will inevitably be, like the knowledge of nature found in physics, morally neutral. Value feelings arise from direct experience and they cannot be discussed within the realm of true criticism. The improvement of the individual can, therefore, only take place in haphazard

fashion and cannot be ordered or directed by criticism itself. One of the ethical effects Frye envisages stemming from criticism is detachment from unthinking social prejudice: "The goal of ethical criticism is transvaluation, the ability to look at contemporary social values with the detachment of one who is able to compare them in some degree with the infinite vision of possibilities presented by culture".¹⁰² This is a noble conception of the function of criticism. But again Frye does not display the detachment he champions. Discussion is not really possible within his framework because the most important questions are already closed: "The ethical purpose of a liberal education is to liberate, which can only [my italics] mean to make one capable of conceiving society as free, classless and urbane".¹⁰³ Frye, in the Tentative Conclusion of the Anatomy sees criticism as having social relevance. He advocates his own conception of society's aim, but he does so with the implicit suggestion that it permits no questioning: "This idea of complete civilisation is also the implicit moral standard to which ethical criticism always refers something very different from any system of morals".¹⁰⁴ The difference is only one established by a rhetoric which relies upon an unfavourable response to the phrase "system of morals". Frye is taking a moral stance which his theoretical position does not permit him and is attempting to avoid the consequences.

In the latter half of the Tentative Conclusion Frye takes up the distinction he had made between literary and non-literary verbal structures, the centripetal and the centrifugal, and claims that "all structures in words are partly rhetorical and hence literary".¹⁰⁵ Thus "the notion of a scientific or philosophical verbal structure free of rhetorical elements is an illusion".¹⁰⁶ Frye then uses an analogy with mathematics to extend his argument. Mathematics begins as "a numerical commentary on the outside world".¹⁰⁷ But as the symbolic account of the world given by mathematics increases in comprehensiveness "there is a point at which it becomes in a measure independent of that common field of experience which we call the objective world".¹⁰⁸ Mathematics finally turns into a system which is "concerned more and more with its inner integrity, and less and less with its reference to external criteria".¹⁰⁹ Frye believes that criticism should model its methodology by considering literature as having the same relation to the objective world as mathematics has. It should move from viewing "literature as reflection of life to literature as autonomous language".¹¹⁰ "Both literature and mathematics proceed from postulates, not facts."¹¹¹ It is the same account of reality which was reached earlier via Blake and Kant. It is an account which Nietzsche took to its disastrous conclusion. Nietzsche was surely right, and not only for himself, when he said that the

supreme legacy left him by Christianity was the will to truth. He recognised most comprehensively the fact that modern man has a choice of horizons within which to live. For some, there is the possibility of living within a horizon once believed to be "True" with the full recognition that it is only a horizon. But for those with a more robust will to truth, it is not possible so to live. This is what led Nietzsche to construct the Doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence; but, for him, even this could provide no framework within which to live. What is certain is that he and many like him, would never be able to live with the sort of skepticism which Frye implicitly advocates in the analogy with mathematics. That Frye himself does not truly live within it can be seen from the earlier quotations in which his liberalism is at its most doctrinaire. Consider the following quotation: "Literature, like mathematics, is a language, and a language in itself represents no truth, though it may provide the means for expressing any number of them. But poets and critics alike have always believed in some kind of imaginative truth".¹¹² Literature is not a language in the same sense as mathematics. The aspiring literary critic is unlikely to be conversant with the latest developments in mathematics. He has generally to rely upon discussions with students of the discipline since the original literature is impenetrable without the years of

training which he lacks. Such discussions¹¹³ indicate that applied mathematics is a conceptual system which, by abstracting from the world of everyday reality, is able to symbolise it and to manipulate it. It is, therefore, a system of knowledge which has potential for improving human life through its practical application. Literature, however, "a huge aggregate or miscellaneous pile of discrete 'works'",¹¹⁴ offers a vast number of different accounts of different aspects of human experience. Many of these accounts are contradictory, Blake and Dr. Johnson for example, and in the sublunary world distinctions have to be made between them in the interest of intellectual clarity. The critic may, however, believe that his responsibility is not fulfilled by merely making distinctions; he may believe that once distinctions have been made he should evaluate the works he has dealt with. Evaluation implies a standpoint. It develops and is completed by contact with the greatest evaluations of experience which have been left by men. The evaluative critic, as it has been seen that Frye conceives of him, sits at a desk rhythmically stamping the works before him "good" or "bad". But the process of reading and evaluating is at its best a dialogue between reader and work. From numerous dialogues certain conclusions emerge. These conclusions come to form an identity of belief which ultimately assumes some consistency. It stems from, but is not identical with what Frye pejoratively calls "sense"¹¹⁵ in

his essay from Fables of Identity called "The Imaginative and the Imaginary". Here the issues are clearly delineated. For Frye, no conclusions concerning the end of man can be drawn from man's essence, as man. Man is, for Frye, the creator "of the order of human existence represented by such words as culture and civilisation".¹¹⁶ While Frye accepts that this statement is only the verdict of "the last two centuries" it is "obviously true now".¹¹⁷ The belief that man's essence is his freedom "instantly puts the creative arts in the very centre of human culture".¹¹⁸ The arts embody visions of what life could be and man is free to choose between them. Man should be continually "remaking the world on the model of a more desirable vision".¹¹⁹ We see in the following comment how much Frye's own beliefs owe to his study of Blake. Once again we are forced to a recognition of the essential artificiality of the attempt to exclude personal belief from criticism. It is more honest to acknowledge one's beliefs and to be as conscious of them as possible; for they will creep in anyway: "For Blake, mental health consisted in the practice of the imagination, a practice exemplified by the artist, but manifested in every act of mankind that proceeds from a vision of a better world. Madness, for Blake, was essentially the attitude of mind that we have seen called sense, when regarded as an end in itself".¹¹⁹ For Frye, as for Blake, it is a "wistful sense of a golden age, lost but still possible . . . [which] gives

our minds . . . whatever dignity they may possess".¹²⁰ The emphasis is not upon the fact that man's achievements can never match his aspirations. Any account of criticism which takes this fact as its first and most important assumption will tend to found its judgements in "sense". Frye's emphasis is upon what is possible for man in his freedom. The two views are irreconcilable.

In the group of lectures published in 1961 under the title The Educated Imagination we find Frye's position most simply and clearly delineated. He proposes as one of his themes an enquiry into "the social value of the study of literature".¹²¹ As Frye says elsewhere if the poet never affirms he does not deny either. He still believes that literary works exist in a sort of limbo "neither real nor unreal".¹²² He distinguishes between "two worlds, imaginary, meaning unreal, and imaginative, meaning what the writer produces".¹²³ For Frye the primary categories of human existence are not subject and object but necessity and freedom.¹²⁴ Works of imagination are the expression of man's freedom to conceive of a world that is entirely human.¹²⁵ In the world of the imagination "we recapture, in full consciousness, that original lost sense of identity with our surroundings".¹²⁶ Art does not come to terms with reality, it transcends it. Frye significantly quotes Blake: "The nature of my work is visionary and imaginative, it is an

attempt to restore what the ancients call the Golden Age".¹²⁷ The poet's limits are those of the conceivable not of the real. He should "show you a world completely absorbed and possessed by the human mind".¹²⁸ Frye notices "in passing that the creative and the neurotic minds have a lot in common".¹²⁹ Frye believes that the motive for myth was a sense of alienation which was best overcome "by identifying the human and non-human worlds".¹³⁰ This process is essentially metaphoric and it constitutes "part of the language of poetry".¹³¹ When myth is no longer accepted as true, it is immediately commandeered by the poets. But the essential function of these identities remains the same: "Literature is still doing the same job that mythology did earlier".¹³² We learn that sometimes literature "separates this state [of identity] from its opposite, the world we don't like and want to get away from".¹³³ By acknowledging this fact Frye puts the conception of literature which he is here developing in question. For if literature really led men to a sense of identity with their surroundings in the same way as myth, it could be considered supra-moral. But literature often paints the world as it is or the world worse than it is. By the same token by which the recreation of a sense of identity is good, the recreation of a sense of alienation is bad. Frye's own emphasis is, however, on the literature of the spring and summer sequence rather

than that of autumn and winter. Frye's argument fails, then, to convince on this level of abstraction, but let us examine his other points.

Works of literature, he says, are centripetal. They refer to each other rather than to life. Literature, being potential, relieves the reader of the burden of truth and reality.¹³⁴ Frye now concedes that "Writers of course have their own beliefs, and it's natural to feel a special affection for the ones who seem to see things the same way we do",¹³⁵ but he does so with an evasion of the point by his use of the word "seem", though we recognize it as an evasion necessary for his system. He says that it is impossible to judge greatness by one's own standard of reality. While each poet's vision provides the framework for a belief, such beliefs remain "unborn or embryonic".¹³⁶ The critic must continually contemplate a number of different world-views without choosing between them. Frye very rightly asks "what is the use of studying a world of imagination where anything is possible and anything can be assumed, where there are no rights or wrongs and all arguments are equally good?".¹³⁷ His answer is firstly that it leads to tolerance. This is the standard argument of the ethical relativist. It is an argument which is challenged by Henry Veatch in his book Rational Man. He writes: "For one, [relativism] implies a greater tolerance and understanding

of one's fellow men; for another, it justifies the most ruthless intolerance and the arbitrary imposing of one's own will upon others".¹³⁸ He argues that "ethical relativism in any form is a radically inconsistent and thoroughly untenable position".¹³⁹ It may seem that such philosophical questions are at a very great distance from the realm of practical criticism. But since Frye is a confessed literary theorist and admits that "At every step of [his] argument there are extremely complicated philosophical problems"¹⁴⁰ he can best be challenged at the level of his basic assumptions. The sort of skepticism that Frye advocates is more likely to lead to indifference or to intolerance than to the concerned tolerance he approves.

The ethical movement which a study of literature promises, which is "peculiarly its own",¹⁴¹ results from the visionary nature of literature. Frye believes that the limit of the imagination is "a universe entirely possessed and occupied by human life, a city of which the stars are suburbs".¹⁴² He is quite willing to admit that "Nobody can believe in any such universe".¹⁴³ But, for him, it is only imaginative vision which can fertilise reality. It gives us "a perspective and dimension on reality".¹⁴⁴ Frye recognises that such a view entails and stresses that "it would be the wildest kind of pedantry to use [literature] directly as a guide to life".¹⁴⁵ Frye is perhaps only substituting his own

conception of imagination in the position traditionally held by reason. This is indicated by his comment on the anecdote of the girls he heard asking each other whether a film advertised as the "thrill of a lifetime" was "any good".¹⁴⁶ "We may think of [the questioning voice] as the voice of reason, but it's really the voice of the imagination".¹⁴⁷ For Frye: "The fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life . . . is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in in".¹⁴⁸ But Frye admits that there are, on one level, many visions of society presented in literature. It is only by the use of the faculty of reason that they can be distinguished. No better modern example of reason used in this way can be cited than Leo Strauss' brilliant Natural Right and History.

The Well-Tempered Critic, published in 1963, confirms the tendency of The Educated Imagination towards a more considered and less polemic attitude towards criticism. In The Educated Imagination the rhetoric which was noted at the beginning of this chapter is still present --

"Literature as a whole is not an aggregate of exhibits with red and blue ribbons attached to them, like a cat-show"¹⁴⁹ -- but it is complemented by the unquestioning acceptance of value-judgement which is implicit in the following: "In my opinion value judgements in literature should not be hurried . . . [a student] has to feel values for himself and

should follow his individual rhythm in doing so".¹⁵⁰ This modification is best demonstrated by Frye's treatment of Arnold's touchstone technique which is much gentler than that accorded it in the Anatomy.¹⁵¹ Frye writes: "Arnold's 'touchstones' of high style are subjectively invited and their merit is indemonstrable, like all critical value-judgements, but still a community can respond to them, can feel that Arnold's taste, within obvious limits, is accurate and that his quotations are accurate".¹⁵² This is only fitting in a book which talks of the "wisdom and insight"¹⁵³ of Gibbon. We find Frye admitting that "with all allowance made for individual variety, there clearly are . . . standards of taste in the arts".¹⁵⁴ He still believes that values cannot be directly taught,¹⁵⁵ but, even allowing for the difference of intention from the Anatomy, The Well-Tempered Critic no longer insists upon the "body of knowledge" as a critical panacea. Frye continues to stress the necessity of critical detachment. "The fundamental act of criticism is a disinterested response to a work of literature",¹⁵⁶ but he organises his argument to throw a greater stress on the fact that "such detachment is not an end in itself".¹⁵⁷ He seems to make an implicit comment on his own earlier work, especially the Anatomy, when he writes: "It is not necessarily naïve to write 'how true' on the margins of what we read; or at least we do not have to confine our contact with literature to purely disinterested and esthetic

responses. We should mutilate our literary experience if we did, and mutilations of experience designed merely to keep a theory consistent indicate something wrong with the theory".¹⁵⁸ Frye fulminates a little against "mutually unintelligible élites"¹⁵⁹ and refers to Coleridge's "moral, religious and political anxieties"¹⁶⁰ but it is obvious that he is parading his straw tigers much like the magician who produces a rabbit out of a hat -- because he is expected to do so.

In the course of the book he points to several by-products of the study of literature such as the student's increasing "power of utterance"¹⁶¹ and the purification of his stock responses.¹⁶² But he saves his main point until the end. While retaining the conception of literature as essentially centripetal, he argues that "Literature . . . provides a kind of reservoir of possibilities of action".¹⁶³ As long as "an unfamiliar experience in literature . . . is imaginatively conceivable"¹⁶⁴ it broadens the spectrum of possibility. But this is another evasion. For it is not good in itself to know many possibilities. Frye recognizes this and repeats the argument that has already been questioned, that the indefinite postponement of even provisional evaluation of these conceptions will lead to "greater tolerance".¹⁶⁵ A change in emphasis is felt, however, when he adds that a knowledge of the possibilities

of action that literature presents also "increases the power of articulating convictions [my italics]".¹⁶⁶ Frye goes on to tacitly acknowledge the danger that had been isolated as the chief weakness of the earlier work: "As long as both imagination and belief are working properly, we can avoid the neurotic extremes of the dilettante who is so bemused by imaginative possibilities that he has no convictions, and the bigot who is so bemused by his conviction that he cannot see them as possibilities".¹⁶⁷ In the present climate of intellectual opinion, for the dilettante can be substituted the student who is so overwhelmed by relativistic arguments that he believes the case against absolutism to be proven rather than merely stated.

Frye is obviously right in his estimation of the end of literary education as an "ethical and participating"¹⁶⁸ one. But he establishes wrong priorities: the attempt to hold many possibilities of action undifferentiated in the mind rather than the conscious attempt to distinguish the best possibility of action. In the last paragraph of The Well-Tempered Critic, however, he implicitly changes his priorities: "[The world of literature] is the world in which our imaginations find the ideals that they try to pass on to belief and action, where they find the vision which is the source of both the dignity and the joy of life".¹⁶⁹ Visions are here associated with moral qualities,

dignity and joy; thus visions can be appropriately compared from an ethical point of view. In the recent Daedalus article the change is more explicit. Frye uses the article to discuss once again the most urgent questions concerning the value of the study of literature. He himself points to the significance of his title "The Critical Path": "The phrase associated itself in my mind with the closing sentences of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason where he says that dogmatism and skepticism have both had it as tenable philosophical positions and that 'the critical path alone is open'".¹⁷⁰ An attempt will be made in what follows to show that while Frye theoretically takes this Kantian stance he is forced to refer to implicitly Christian standards to evaluate modern social myths. The evaluation of modern social myths, Frye believes, is one of the duties of criticism.

In the first pages of the article Frye traces his own intellectual development in an account which reads like a scientist's account of a new discovery. He was impressed by the New Criticism whose greatest merit was "that it accepted poetic language as the basis for poetic meaning".¹⁷¹ He, however, felt that the New Criticism did not provide a framework within which the insights arising from close reading could be organised. Such a framework was provided for Frye by the now familiar separation of experience and response. The critical response consists in looking "at the work as a

simultaneous unity and study[ing] its structure".¹⁷² The structure of the individual work of art need not be falsified in order to place it within the structure of criticism. Modern science assumes that the physical world is ultimately comprehensible. Scientific knowledge grows and so the scientist must become "an incarnation of that science thinking through him",¹⁷³ but "this is precisely the way that poets [from Homer to Rimbaud] have . . . talked about their relation to poetry".¹⁷³ Just as the modern scientist is directed to work within certain limits established by the body of knowledge already accumulated about the physical world, so the limits of the poet's possibilities have been established by his inspiration. Because of this let upon creative caprice the whole context of literature can be seen as that of the created word: "The critic should see literature as, like a science, a unified, coherent and autonomous created form".¹⁷⁴ But it is only the previously quoted religious analogy which really supports the argument: poets have been the incarnation of the Word when they write; consequently the criticism dealing with their productions can also be "unified, coherent and autonomous" if it deals only with structure. The form of literature, and thus potentially the form of criticism, are coherent because the governing inspiration behind the form of literature is a Unity. This analogy taken seriously leads to the system of the Anatomy.

But on the level of practical criticism, cut free of the conception which gave it both birth and importance, it reduces criticism to a process of putting work into genres where they may not quite fit, and isolating archetypes which may signify a broad range of different things in different poets. This last aspect has been competently criticised by Philip Hallie¹⁷⁵ and M. H. Abrams.¹⁷⁶ The process is based on a submerged deductive argument which has already been noted: all works of literature incarnate the Word; they must, therefore, have a principle of organisation, criticism's job is to isolate that principle. It is, however, only an assumption that literature is of such a nature and that the criticism of it can be a unified and coherent structure. It inevitably involves the simplifications both of literature and the human mind which are censured by Hallie and Abrams.

Frye begins his habitual naming by isolating what he calls the myths of concern and freedom. Myths of concern do not depend on reasoning or evidence and arise in the early stages of society; myths of freedom depend upon reference to truth or reality. Poetry is related to myths of concern rather than myths of freedom. This is quite obvious because poetry is essentially metaphoric and metaphor violates logic. Poetry is closer to magic than to science; it is essentially primitive but "it is no good attaching a pejorative meaning

to the word "primitive".¹⁷⁷ It is the task of poetry to make man feel at home in his world. "The poet's function is still his primitive oral function of defining and illustrating the concerns of the society that man is producing".¹⁷⁸ Frye sees that myths of concern are under attack from "the growth of non-mythical knowledge";¹⁷⁹ but he does not feel that they must capitulate; it is rather that they must "come to terms with the non-mythical criteria of truth and reality".¹⁸⁰ It is only "under the influence of the mental habit of a writing culture"¹⁸¹ that myths of concerns have had to pay respect at the altar of historical fact. But this paying of respect is a perversion because even the myths of religion have "a poetic rather than a rational language".¹⁸¹ The road to concern is not through the search for truth but through the exercise of imagination.¹⁸² What is more, concern stemming from this exercise will have an "open mythology",¹⁸³ which will lead to tolerance and respect for the individual. One of the tasks of the educated is "to show by example that beliefs may be held and examined at the same time".¹⁸⁴ By doing this "one is not renouncing [the] truth [of a myth of concern]: what one renounces is the finality of one's understanding of that truth".¹⁸⁵ As far as literary criticism is concerned it must remain uninvolved on a professional level with any particular myth of concern for it is "truth of correspondence [which] is the chief business of schools

and universities".¹⁸⁶ Knowledge is separated from belief.¹⁸⁷ "Truth of concern . . . cannot strictly be verified and expanded like the established principles of a science".¹⁸⁸ The commitment is, therefore, "voluntary self-blinkering".¹⁸⁷ The anaesthetised criticism Frye now proposes "is the attempt to attain knowledge of the language of concern and belief, and hence it has a central role in the study of human society".¹⁹⁰ When a work of literature embodies "questionable or dated attitudes" these can be dismissed without loss, while "the real meaning" is found to be "conveyed through a structure of imagery and action".¹⁹¹ If we consider the social attitudes of Yeats, Lawrence, Pound, Graves and Wyndham Lewis, for instance, we find them to be "freakish and obscurantist"¹⁹² but this does not damage their works. They represent additions to that irrefutable "great poem" of which Shelley talks, "which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world".¹⁹³

Frye's opinions are questionable on a number of counts. He believes that "The principle of openness is a myth of concern does not . . . prevent a society from having a myth of concern",¹⁹⁴ and he sees Nietzsche's opposition of Christ and Dionysus as only the culmination of the tendency to suggest that our real myth of concern is of Classical rather than Christian origin.¹⁹⁵ But Nietzsche's perspective

is much broader than this. His recognition of his inability to live within an arbitrary horizon has already been discussed. Frye celebrates the consequent necessity of creating meaning: "an open mythology establishes the relativity of a myth of concern, and so emphasises the element of construct, of imaginative vision in it".¹⁹⁶ But as a Christian it is difficult to understand how he can do so. For Christ's story in the Gospels, while it may be, as Frye says, ahistorical is surely for the Christian the source of truth. Christ's sayings are true for they are God's Word to man rather than a construct or imaginative vision. For the believing Christian they have the highest warrant. They put ethical relativism beyond the Christian's reach. Frye attempts to synthesise positions which are mutually exclusive. Furthermore Nietzsche's horror seems a more appropriate response than Frye's complacency to a world in which meaning can only be the result of human creativity. Anxiety, alienation and absurdity are, as Frye says, noble sentiments, but they cannot be dismissed as "derived from a prevailing ironical age of fable".¹⁹⁷ A far more convincing answer is that they are the manifestation of the emotions man feels when he recognises that meaning has to be created.

At the end of the article in Daedalus Frye seriously considers the possibility of distinguishing between different myths of concern or visions for the first time in his work.

While asserting that Nazism, for instance, is a very low myth of concern¹⁹⁸ he sticks to his earlier position and repeats that "participation in a myth of concern is not in itself verifiable".¹⁹⁹ He believes, however, that "to some extent it can be verified in experience".²⁰⁰ The myths which makes a "fuller life possible" and which "compares its activities to the total welfare of mankind"²⁰¹ is clearly preferable. Myths can also be judged by their "ability . . . to come to terms with non-mythical criteria of truth and reality".²⁰² The first of these criteria begs the question: what is a "fuller life"? For Frye it is to be lived within a potentially universal myth of concern which assumes "that life is better than death, freedom better than slavery, happiness better than misery, health better than sickness, for all men everywhere without exception".²⁰³ But granted Nietzsche's premises, such a myth will lead to a race of last men. It is not the rationalist but Frye himself who, in argument with a Nietzschean, would be reduced to "the single exasperated formula: 'But can't you see how wrong you are?'"²⁰⁴ unless he were to refer to Christian standards. The rationalist could at least point to certain premises about which discussion could begin. He would be able to say that because of man's essence certain things are in reality good for all men everywhere without exception. The second of the criteria evinces the same spanielling at heels

of the sciences that we found in Brooks. It also confuses the realms of knowledge about the physical world and knowledge of moral truths. Veatch argues that the sciences can tell us nothing concerning that which it is most important for man to know.²⁰⁵ For him there is a verifiable non-mythical criterion of truth and reality which claims a higher authority than the "reality" established by the sciences because the knowledge it helps to establish is more important.²⁰⁶ This provides a far more complete and satisfying basis for a vindication of the value of the humanities than Frye's stagger along the Kantian razor blade between dogmatism and skepticism could ever do. Concern in this age may be as Frye says "constantly on the borderline of anxiety and anxiety, it [may be] only a hairsbreadth away from bigotry and fanaticism, violence and terror",²⁰⁷ but rationalism at least offers certain inescapable imperatives, not arbitrary but true ones which demand of the rationalist certain elementary human attitudes. For him, everything is not permitted. It has been suggested that Frye's position would only be tenable within a framework which asserted absolutely certain moral imperatives, putting them beyond question. The fact that he can write "sooner or later . . . the scientific spirit and the search for truth of correspondence are going to invade the structures of concern themselves, studying human mythology in the same spirit that they

study nature"²⁰⁸ as if it were a process in the future rather than one that had been going on long enough for Nietzsche to recognise it, indicates that Frye does not fully grasp the extent of the modern crisis of belief. His article concludes, as we have come to expect, on an almost mystical note: "Bob Dylan rightly says that there are no truths outside the garden of Eden, but the innocence needed to live continuously in such a world would require a nakedness beyond anything that removing one's clothes could reach. If we could live in it, if we could lift our entire verbal experience from belief and concern to imagination, criticism would cease and the distinction between literature and life would disappear, because life would then be the incarnation of the creative word".²⁰⁹ It is significant that the "if" clauses are two more impossible conditions. While they remain impossible, criticism would do better to discriminate between the different moral worlds presented in literature, than to follow in the steps of an innocent who has accepted too naively the romantic identification of God and the imagination.

CHAPTER IV

FRYE ON THE WASTE LAND

In the Introduction to his little book on Eliot, published in 1963, Frye implicitly denies that his choice of Eliot as a topic is based upon a value judgement. He writes that "A thorough knowledge of Eliot is compulsory for anyone interested in contemporary literature".¹ Eliot must be read, good or bad, because he has been so influential. "Value judgements . . . are the concern of the reader."² Frye characteristically insists that "It is, or should be, a central principle of criticism that no major poet stands or falls by his views, however closely they may be identified with his creative work".³ Since such a priority must always rest on the minimisation of the communicative aspects of poetry, Frye's admission that "I have tried to emphasize the structure"⁴ is not unexpected. It is immediately evident that it is possible to consider this book as an example of the practical criticism which the method outlined in the Anatomy leads to.

The first paragraph of the short passage on The Waste Land shows how difficult it is to make a commentary on the poem which treats it as rigorously centripetal. Indeed, the first sentence, if taken alone, would involve Frye in a centrifugal view of the poem, were it not for the final clause:

"The Waste Land is a vision of Europe, mainly of London at the end of the First World War, and is the climax of Eliot's 'infernal' vision".⁵ If the poem is a vision of Europe at a certain time, the question of whether it is a complete or incomplete one follows naturally. This question is evaded by the statement that it is an "infernal" vision. Frye notes the fact that Eliot wrote The Waste Land and Dante wrote the Inferno when they were middle-aged and thus connects The Waste Land with a literary tradition, implicitly suggesting that such poems are generally produced in middle life. By placing The Waste Land within a literary tradition Frye has use of a context for his critical investigation. Within this context he is able to relate aspects of the poem to the tradition without being led to ask about the quality of the vision.

Later in the first paragraph he does, however, transgress his own self-imposed limits. The sentence -- "The inhabitants live the 'buried life' . . . of seeds in winter"⁶ -- can be taken as a statement about a centripetal poem. But the next sentence -- "Human beings who live like seeds, egocentrically, cannot form a community but only an aggregate"⁷ -- is a generalisation about an aspect of human experience. While it is a thematic paraphrase it is also a statement which Frye clearly approves. It indicates the possibility that the poem is essentially centrifugal. We

must grant, however, that Frye mainly succeeds in preventing his comments from being assertive in this way. He remains largely content to relate.

The reference to Dante's age when he wrote the Inferno has already been remarked. Frye is as rigid as any commentator on The Waste Land has been in imposing patterns within which to read its parts. One of these schemes is, for him, that of the Inferno. He adds that the Inferno itself is structured by "the three-day rhythm of the redemption".⁸ Frye suggests that "in the first section of The Waste Land, 'The Burial of the Dead'", we sink into the lower world of the "unreal city",⁹ and that "We remain in the underworld all through the next two sections".¹⁰ But the two quotations from the Inferno in the final paragraph of "The Burial of the Dead" offer no real warrant for this schematisation. Such a reading depends largely on Frye's own metaphoric scheme: "This world is physically above ground but spiritually subterranean".¹¹ If we compare Dante's organisation to Eliot's the tendentiousness of Frye's claim stands out in relief. Both the title itself and the opening of the third canto leave the reader no doubt of the situation in Dante's poem. There is, however, no rational framework in The Waste Land which could be pointed to in order to establish the truth of Frye's association. It is little more than capricious.

After the first three sections in the underworld, writes Frye, comes "'Death by Water', evidently physical death, as burial in earth symbolises the physical life which is spiritual death".¹² But there is no reason offered for this interpretation of the poem's symbols. Frye himself stresses that the poem is "intensely Latin, owing much . . . to Virgil and Ovid".¹³ If this is so, it would surely be likely that the symbols of Section IV could be taken from Virgil. It is just as likely, then, that the relevant association is the necessity in the Aeneid for dust to be sprinkled on the corpse in order that the soul might be at rest. In this case "Death by Water" would represent physical and spiritual death. The tone of the last two lines of the action -- "O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,/Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you." --- is reminiscent of the tone of a momento mori. The brooding sombreness with which the reader is invited to contemplate Phlebas' death would support this reading. The second part of Frye's interpretation of the poem's symbolism is supported by its first lines. But the striking image of the corpse planted in the garden hardly suggests "physical life which is spiritual death".¹⁵ In short we suspect Frye of simplification, the more so because his interpretations are not argued but are only asserted, but from within a specific conceptual framework.

When Frye does give information which is potentially useful to the reader he does so without demonstrating what he believes to be its relevance. He remarks that in the rites described in Frazer's Golden Bough "a red or purple flower was associated with the god's blood: this appears in the hyacinths of The Waste Land".¹⁶ In view of the fact that Eliot directs the reader to The Golden Bough in his notes, the reader attempts to relate this piece of information to the hyacinth passage. But there seems no way in which it can enrich its meaning; it is more confusing than enlightening. This is not an isolated example of erudition followed by no conclusion. In the same paragraph Frye writes: "The death of Adonis was mourned by women representing the spirit of the earth, and the line 'Murmur of maternal lamentation' associates this with the Biblical weeping of Rachel",¹⁷ once again leaving the reader to his own devices.

Frye seems to lack a coherent argument. He is content to make observations which are by no means unusually perceptive. No careful reader will be indebted to a critic who does no more than inform him that: "As later in Four Quartets, there is an elaborate imagery of the four elements".¹⁸ Eliot's own note on the quotations from Augustine and Buddha makes it clear that the burning of the lust and the burning of the spirit are being contrasted and Frye's comment on the passage does no more than repeat this. His mention of "the fire that refines them"¹⁹ from the Purgatorio is potentially

confusing because the movement from references to the Inferno to references to the Purgatorio is one way in which tone of the poem is controlled. After referring to the "Ovidian theme of metamorphosis"²⁰ Frye writes: "The dissolving and reforming of physical elements suggest that the reality of which they are an appearance is a spiritual substance, the risen Christ".²¹ Once again there is no warrant for such an assertion. The facts that the Thames is asked to "run softly" in section III and that it rains in section V present some ground for talking of a "cycle of water" but none at all for the identification of the reality behind the flux with the risen Christ. This identification is quite arbitrary.

Several of Frye's comments point directly to problems in the interpretation of the poem which he ignores. Consider the statement: "The Sybil is parodied in The Waste Land by Madame Sosostriis".²³ If Madame Sosostriis is a parody of the Sybil it is but a short step to recognising that she is fulfilling the same human need but in a degraded fashion. Frye acknowledges that "'The Dry Salvages' later explains that a shoddy occultism pandering to man's desire to know his future is characteristic of sterile cultures".²⁴ But he does not continue the discussion and thus evades a consideration of this essentially centrifugal aspect of the poem's meaning. He is not, therefore, forced to ask whether the specific details of modern civilisation which Eliot chooses to implicitly criticise are really representative.

In the next paragraph Frye accepts the poem as "a reverie of Tiresias".²⁵ He points out that Tiresias is sterile and an authority on the pleasures of sexual intercourse but blithely passes by all the questions which were raised in the discussion of Brooks' essay on The Waste Land. He seems to find none of the difficulties of wide divergence of attitude which Lucas and Myers consider crucial.²⁶ He remains at a great distance from the texture of the poetry, content to note symbolic patterns, contrasts and parallels without examining the precise meaning to which they are limited by the context in which they occur. Thus Frye says that: "The contrasting figure to Tiresias is Phlebas"²⁷ but no explicit reason is given for that contrast. Consequently there seems no point to the comment. Frye, at Eliot's prompting connects Phlebas with Mr. Eugenides since both are "symbolising a commerce",²⁸ but we are given no inkling of what function this symbolising has in the poem. Neither the comment on Augustine or Joyce's note -- "Eliot: Bishop of Hippo" -- seem to have a direct bearing on the text.

Midway through the commentary on The Waste Land Frye makes another generalisation about the structure of the poem: "In The Waste Land the coming of Christianity represents the turning of Classical culture from its winter into a new spring, for the natural cycle is also associated with the cycles of civilisation".²⁹ The last clause is more like a comment on the Anatomy than one on the poem. The

Christian references in the poem are always oblique. Eliot's own note on line 20 directs the reader to find the source of the phrase "Son of man" in Ezekiel rather than in the New Testament. In section V the allusion may well be to Luke Ch. 24, but even if this is so it is surely significant that Christ was unrecognised by his companions on the road to Emmaus. The line "He who was living is now dead" hardly affirms Christ's presence in the poem. The fact that the decay of Classical civilisation was halted by Christianity which replaced decadence with youth and vigour, says Frye, "may be one reason for the prominence of the poets, Virgil and Ovid, who were contemporary with Christ".³⁰ This is already a shaky argument. But when Frye attempts to build upon this foundation, substituting "logically" for "by analogy", the artifice crashes to the ground: "Whatever future faces us today would, then, logically be connected with a second coming of Christ".³¹ He continues suggesting that the second coming "is not a future but a present event, a confronting of man with an immediate demand for self-surrender, sympathy and control".³² The reader is compelled to wonder why Frye should introduce a schematisation of the poem which involves his seeing the introduction of three moral imperatives which he admits "are preliminary to the Christian faith, hope and love"³³ as the second coming. The last point he addresses to support his eccentric view of the poem's

structure is the weakest of all. He writes: "The London churches, St. Magnus Martyr, St. Mary Woolnoth, and others stand like sentinels to testify to the presence of the risen Christ in the ruins of Europe".³⁴ Eliot's note on Magnus Martyr directs the reader to The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches and thus makes it unlikely that the churches have the function in the poem Frye ascribes to them. The definition of the vision of Christ in the poem has already been questioned.

Frye goes on to make random observations concerning the likelihood that the sixth book of the Aeneid and The Tempest are allegories "of initiation into Eleusinian mysteries".³⁵ He mentions the structural parallel between "the Christian myth and the structure of comedy".³⁶ Then he points out: "The court party in The Tempest make, like Aeneas and Augustine, a journey to Italy from Tunis"³⁷ which can surely help no one to a fuller understanding of the poem. The following sentence is typical of the associative progression which is found throughout: "The recognition scene in The Tempest discovers Ferdinand playing chess with Miranda, a game which ends either in checkmate, the death of the King, or in stalemate, like the two unions in the second section of The Waste Land which is called "A Game of Chess".³⁸ Frye is surely "getting lost in the allusions"³⁹ whatever his intentions. He recounts a part of the plot of The Tempest

because there are a few allusions to the play in the poem. The fact that checkmate is the death of the King gives the illusion of being a critical comment only because of the use of the myth of the Fisher King in the poem. It really says nothing. Even granted the fact that Frye's book is "an elementary handbook"⁴⁰ and that his aim is chiefly helpful annotation, it is fair to ask for notes which potentially increase the reader's understanding of the poem. Frye's comment on the two unions in "A Game of Chess", however, leads away from a full understanding of the poem's complexity. To call the two union stalemates is to reduce them to their lowest common denominator; the comment seems to arise from a desire for symmetrical prose rather than a desire to elucidate the poem. The schematisation in the following comment is as usual achieved by means of simplification: "Miranda is replaced by two female wrecks, with bad nerves and bad teeth respectively, corresponding to the spiritual and physical narcoses symbolised by burial in earth and in water".⁴¹ The malaise of the woman in the second section is, however, as much spiritual as physical, but to admit this would have unbalanced the rhythm of the sentence. Frye supplies a list of six women (and admits there are others) of whom the woman is the first part of "A Game of Chess" has overtones. But once again he draws no conclusion. He adds that "the latter has not literary splendours around her

except a dim recall of the drowned Ophelia".⁴² But there is no consideration of the use to which this dim recall it put, let alone of its quality.

Frye enlarges upon the allusions to The Tempest with the same lack of inhibition with which he dealt with the allusion to Dante. He informs us that The Tempest uses the romance theme of the prince who comes to a strange land and marries its King's daughter.⁴³ This story is associated with the Fisher King myth, in which a sea-monster ravages the land left unprotected by a sick King. "The hero kills the monster and succeeds to the kingdom."⁴⁴ Frye also points out that "In the background is a nature myth of winter turning to spring, sea and snow turning to spring rain".⁴⁵ This last sentence is perhaps the one in which it is clearest that the imposing of such broad patterns onto the poem inevitably involves ignoring detail: the poem begins not in winter but in April. Furthermore, it is hardly clear that it ends in spring. The reference to spring in line 327 is surely a reference to the time of the crucifixion. The rebirth which that spring had promised has turned to disillusion. The Bible promised an "imminent eschaton"⁴⁶ but, as Karl Löwith points out in his book Meaning in History, its advent becomes increasingly difficult to believe in with each passing century.⁴⁶ Thus arises the quality of bitter irony of the lines:

He who was living is now dead
 We who were living are now dying
 With a little patience.⁴⁷

But, to return to the main point, there may be a suggestion that it is spring in the phrase "limp leaves";⁴⁸ it is, however, hardly made clear enough to support Frye's argument. Both winter and snow are indeed mentioned in the first lines of the poem but they were already a memory at its beginning; what is more, they were a pleasant memory. Rain does fall, as Frye says, near the end of the poem -- "Then a damp gust/
 Bringing rain"⁴⁹ -- but the very next lines are characteristic of its ambivalence:

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant.⁵⁰

There is no more mention of rain though the thunder does of course speak. The reader is left with the hope of rain in the gathering black clouds but he is characteristically given no certainty. Frye's apologetic tone in the passage where he tries to demonstrate the presence of the myth of the killing of the sea-monster in the poem befits the weakness of his evidence. He writes, rather apologetically, "There is no monster in Eliot, but there are vestiges of his open mouth in the references to 'Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth' and 'this decayed hole among the mountains'".⁵¹ The first quotation would hardly put the critic on the track of a monster unless he were hoping to find one and the second seems to have no relation to the beast unless it is, in Frye's

mind, its lair. There would be no harm in Frye's introducing a few of these eccentric responses were it not for the fact that they accumulate into an imaginative pattern built on top of the poem which obscures its nature. Having introduced "the dragon-killer story [which] merges with the dying-god story"⁵² Frye has to find a "hero", presumably the protagonist, who "like Jonah in the Bible, must die himself and be reborn".⁵³ But the line "These fragments I have shored against my ruins"⁵⁴ and the allusion to Isaiah 38:1 hardly assure us of his rebirth.

In his penultimate paragraph Frye discusses the relation of the poem to Jessie Weston's From Ritual to Romance. Since Eliot cites the book as a source for The Waste Land it promises to be an important topic. Frye rightly associates the chapel of lines 385-95 with the "Chapel Perilous". But he extends this identification as follows: "On the final section of The Waste Land the Chapel Perilous represents the underworld of death and burial, the tomb from which Christ rises".⁵⁵ The extension is hardly warranted by the mere presence of the phrase "tumbled graves" and there is no other warrant. The discussion peters out with the introduction of interesting but irrelevant information about the lance and the cup, "originally fertility and sexual symbols"⁵⁶ which, Frye remarks, "are to be connected also with the two red suits of the modern pack of cards, the

diamond being a lance head and the heart a chalice".⁵⁷

Frye's final paragraph begins with a reference to Jesus' "slaying a sea-monster" in his "Easter victory over death and hell".⁵⁸ After referring to the identification of this monster with "Kingdoms of tyranny"⁵⁹ Frye draws the conclusion that "the world that needs redemption is to be conceived as imprisoned in the monster's belly".⁶⁰ Supporting his point further with a reference to "Christian iconography"⁶¹ Frye says that the depiction of Jesus leading the redeemed out of hell forms "a ghostly background to the final section of The Waste Land".⁶² The only body that could be likened to a procession in the final section is that in lines 366-76. But these "hooded hordes" are representative for Eliot of "the present decay of eastern Europe"⁶³ as he himself tells us. There seems no reason to contrast them to Jesus leading the redeemed out of hell. Why make this association rather than any other?

Frye interprets the symbolism of the last lines according to his whim. Having said that -- "The world to be redeemed is symbolically under water as well as under the earth"⁶⁴ -- he claims that "Eliot's fisher King . . . thus corresponds to Adam, or human nature that cannot redeem itself".⁶⁵ But Frye himself mentions the symbolism of fishing in the Gospels; why, in his own terms, should the fisher at the end of the poem not correspond rather to the

apostles? Frye has no right to the word "thus". It seems most likely that the use of the first person singular directs us to identify the fisher with the protagonist, who has been carefully characterised within the poem. It is worth noting, however, that the comment would indicate an emphatically centrifugal evaluation at the close of the poem: that human nature cannot redeem itself. In his final sentence Frye suggests that the "bateaux ivres"⁶⁶ of the poem are the heritage of Adam, just as the responding ship is the heritage of Christ. It is worthwhile to point to the recurrence of boats in the poem but once again schematisation is too rigid and the associations with Adam and Christ arbitrary. The essay breaks off abruptly. There is no real conclusion.

It is hoped that the preceding detailed examination has shown that Frye's criticism of The Waste Land tells us more about Frye than it does about Eliot's poem. He stands back from it and the result is little more than a vague account of dubious interrelationships. The comments are frequently more confusing than elucidating. Frye does not convincingly demonstrate any governing design in the poem; but his method does not lead him to ask whether there is one. The poem is widely read and influential; this is warrant enough for connecting it with other literary works. Since he is not led to ask whether or not it is finally coherent he can legitimately give a criticism which establishes no

priorities in interpretation. Comments on aspects of the poem which Eliot says should disclose its principles of organisation are set beside comparatively long comments on minor details with no indication of their comparative importance for comprehending it.

The unusual techniques of the poem which caused some of its first readers to think it a hoax are not analysed. The possibility that they are inherently obscure is not considered by Frye; and even if they were, in his terms, it would not matter. The popular vote has made the poem an important document upon which the techniques of criticism must dutifully go to work, hoax or not. The critic's job is not to try to discover whether or not the poem means anything very precise. Indeed, Frye's criticism would not suggest to the reader that it was anything but the collocation of a few well-known European myths. The fact that the poem can be taken as an urgent comment upon modern civilisation only emerges in a few unguarded phrases. Frye's criticism, written primarily because of the attention that the poem has drawn upon itself, not because of any inherent merit it might have, largely ignores those qualities of the poem's technique and meaning which have caused it to attract that attention.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown in the preceding pages that in the cases of Brooks and Frye their critical theories are closely related to their convictions. This may seem little more than a truism but it is a truism which must be reaffirmed in view of the equivocations which have been noted in the two critics on the question of criticism and belief. It may not be an unwarranted generalisation to suggest that in all cases critical theory will be closely related to conviction.

If this is so it would seem best that the critic should be continually conscious of the fact. His convictions will lead to value-judgements, even if they remain implicit, and the grounds of these value-judgements should be made as explicit as possible in the interests of intellectual honesty. This is well done by Yvor Winters who prefaces both In Defense of Reason and Forms of Discovery with theoretical discussions in which he makes his position clear. He writes in the Foreword to In Defense of Reason: "I believe that the work of literature, is so far as it is valuable, approximates a real apprehension and communication of a particular kind of objective truth".¹

This statement represents a point of view far removed from those of Brooks and of Frye who both leave science in command of the realm of truth. It has been shown that the

writings of the two critics are responses to the achievement of modern science. Other responses are, however, possible. That of Winters and Veatch is consonant with Pascal's implicit evaluation of the knowledge supplied by science and the humanities in the following: "the moral law will always comfort me and make up what I lack in knowledge of physical sciences".² It is to view literature as the precise communication of true and important knowledge "of man and of nature".³ Another is that of Erich Heller who, believing that "the ultimate concern of [literary criticism] is neither facts nor classifications",⁴ but instead "the communication of a sense of quality rather than measurable quantity"⁴ makes evaluations by comparison without being able to connect them to an absolute ethical system.

Both these alternatives connect literary criticism with what Alvin W. Gouldner has called in his critique of Weber's value-free sociology "one of the basic intellectual traditions of the West -- the dialectical exploration of the fundamental purposes of human life"⁵ in a way in which the early criticism of Brooks and the criticism of Frye do not.

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

¹Adams, The Interests of Criticism, p. 122.

²Interests, p. 131.

³Lemon, The Partial Critics, p. 12.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

- ¹Brooks, The Well-Wrought Urn, p. vii.
- ²Lemon, The Partial Critics, p. 31.
- ³Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, p. xxxi.
- ⁴John Holloway, "The Critical Intimidation", Hudson Review, V (Winter 1953), 480.
- ⁵Tradition, pp. 45, 49, 91, 97, 174, 202; Urn, pp. 7, 169, 171.
- ⁶Tradition, p. 45.
- ⁷Handy, Kant and the New Southern Critics, p. 81.
- ⁸Tradition, p. 91.
- ⁹Urn, p. 108.
- ¹⁰Tradition, p. xxvi.
- ¹¹Kant, pp. 27-28.
- ¹²Urn, p. 59.
- ¹³Urn, p. 173.
- ¹⁴Rene Wellek, "Aesthetics and Criticism", in Charles Charles W. Hendel, ed., The Philosophy of Kant and Our Modern World, 74.
- ¹⁵Adams, The Interests of Criticism, p. 91.
- ¹⁶Urn, p. 155.
- ¹⁷Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure",

in M. D. Zabel, ed., Literary Opinion in America, II, 729.

¹⁸Urn, p. 142.

¹⁹Urn, p. 151.

²⁰Urn, p. 20.

²¹Holloway, Hudson Review, V (1953), 476.

²²Urn, p. 13.

²³Urn, p. 158.

²⁴Urn, p. 159.

²⁵Tradition, p. 193.

²⁶Urn, p. 60.

²⁷Kant, p. 6.

²⁸Urn, p. 171.

²⁹Urn, p. 173.

³⁰Kant, p. 12.

³¹Brooks, The Hidden God, p. 2.

³²Tradition, p. 15.

³³Tradition, p. 15.

³⁴Tradition, p. 28.

³⁵Tradition, p. 23.

³⁶Tradition, p. 29.

- ³⁷Tradition, p. 38.
- ³⁸Tradition, p. 111.
- ³⁹Urn, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰Urn, p. 6.
- ⁴¹Tradition, p. 41.
- ⁴²Tradition, p. 37.
- ⁴³Tradition, p. 37.
- ⁴⁴Tradition, p. 213.
- ⁴⁵Tradition, p. 218.
- ⁴⁶Urn, p. 169.
- ⁴⁷Urn, p. 168.
- ⁴⁸Urn, p. 169.
- ⁴⁹Partial, p. 148.
- ⁵⁰Urn, p. 163.
- ⁵¹Urn, p. 160.
- ⁵²Urn, p. 60.
- ⁵³Tradition, p. 166.
- ⁵⁴Urn, p. 155.
- ⁵⁵Tradition, p. 86. See the comments concerning Warren's "History".
- ⁵⁶Urn, p. 152.

⁵⁷Urn, p. 152.

⁵⁸Urn, p. 152.

⁵⁹Urn, p. 152.

⁶⁰Hidden God, p. 21.

⁶¹Urn, p. 152.

⁶²Veatch, Rational Man, pp. 37-46.

⁶³Urn, p. 13.

⁶⁴Heller, The Disinherited Mind, p. 265.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Urn, p. 61.

²Urn, p. 168.

³Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", in C. B. Cox and Arnold P. Hinchliffe, ed., The Waste Land: A Selection of Critical Essays, 130.

⁴Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962. All references are made to this edition.

⁵Selection, p. 129.

⁶Selection, p. 133.

⁷Selection, p. 138.

⁸Selection, p. 132.

⁹Selection, p. 133.

¹⁰Selection, p. 133.

¹¹William Myers, "Allusion in 'The Waste Land': A Reply", Essays in Criticism, XX (January 1970), 121.

¹²Myers, Essays in Criticism, XX (1970), 121.

¹³Selection, p. 141.

¹⁴Selection, p. 154. From his brief comment on this line in his essay "William Butler Yeats as a Literary Critic", in Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene and Lowry Nelson, Jr., ed., The Disciplines of Criticism, 36, it is clear that Brooks' reading of it has not changed.

¹⁵Williamson, A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot, p. 152.

- ¹⁶Urn, p. 122.
- ¹⁷Myers, Essays in Criticism, XX (1970), 122.
- ¹⁸Selection, p. 141.
- ¹⁹Selection, p. 128.
- ²⁰Selection, p. 129.
- ²¹Selection, p. 132.
- ²²Selection, p. 139.
- ²³Selection, p. 138.
- ²⁴Quoted by Brooks, Selection, p. 137.
- ²⁵Selection, p. 141.
- ²⁶Selection, p. 138.
- ²⁷Hidden God, p. 72.
- ²⁸Quoted by Brooks, Selection, p. 137.
- ²⁹Collected Poems 1909-1962, 11. 94-96.
- ³⁰Selection, p. 140.
- ³¹Selection, p. 144.
- ³²Selection, p. 144.
- ³³Selection, p. 144.
- ³⁴Myers, Essays in Criticism, XX (1970), 121.
- ³⁵Selection, p. 145.

³⁶Selection, p. 145.

³⁷Selection, p. 161.

³⁸Selection, p. 128.

³⁹Selection, p. 128.

⁴⁰Urn, p. 61.

⁴¹Selection, pp. 136-7.

⁴²Selection, p. 137.

⁴³Selection, p. 156.

⁴⁴Tradition, p. xxvii.

⁴⁵David Craig, "The Defeatism of 'The Waste Land'",
in C. B. Cox and Arnold P. Hinchcliffe, ed., The Waste Land:
A Selection of Critical Essays, 200-13.

⁴⁶Urn, p. v.

⁴⁷Selection, p. 128.

⁴⁸Selection, p. 154.

⁴⁹Urn, p. 61.

⁵⁰Holloway, Hudson Review, V (1953), 494.

⁵¹Urn, p. vi.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Philip Hallie, "The Master Builder", Partisan Review, XXXI (Fall 1964), 658.

²John Frazer, "Mr. Frye and Evaluation", Cambridge Quarterly, II (Spring 1967), 116.

³W. K. Wimsatt, "Northrop Frye: Criticism as Myth", in Murray Krieger, ed., Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism, p. 75.

⁴Wimsatt, "Criticism as Myth", p. 106.

⁵Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 15-16. Hereafter referred to as Anatomy.

⁶Northrop Frye, "The Critical Path", Daedalus, LXXXXIX (Spring 1970), 277.

⁷Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 278.

⁸Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 335.

⁹Wimsatt, "Criticism as Myth", pp. 102-3.

¹⁰Anatomy, p. 310.

¹¹Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 341.

¹²Anatomy, p. 8.

¹³Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 305.

¹⁴Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 304.

¹⁵Northrop Frye, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil", in Max Black, ed., The Morality of Scholarship, 7.

¹⁶Northrop Frye, "Criticism, Visible and Invisible", College English, XXVI (October 1964), 3-12.

¹⁷Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 3.

¹⁸Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 4.

¹⁹Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 4.

²⁰Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 4.

²¹Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 5.

²²Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 5.

²³Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 6.

²⁴Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 6.

²⁵Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 6.

²⁶Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 7.

²⁷Veatch, Two Logics, p. 49.

²⁸Frye, The Well-Tempered Critic, p. 133.

²⁹Anatomy, p. 23.

³⁰See Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 339.

³¹Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 12.

³²Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 8.

³³I am indebted to George Grant for this suggestion which is made in his essay "The University Curriculum", in Technology and Empire, 113-33.

³⁴Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p. 91.

³⁵Anatomy, p. 98.

³⁶Anatomy, p. 98.

³⁷Symmetry, p. 78.

³⁸Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo", in Walter Kaufmann, ed., The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo, p. 300.

³⁹Symmetry, p. 30.

⁴⁰Anatomy, p. 117.

⁴¹Northrop Frye, "Long Sequacious Notes", Hudson Review, V (Winter 1953), 607.

⁴²Frye, Hudson Review, V (1953), 607.

⁴³Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 295.

⁴⁴Anatomy, p. 11.

⁴⁵Anatomy, p. 12.

⁴⁶Anatomy, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷Anatomy, p. 16.

⁴⁸Anatomy, p. 16.

⁴⁹Anatomy, p. 20.

⁵⁰Cf. fn. 24, Logics, p. 49.

⁵¹This has been brilliantly done in an analysis to which I am indebted in Leavis, Education and the University, pp. 78-82.

⁵²Anatomy, p. 89.

- ⁵³Anatomy, p. 26.
- ⁵⁴Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 123.
- ⁵⁵Warnock, Ethics Since 1900, p. 202.
- ⁵⁶Technology, p. 119.
- ⁵⁷Technology, p. 120.
- ⁵⁸Anatomy, p. 78.
- ⁵⁹Anatomy, p. 87.
- ⁶⁰Anatomy, p. 80.
- ⁶¹Anatomy, p. 74.
- ⁶²Anatomy, p. 80.
- ⁶³Anatomy, p. 80.
- ⁶⁴Handy, Kant and the New Southern Critics, p. 6.
- ⁶⁵Symmetry, p. 40.
- ⁶⁶Anatomy, p. 99.
- ⁶⁷Quoted in Symmetry, p. 19.
- ⁶⁸Anatomy, p. 60 (Tonality); p. 74 (Motifs); p. 90 (Contrapuntal); p. 111 (Art of Fugue); p. 158 (Keys).
- ⁶⁹Anatomy, p. 140.
- ⁷⁰Anatomy, p. 140.
- ⁷¹Frye, Fables of Identity, p. 38.
- ⁷²Anatomy, p. 4; College English, XXVI (1964), 10;

The Educated Imagination, pp. 39-40; The Well-Tempered Critic, p. 125; Daedalus, LXXXIX (1970), 323.

⁷³Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 10.

⁷⁴Frye, College English, XXVI (1964), 10.

⁷⁵Frye, The Educated Imagination, p. 39.

⁷⁶Imagination, p. 42.

⁷⁷Imagination, p. 42.

⁷⁸See Technology, pp. 125-6, for a discussion of this point.

⁷⁹Northrop Frye, "Reflections in a Mirror", in Murray Krieger, ed., Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism, pp. 133-46.

⁸⁰Frye, "Reflections", p. 138.

⁸¹Imagination, p. 39.

⁸²Anatomy, pp. 247-8.

⁸³Anatomy, p. 293.

⁸⁴Anatomy, p. 27.

⁸⁵Anatomy, p. 20.

⁸⁶Anatomy, p. 27.

⁸⁷Anatomy, p. 19.

⁸⁸Anatomy, p. 25. It seems likely that Frye is making an oblique reference to Yvor Winters' discussion of the same point in his essay "Problems for the Modern Critic of Literature", in The Function of Criticism, p. 24, where Winters takes Milton and Blackmore as examples.

- ⁸⁹Anatomy, p. 24.
- ⁹⁰Frazer, Cambridge Quarterly, II (1967), 102.
- ⁹¹Anatomy, p. 24.
- ⁹²Anatomy, p. 24.
- ⁹³Anatomy, p. 24.
- ⁹⁴Anatomy, p. 25.
- ⁹⁵Anatomy, p. 19.
- ⁹⁶Anatomy, p. 93.
- ⁹⁷Anatomy, p. 122.
- ⁹⁸Anatomy, p. 125.
- ⁹⁹Anatomy, p. 125.
- ¹⁰⁰Anatomy, p. 344.
- ¹⁰¹Anatomy, p. 344.
- ¹⁰²Anatomy, p. 348.
- ¹⁰³Anatomy, p. 347.
- ¹⁰⁴Anatomy, p. 348.
- ¹⁰⁵Anatomy, p. 350.
- ¹⁰⁶Anatomy, p. 350.
- ¹⁰⁷Anatomy, p. 350.
- ¹⁰⁸Anatomy, p. 350.

109 Anatomy, p. 351.

110 Anatomy, p. 351.

111 Anatomy, p. 351.

112 Anatomy, p. 354.

113 I am indebted to Mel Adler of the Department of Mathematics at McMaster for information upon which this discussion is based.

114 Anatomy, p. 16.

115 Identity, p. 151.

116 Identity, p. 160.

117 Identity, p. 160.

118 Identity, p. 162.

119 Identity, p. 164.

120 Identity, p. 165.

121 Imagination, p. 2.

122 Imagination, p. 24.

123 Imagination, p. 24.

124 Imagination, p. 4.

125 Imagination, p. 9.

126 Imagination, p. 9.

127 Imagination, p. 20.

- 128 Imagination, p. 11.
- 129 Imagination, p. 9.
- 130 Imagination, p. 13.
- 131 Imagination, p. 13.
- 132 Imagination, p. 22.
- 133 Imagination, p. 21.
- 134 Imagination, p. 31.
- 135 Imagination, p. 31.
- 136 Imagination, p. 31.
- 137 Imagination, p. 32.
- 138 Veatch, Rational Man, p. 41.
- 139 Rational, p. 43. See pp. 37-46 for the complete form of the argument.
- 140 Anatomy, p. 350.
- 141 Imagination, p. 32.
- 142 Imagination, p. 33.
- 143 Imagination, p. 33.
- 144 Imagination, p. 43.
- 145 Imagination, p. 36.
- 146 Imagination, p. 59.

- 147 Imagination, p. 59.
- 148 Imagination, p. 60.
- 149 Imagination, p. 44.
- 150 Imagination, p. 48.
- 151 Anatomy, pp. 21-2.
- 152 Critic, p. 107.
- 153 Critic, p. 60.
- 154 Critic, p. 132.
- 155 Critic, p. 136.
- 156 Critic, p. 140.
- 157 Critic, p. 140.
- 158 Critic, p. 141.
- 159 Critic, p. 135.
- 160 Critic, p. 113.
- 161 Critic, p. 47.
- 162 Critic, p. 145.
- 163 Critic, p. 149.
- 164 Critic, p. 149.
- 165 Critic, p. 150.
- 166 Critic, p. 150.

- 167 Critic, p. 150.
- 168 Critic, p. 142.
- 169 Critic, p. 156.
- 170 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 268.
- 171 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 272.
- 172 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 273-4.
- 173 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 274.
- 174 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 275.
- 175 Hallie, Partisan Review, XXXI (1964), 658.
- 176 M. H. Abrams, "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor", in M. H. Abrams, ed., English Romantic Poets, 37-54. See especially 49-52.
- 177 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 294.
- 178 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 296.
- 179 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 299.
- 180 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 336.
- 181 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 305.
- 182 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 308.
- 183 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 310.
- 184 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 299.
- 185 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 310.

- 186 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 311.
- 187 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 313.
- 188 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 320.
- 189 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 326.
- 190 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 337.
- 191 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 289.
- 192 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 292.
- 193 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 295.
- 194 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 326.
- 195 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 300.
- 196 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 310.
- 197 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 322.
- 198 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 336.
- 199 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 335.
- 200 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 335.
- 201 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 335.
- 202 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 335.
- 203 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 309.
- 204 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 310.
- 205 Logics, p. 274.

206 Logics, p. 275.

207 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 339.

208 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 298.

209 Frye, Daedalus, LXXXXIX (1970), 342.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹Frye, T. S. Eliot, p. 5.

²Eliot, p. 5.

³Eliot, p. 6.

⁴Eliot, p. 6.

⁵Eliot, p. 64.

⁶Eliot, p. 64.

⁷Eliot, p. 64.

⁸Eliot, p. 65.

⁹Eliot, p. 65.

¹⁰Eliot, p. 65.

¹¹Eliot, p. 64.

¹²Eliot, p. 65.

¹³Eliot, p. 67.

¹⁴The Waste Land, ll. 320-1.

¹⁵Eliot, p. 65.

¹⁶Eliot, p. 65.

¹⁷Eliot, p. 66.

¹⁸Eliot, p. 66.

¹⁹Eliot, p. 66.

²⁰Eliot, p. 66.

²¹Eliot, p. 66.

²³Eliot, p. 67.

²⁴Eliot, p. 68.

²⁵Eliot, p. 67.

²⁶John Lucas and William Myers, "The Waste Land Today", Essays in Criticism, XIX (1969), 193-209.

²⁷Eliot, p. 67.

²⁸Eliot, p. 67.

²⁹Eliot, p. 68.

³⁰Eliot, p. 68.

³¹Eliot, p. 68.

³²Eliot, p. 68.

³³Eliot, p. 68.

³⁴Eliot, p. 68.

³⁵Eliot, p. 68.

³⁶Eliot, p. 69.

³⁷Eliot, p. 68.

³⁸Eliot, p. 69.

- ³⁹Eliot, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰Eliot, p. 5.
- ⁴¹Eliot, p. 69.
- ⁴²Eliot, p. 69.
- ⁴³Eliot, p. 69.
- ⁴⁴Eliot, p. 69.
- ⁴⁵Eliot, p. 69.
- ⁴⁶Lowith, Meaning in History, p. 198.
- ⁴⁷The Waste Land, ll. 328-30.
- ⁴⁸The Waste Land, l. 395.
- ⁴⁹The Waste Land, ll. 393-4.
- ⁵⁰The Waste Land, ll. 395-7.
- ⁵¹Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵²Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵³Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵⁴The Waste Land, l. 430.
- ⁵⁵Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵⁶Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵⁷Eliot, p. 70.
- ⁵⁸Eliot, p. 70.

⁵⁹Eliot, p. 71.

⁶⁰Eliot, p. 71.

⁶¹Eliot, p. 71.

⁶²Eliot, p. 71.

⁶³Eliot, Collected Poems, p. 84.

⁶⁴Eliot, p. 71.

⁶⁵Eliot, p. 71.

⁶⁶Eliot, p. 71.

FOOTNOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹Winters, In Defense of Reason, p. 11. This sentence is quoted with approval by Veatch in Two Logics, p. 48.

²Pascal, Pensées, p. 52.

³Veatch, Two Logics, p. 62..

⁴Heller, The Disinherited Mind, p. ix.

⁵Alvin W. Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology", in Irving Louis Horowitz, ed., The New Sociology, p. 202.

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