

# NORTHROP FRYES WRITINGS ON EDUCATION (COLLECTED WORKS OF NORTHROP FRYE) pdf

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*Frye's consistent affirmation that the goal of a liberal education is to make one maladjusted may give some hint as to the richness and variety of the writings collected here.*

The reputation of Northrop Frye as a literary theorist was originally based upon his *Anatomy of Criticism*, a book that sought to provide a structural framework for the study of literature through an analysis of its various modes, symbols, myths, images, and genres. The *Anatomy*, heralded for a generation as a twentieth-century Poetics, had a large following in the 1950s and 1960s, and twenty years after its publication it was the most frequently cited book in the arts and humanities by a writer born in the twentieth century. Seventeen translations of the *Anatomy* into thirteen languages attest to its international standing. Frye grew up in a Methodist environment in Moncton, New Brunswick. Although he rejected at an early age what he saw as the constraining features of fundamentalism and the oppressive demands of Methodist moral piety, he never abandoned his Protestant roots, particularly its low-church, dissenting traditions and the Methodist emphasis on experience. In 1935, at age seventeen, he entered Victoria College in Toronto as a "church student," and on completing his undergraduate honors degree in philosophy, he enrolled at Emmanuel College, the theology school at Victoria University. Several of these essays also addressed the relationship of religion and art. At age twenty-two Frye wrote, "religion and art are the two most important phenomena in the world; or rather the most important phenomenon, for they are basically the same thing" *Correspondence*, vol. 1. This was an insight that Frye spent the next fifty-six years exploring. But having an interest in religion would be not be unusual for any thinker who engaged as expansive a range of literary, social, and cultural issues as Frye did. That would be the weak claim. Frye remarked on several occasions that all of his ideas derived from William Blake, a deeply religious poet, the code of whose "prophecies" Frye was more responsible than anyone else for deciphering. The most important thing Blake taught Frye was the religious vision of radical immanence. Blake insists, says Frye, that "everything God does comes through man—the consciousness and imagination of man. God becomes man in order that we may be as he is" *Cayley*, p. 10. Theologically, this is the doctrine of the incarnation, though Frye was not inclined to speculate on such paradoxes in theological terms—in what he called the second-phase language of discursive thought with its emphasis on subjects and objects. His approach was through the first-phase language of metaphor. Identity is also a principle of myth: In such hyphenated words as sky-god or river-god the hyphen really functions as an equal mark, identifying the sky or the river with the god. Mythos or narrative, moreover, has to do with the loss and regaining of identity, or recognition of self by both literary characters and readers, which is the general topic of *The Secular Scripture*. The Bible for Frye was the primary text in the Western literary imagination, becoming for him a touchstone for studying what he called "positive analogies" in nonbiblical stories and images. His approach always moved away from the historical and doctrinal toward the poetic. But although he was known primarily as a literary critic, his lifelong project took the form of a religious quest and the structures he built for containing his expansive vision were fundamentally religious. In his late work such thinkers are displaced by G. Hegel, whose *Phenomenology of Spirit* Frye saw as the great philosophic statement of anabasis. Both Frye and Hegel climb a spiraling ladder to a higher level of being, except Frye moves upward by way of the language of myth and metaphor. Frye said, "If Hegel had written his *Phenomenology* in mythos-language instead of in logos-language a lot of my work would be done for me" *Late Notebooks*, vol. 1. Frye never escaped from his Christian roots, nor did he want to: But he had more than a passing interest in Eastern religious traditions, and his notebooks reveal that he was deeply engaged with esoteric and mystical religious traditions. His library contains more than annotated books that can be labeled esoterica, ranging from Alexandrian hermeticism through the medieval mystics to various forms of the occult, including alchemy, astrology, Gnosticism, magic, mysticism, Rosicrucianism, channeling, the tarot, numerology, astral projection, New Age science, Theosophy, synchronicity, and qabballism. Frye had no interest in these traditions as matters of belief, but they

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did confirm his contention that poetic thought is schematic, and they contained grammars of literary and religious symbolism. He was drawn to the esoteric traditions only to the extent that he could make imaginative use of them. Frye was a schematic thinker he could hardly put pen to paper without a diagram in mind, but he was also a dialectical thinker, his mind repeatedly moving back and forth between opposing poles of reference: But unity was not achieved at the expense of variety, and he never tires of insisting that opposites are never resolved by reconciliation, harmony, or agreement. They are typically resolved, rather, by the process of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, a dialectic in which oppositions are, in the triple meaning of the term, canceled, preserved, and raised. The movement of passing through negation to another level of vision is present in the conclusions of each of the eight chapters of *Words with Power*, and it is operative as well in the final pages of each of the four chapters of *The Double Vision*. But the structural poetics that Frye developed in *Anatomy of Criticism* remained with him to the end. Therefore, to see Frye as a religious visionary and architect of the spiritual world is to consider his work less in revisionary terms than in expanded ones. See *Also Literature*, article on *Literature and Religion*. As of , thirteen of the more than thirty volumes had appeared: The remaining volumes are expected at the rate of two per year. Secondary Sources Adamson, Joseph. Boyd, David, and Imre Salusinszky, eds. *The Published and Unpublished Works of Northrop Frye*. *Northrop Frye in Conversation*. A Vision of the New World. Cook, Eleanor, et al. *Essays in Honour of Northrop Frye*. *Northrop Frye and the Poetics of Process*. *Northrop Frye and Critical Method*. Donaldson, Jeffery, and Alan Mendelson, eds. *Frye and the Word: Religious Contexts in the Criticism of Northrop Frye*. Rousseau, Northrop Frye, et al. *The Bible: Anatomy of His Criticism*. *Northrop Frye and the Afterlife of the Word*. *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism*. *The Legacy of Northrop Frye*. *Ritratto de Northrop Frye*. Eastern and Western Perspectives. *Northrop Frye, o, delle finzioni supreme*. *Northrop Frye on Myth*: Denham Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

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Frye went to Toronto to compete in a national typing contest in 1927. After a brief stint as a student minister in Saskatchewan, he was ordained to the ministry of the United Church of Canada. He then studied at Merton College, Oxford, where he was a member and Secretary of the Bodley Club [6] before returning to Victoria College, where he spent the remainder of his professional career. Academic and writing career[ edit ] Frye rose to international prominence as a result of his first book, *Fearful Symmetry*, published in 1947. Until then, the prophetic poetry of William Blake had long been poorly understood, and considered by some to be delusional ramblings. Frye found in it a system of metaphor derived from *Paradise Lost* and the Bible. Moreover, Frye outlined an innovative manner of studying literature that was to deeply influence the study of literature in general. He was a major influence on Harold Bloom, Margaret Atwood, and others. Northrop Frye did not have a Ph.D. She died in Australia while accompanying Frye on a lecture tour. Contribution to literary criticism[ edit ] The insights gained from his study of Blake set Frye on his critical path and shaped his contributions to literary criticism and theory. He was the first critic to postulate a systematic theory of criticism, "to work out," in his own words, "a unified commentary on the theory of literary criticism" *Stubborn Structure*. In so doing, he shaped the discipline of criticism. Inspired by his work on Blake, Frye developed and articulated his unified theory ten years after *Fearful Symmetry*, in the *Anatomy of Criticism*. He described this as an attempt at a "synoptic view of the scope, theory, principles, and techniques of literary criticism" *Anatomy* 3. He asked, "what if criticism is a science as well as an art? Criticism as a science[ edit ] As A. Hamilton outlines in *Northrop Frye*: Firstly and most fundamentally, it presupposes that literary criticism is a discipline in its own right, independent of literature. Claiming with John Stuart Mill that "the artist. To defend the right of criticism to exist at all, therefore, is to assume that criticism is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own right, with some measure of independence from the art it deals with *Anatomy* 5. This "declaration of independence" *Hart* xv is necessarily a measured one for Frye. For coherence requires that the autonomy of criticism, the need to eradicate its conception as "a parasitic form of literary expression,. For Frye, this kind of coherent, critical integrity involves claiming a body of knowledge for criticism that, while independent of literature, is yet constrained by it: He defines this as the movement of "a scholar with a special interest in geography or economics [to] express. By attaching criticism to an external framework rather than locating the framework for criticism within literature, this kind of critic essentially "substitute[s] a critical attitude for criticism. The primary facts, in this case, are the works of literature themselves. Significantly, they revealed "a general tendency on the part of great classics to revert to [primitive formulas]" *Anatomy* I suggest that it is time for criticism to leap to a new ground from which it can discover what the organizing or containing forms of its conceptual framework are. Criticism seems to be badly in need of a coordinating principle, a central hypothesis which, like the theory of evolution in biology, will see the phenomena it deals with as parts of a whole *Anatomy* The order of words[ edit ] The recurring primitive formulas Frye noticed in his survey of the "greatest classics" provide literature with an order of words, a "skeleton" which allows the reader "to respond imaginatively to any literary work by seeing it in the larger perspective provided by its literary and social contexts" Hamilton Frye identifies these formulas as the "conventional myths and metaphors" which he calls "archetypes" *Spiritus Mundi* The archetypes of literature exist, Frye argues, as an order of words, providing criticism with a conceptual framework and a body of knowledge derived not from an ideological system but rooted in the imagination itself. Imposing value judgments on literature belongs, according to Frye, "only to the history of taste, and therefore follows the vacillations of fashionable prejudice" *Anatomy* 9. Genuine criticism "progresses toward making the whole of literature intelligible" *Anatomy* 9 so that its goal is

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ultimately knowledge and not evaluation. It is Romantic in the same sense that Frye attributed Romanticism to Blake: He reminds us that literature is the "central and most important extension" of mythology: Mythology and literature thus inhabit and function within the same imaginative world, one that is "governed by conventions, by its own modes, symbols, myths and genres" Hart Integrity for criticism requires that it too operates within the sphere of the imagination, and not seek an organizing principle in ideology. To do so, claims Frye,. Such structural principles are certainly conditioned by social and historical factors and do not transcend them, but they retain a continuity of form that points to an identity of the literary organism distinct from all its adaptations to its social environment Words with Power xiii. Myth therefore provides structure to literature simply because literature as a whole is "displaced mythology" Bates Hart makes the point well when he states that "For Frye, the story, and not the argument, is at the centre of literature and society. The base of society is mythical and narrative and not ideological and dialectical" Criticism, Frye explains, is essentially centripetal when it moves inwardly, towards the structure of a text; it is centrifugal when it moves outwardly, away from the text and towards society and the outer world. The "Ode" has centrifugal tendencies, relying for its effects on elements of history and pottery and visual aesthetics. Cabin has centripetal tendencies, relying on syntax and lexical choice to delineate characters and establish mood. But the one veers inward, the other pushes outward. Criticism reflects these movements, centripetally focusing on the aesthetic function of literature, centrifugally on the social function of literature. While some critics or schools of criticism emphasize one movement over the other, for Frye, both movements are essential: He would therefore agree, at least in part, with the New Critics of his day in their centripetal insistence on structural analysis. But for Frye this is only part of the story: But a purely structural approach has the same limitation in criticism that it has in biology. Structural analysis brings rhetoric back to criticism, but we need a new poetics as well. It is through the lens of this framework, which is essentially a centrifugal movement of backing up from the text towards the archetype, that the social function of literary criticism becomes apparent. Essentially, "what criticism can do," according to Frye, "is awaken students to successive levels of awareness of the mythology that lies behind the ideology in which their society indoctrinates them" Stingle 4. That is, the study of recurring structural patterns grants students an emancipatory distance from their own society, and gives them a vision of a higher human state "the Longinian sublime" that is not accessible directly through their own experience, but ultimately transforms and expands their experience, so that the poetic model becomes a model to live by. In what he terms a "kerygmatic mode," myths become "myths to live by" and metaphors "metaphors to live in," which ". Because of its important social function, Frye felt that literary criticism was an essential part of a liberal education , and worked tirelessly to communicate his ideas to a wider audience. It is therefore fitting that his last book, published posthumously, should be one that he describes as being "something of a shorter and more accessible version of the longer books, The Great Code and Words with Power," which he asks his readers to read sympathetically, not "as proceeding from a judgment seat of final conviction, but from a rest stop on a pilgrimage, however near the pilgrimage may now be to its close" Double Vision Preface. Archetypal literary criticism Influences: Vico and Blake[ edit ] Vico, in The New Science, posited a view of language as fundamentally figurative, and introduced into Enlightenment discourse the notion of the role of the imagination in creating meaning. For Vico, poetic discourse is prior to philosophical discourse; philosophy is in fact derivative of poetry. Frye readily acknowledged the debt he owed to Vico in developing his literary theory, describing him as "the first modern thinker to understand that all major verbal structures have descended historically from poetic and mythological ones" Words with Power xii. In fact, Frye claims that his "second book [Anatomy] was contained in embryo in the first [Fearful Symmetry]" Stubborn Structure For it was in reflecting on the similarity between Blake and Milton that Frye first stumbled upon the "principle of the mythological framework," the recognition that "the Bible was a mythological framework, cosmos or body of stories, and that societies live within a mythology" Hart Blake thus led Frye to the conviction that the Bible provided Western societies with the mythology which informed all of Western literature. Frye argued that regardless of the formal quality of the writing, it was imperative to study Canadian literary productions in

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order to understand the Canadian imagination and its reaction to the Canadian environment. In this work, Frye presented the idea of the "garrison mentality" as the attitude from which Canadian literature has been written. The garrison mentality is the attitude of a member of a community that feels isolated from cultural centres and besieged by a hostile landscape. Essays on the Canadian Imagination He coined phrases like "the Garrison Mentality", a theme that summarizes Canadian Literature. Margaret Atwood adopted his approach and elaborated on this in her book *Survival Essays on Canadian Culture*. However, Frye perceived the ability and advisability of Canadian literary identity to move beyond these characteristics. Frye proposed the possibility of movement beyond the literary constraints of the garrison mentality: He was named University Professor by the University of Toronto in

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