A Northrop Frye Chrestomathy

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Prefatory Note

A substantial amount of what Northrop Frye wrote was for publication—fifteen of the twenty-nine volumes in the Collected Works. But an even greater amount—approximately 55%—was not intended for publication. Of the more than eight million words in the Collected Works, four and a half million fall into the previously unpublished category. The entries in the present collection derive from this category.The entries are alphabetically arranged. In this respect the *Chrestomathy* is connected to a more or less companion volume, *Northrop Frye Unbuttoned: Wit and Wisdom from Frye’s Notebooks and Diaries* (Frankfort, KY: Gnomon; Toronto: Anansi, 2004), though it draws from a wider range of previously unpublished sources than the notebooks and diaries.More than half of the volumes in the Collected Works have been published since *Frye Unbuttoned* appeared, so the present collection is a continuation of what was begun there. It is a discontinuous series of reflections on divers topics, including biographical ones, that I have judged to be worthy of extracting from their original locus.

“Chrestomathy” comes from the Greek, meaning useful to learn, and it has the narrow meaning of passages that are useful in learning a language. I am using the word in the more general sense of a selection of passages from one author. The selections here follow in the tradition of H.L. Mencken’s *A Mencken Chrestomathy: His Own Selection of His Choicest Writing*. But the magpie tendency to collect aphoristic apperçus has created a capacious genre, including such satirical collections asAmbrose Bierce’s *The Devil’s Dictionary* and all the variants it inspired and Flaubert’s *Dictionary of Received Ideas*, a compilation of his satirical definitions. These bear a family resemblance to Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary*, which is one of several examples we have of the Enlightenment tendency to structure ideas and information alphabetically.

No continuous thread links the selections together. I have simply chosen passages that I found to be aphoristic, insightful, clever, startling, amusing, contrarian, curious, powerful, salty, irreverent, or otherwise noteworthy in the way they reveal Frye’s fertile mind at work. Frye is Canada’s greatest literary critic, and a good argument can be made that he is the greatest critical presence internationally of the last century. The publication of Frye’s notebooks has already prompted revisionary views of his work. Of the fifty-two books devoted in their entirety to Frye, thirty-nine have appeared since his death in 1991. Twenty-one of his books have been translated into Italian; seventeen, into Japanese. Altogether there have been 126 translations of his books into twenty-six languages. The thousands of doctoral dissertations and M.A. theses in which Frye’s work figures importantly continue to increase at an exponential rate. Although predicting the reputations of literary critics is a hazardous enterprise, Frye is still with us more than a century after his birth, and it seems safe to say that his works will live on. *The Northrop Frye Handbook* (McFarland, 2012) reveals that large numbers of people still read and write about his expansive body of work.

There are many reasons for Frye’s staying power, including his expansive vision and the genius of his insights. Another reason is that Frye wrote well. The rhythm of his published prose has an easy formality about it. It is deliberately rhetorical—an example of what in *The Well-Tempered Critic* he calls “hieratic.” Although it is sometimes difficult to say definitively why one paragraph follows another in Frye’s published writings, this prose is nevertheless marked by a flowing continuity. The writing that he did not himself intend to be published, tends toward the

“demotic”—familiar, aphoristic, sometimes colloquial, and discontinuous. The largest genre of the previously unpublished material is by far the notebooks, and the sources of the entries in the *Chrestomathy* mirror that fact.

Among Frye’s papers at the Victoria University Library in Toronto are seventy-seven holograph notebooks in various shapes and sizes (the longest is 253 pages), which he kept from the late 1930s, when he was a student at Oxford, until only a few months before his death in 1991. Although portions of some notebooks are drafts of Frye’s various books, essays, reviews, and lectures, most of the material consists of neatly organized and syntactically complete paragraphs separated by blank lines. The entries are most often not the polished prose of Frye’s published work, but they do reveal a genuine concern for the rhetorical unit that can stand alone. The holograph notebooks contain approximately 800,000 words, excluding the drafts. In the 1970s Frye began typing some of his notes. The experiment was not altogether successful in his mind (he even wrote of wanting to destroy his typed notes for *The Great Code*), but a large percentage of these notes is practically identical in form and scope to the holograph material. The typescripts, which have become known in Frye’s Collected Works as “Notes” to distinguish them from the holograph “Notebooks,” constitute another 350,000 words. All but one of the notebooks has now been published, and the notebook material forms a substantial body of work—well over a million words.

While Frye’s notebooks do contain passages that will be of considerable interest to his biographers, their form is altogether different from the diaries he kept in the 1940s and 1950s, and their intent is neither to record his personal life nor to explore his own psyche. The notebooks are first and foremost the workshop out of which Frye created his books. After *Anatomy of Criticism* Frye produced books at the rate of about one per year, giving the impression perhaps that writing for him was a facile enterprise. But while the shorter books that emerged from his lectures were often written quickly, the process was anything but that for his four major books. *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) and the *Anatomy* (1957) were each more than ten years in the making; *The Great Code* (1982) was begun more than a decade before it appeared; and *Words with Power* (1990), as Frye notes in the introduction to *The Great Code*, was “in active preparation” in the early 1980s. The notebooks record this deliberate and often labyrinthine process, and the process did not always issue in the product Frye had envisioned, his inability to complete the major book that was to follow *Fearful Symmetry* and *Anatomy of Criticism—*the “third book,” he calls it*—*being the most obvious example of this. At times the workshop function seems to fade away almost completely, for the notebooks contain entries on scores of topics that have no obvious connection to the project at hand. An entry will be triggered by a detective story Frye is reading, a newspaper article, a lecture or sermon he has to prepare, a Latin quotation, a glance at the books on his shelves, a quotation he remembers, a letter received, a memory from a trip, and occasional personal reflections*—*thoughts about his own status as a critic, about the difficulties of writing, about the bankruptcy of contemporary criticism, and the like.

Writing for Frye, of whatever form, was, if not an obsession, as indispensable a part of his life as eating and sleeping. He wrote because he could do no other, and the process was not always liberating. “I know from experience,” he writes, “and I’ve read the statement often enough, that if one could turn off the incessant chatter in one’s psyche one would be well on the way to freedom. In all my life I’ve never known an instant of real silence.” Several times he expresses a deep desire for the apophatic and contemplative life, or at least for certain moments when he could “turn off the chatter in [his] mind, which is making more noise than a punk rock band (“drunken monkey,” the Hindus call it) and relax into the divine knowledge of us which is one of the things meant by a cloud of unknowing.” In one of his notebooks, written in the mid-1940s, Frye ruefully wonders “what it would really be like to get one’s mind completely clear of the swirl of mental currents. It would be like walking across the Red Sea to the Promised Land, with walls of water standing up on each side.” The fact that Frye was never really able to turn off the “drunken monkey” is what accounts for both the sheer mass of material in the notebooks and the constant repetition of ideas, hunches, insights, poetic passages, and illustrations. Still, Frye approached the discipline of notemaking with Benedictine zeal: “working at what one can do is a sacrament,” he writes at the beginning of Notebook 44. Or again, “My whole life is words: nothing is of value in life except finding verbal formulations that make sense.”

Here and there Frye speaks of the intent of his notebook writing, as in this remark about the relation between his obsessive note-taking and the books that eventually emerge: “All my life I’ve had the notebook obsession manifested by what I’m doing at this moment. Writing in notebooks seems to help clarify my mind about the books I write, which are actually notebook entries arranged in a continuous form. At least, I’ve always told myself they were that.” In one of his marginalia to Coleridge Frye observes that Coleridge’s “mind moves in a series of crystallizations, like Homer trying to write an epic. We need a prose Poe to assert that a long prose structure is impossible.” The notebook entries can also be seen as a series of crystallizations, Frye’s ideas suddenly emerging into discontinuous prose form. Continuity in Frye’s published prose is, as already suggested, sometimes difficult to discern, and when Frye is especially elliptical one wonders if he does not believe about prose what Poe said about the long poem. But the notebook entries are kernels of what he hopes can be incorporated into longer forms: “I keep notebooks because all my writing is a translation into a narrative sequence of things that come to me aphoristically. The aphorisms in turn are preceded by ‘inspirations’ or potentially verbal *Gestalten*. So ‘inspiration’ is essentially a snarled sequence.” While the notebook entries are ordinarily not as brief as an aphorism (they contain about seventy-five words on average), they do consist on the whole of discontinuous reflections. But, as “snarled sequence” suggests, the entries are by no means unrelated to each other. Frye will often devote a succession of paragraphs to a single topic, and he frequently refers to previous sections of the notebook in which he is writing at the time and occasionally to other notebooks. Frye puts “inspiration” in quotation marks because the actual genesis of the notebook entries is often somewhat mysterious. “I think in cores or aphorisms, as these notebooks indicate, and all the labor in my writing comes from trying to find verbal formulas to connect them. I have to wait for the cores to emerge: they seem to be born and not made.” In one of his notebooks for *Anatomy of Criticism*, he speaks of these aphorisms as auditory epiphanies: they are, he says, “involuntarily acquired” and have “something to do with listening for a Word, the ear being the involuntary sense.” If the birth of the aphorisms comes from things “heard,” the connections among them come from things “seen.” Realizing the potential of a “verbal *Gestalten*” or a pattern of continuous argument, Frye says, has something to do “with the spread-out panorama for the eye.” But, as the notebooks unequivocally reveal, the pattern of continuity is never achieved without a mighty struggle: once Frye got hold of the building-blocks, “the spread-out performance” was never necessary or even predictable. In his words, “Continuity, in writing as in physics, is probabilistic, and every sequence is a choice among possibilities. Inevitable sequence is illusory.” The sequence that Frye eventually achieved in his published work came only after revisions of numerous drafts, sometimes as many as eight or nine revisions. Some of the chapters in *Words with Power* were, in their early form, as long as a hundred pages, so Frye’s revisions involved a great deal of cutting. He would typically type three or four drafts himself before giving them, often with holograph additions and corrections, to his secretary Jane Widdicombe to type or enter on a word processor. Once he received the draft back, he would revise again, and this process would be repeated as many as five times. But the notebooks themselves are by no means drafts: they reveal a stage of Frye’s writing before, sometimes years before, he began even to work on a first draft.

As for the rhetoric of the notebooks, one can naturally detect features of Frye’s style on every page: the wit, the koan-like utterances that capture some paradox, the attention to the shape of the periodic sentence, the grace and elegance of the prose, the ironic tone. But the difference between Frye’s notebook entries and his published work is readily apparent, for in the notebooks Frye is wearing everything on his sleeve. He feels no need for the detachment that was almost always a feature of what he presented to the public, no need to create that sense of assurance that comes with a distanced academic presence. Frye did insist that the antithesis between the scholarly and unscholarly, between the personal and impersonal was an antithesis that needed to be transcended. Still, the voice in the notebooks is not Frye’s public voice. There is, on the one hand, the direct expression of convictions, often taking the form of beliefs. Frye’s own beliefs were, of course, implicit in all his writing, from *Fearful Symmetry* on. But in the notebooks they are explicit, sometimes amounting almost to a confession of faith. On the other hand, at the level simply of diction, Frye’s not infrequent use of coarse and indecent language may come as a surprise. But Frye’s four-letter words are used fairly innocently, serving as a kind of shorthand for referring to sex, which is of course one of his “primary concerns” (as in the male and female principles in Genesis 1 and 2 that are the starting points for his account of the mountain and garden archetypes in *Words with Power*), and to bodily functions. Still, Frye’s language often deflates the most sober of reflections. Thus, while there is not so much as a whisper of the mock-heroic in the notebooks, there is a good measure of the Swiftian burlesque, which is one of the ways that Frye, never without a sense of irony, brings his soaring speculations back down to earth.

If we cannot always with assurance follow the sequence of the arguments in Frye’s published work or always understand clearly why one paragraph follows the next, we nevertheless have the impression that *he* knew where he was going. But this confident sense of direction is often absent from the notebooks. “God knows,” he writes at one point, “I know how much of this is blither: it makes unrewarding reading for the most part. But I have to do it: it doesn’t clarify my mind so much as lead to some point of clarification that (I hope) gets into the book. Hansel & Gretel’s trail of crumbs.” Or again, when speculating on the relation between the dialogues of Word and Spirit and the four levels of meaning, Frye remarks, “I don’t know if this is anything but bald and arbitrary schematism.” Or still again, “I’m again at the point in the book where I wonder if I know what the hell I’m talking about.” Remarks such as these are sprinkled throughout the notebooks, and there are entries in which Frye begins to explore an idea but, by the time he gets to the end of the paragraph, forgets the point he was going to make. Over and over we see the persona of a Frye who is human, all-too-human. There is nothing particularly surprising in this: writing for Frye was a discovery procedure, and we should not expect that every aphorism that came to him should issue in a “verbal Gestalten.” In this respect Frye’s notebooks are like Nietzsche’s own book of aphorisms, *Human All-too-Human*, an exercise in free thinking; and free thought, by definition, is under no obligation always to issue in certitude. The persona of the writer is revealed too in the occasional intemperate epithets (“fool,”“idiot,” and the like) that Frye hurls at himself for overlooking the obvious or for a lapse in memory, and in the self-deprecating remarks (“By the standards of conventional scholarship, *The Great Code* was a silly and sloppy book.”) Still, Frye’s most explicit reference to the use readers might make of his notebook aphorisms, which follows on a remark about the metaphor of *sparagmos* (tearing to pieces) that runs through his writing, helps to explain why such a large percentage of the items in the *Chrestomathy* derive from the notebooks:

The way I begin a book is to write detached aphorisms in a notebook, and ninety-five percent of the work I do in completing a book is to fit these detached aphorisms together into a continuous narrative line. I think that Coleridge worked in the same way, though he seems to have had unusual difficulty when it came to the narrative stage, and so instead of completing his great treatise on the Logos he kept much of the best of what he had to say hugged to his bosom in the form of fifty-seven notebooks. Holism is not only not the end of the critical enterprise: it is an axiom pursued for its own rewards which at a certain point may turn inside out. I may work hard enough to weld my books into a narrative unity, but it is possible that many of my readers tend to find their way back to the original aphoristic form, finding me more useful for detached insights than for total structures. However, if bits and pieces of me float down to Lesbos with the head still singing, it doesn’t matter to me if some of those pieces (I’m mixing metaphors violently here, but the mixing seems to fit the context) get swallowed by someone and grow up again from inside him.

In one of his early notebooks Frye expresses the fear that his speculations will not turn out to be definitive, but this is a fear that he is soon able to vanquish. The pace of the writing initially seems to be almost frenetic—the drive of a man possessed to record every nuance of the “obstinate questionings” of his active mind. But when we stand back from the notebooks as a whole the mood they convey is neither fear nor frenzy. It is rather a process of speculative free play, “of letting things come & not forcing or cramping or repressing them.” Frye is in no panic to bring things to closure, moving as he does at a leisurely pace, releasing himself from all inhibitions, and not worrying that his schemes “go bust immediately.”“Perhaps that’s the reason I have them,” he muses. Sometimes anxieties about the efficacy of the incessant scribbling arise: “Why do I try to keep notes like this, when forty years of experience shows me they don’t do me any good.” At other times boredom sets in “because so much of what I put into [the notebooks] is just a form of masturbation: an empty fantasy life making the scene with beckoning fair charmers who don’t exist.” But this sentence is followed by the single, telling word, “however,” which signals, of course, that the doubts he might have about the value of recording his imaginative life do not deter him from moving on immediately.

In one of his notebooks from the 1960s Frye issues these tactical instructions to himself: “in beginning to plan a major work like the third book, *don’t eliminate anything*. *Never* assume that some area of your speculations can’t be included & has to be left over for another book. Things may get eliminated in the very last stage . . . but *never*, *never*, exclude anything when thinking about the book. It was strenuous having to cut down FS [*Fearful Symmetry*] from an encyclopaedia, but . . . major works are encyclopaedic & anatomic: everything I know must go into them—eye of bat & tongue of dog.” Frye goes on to say that all of his major books are essentially “the same book with different centres of gravity: interpenetrating universes. Give me a place to stand, and I will include the world.” This “same book” theory means that we encounter many iterations and echoes of the same idea. Repetition was a feature of Frye’s published work, which, as he said, assumed the shape of a spiral curriculum, “circling around the same issues” in a way that produced a gradual continuity over time. He justifies the repetition in his books and essays by noting that the principles he keeps returning to are the only ones he knows. Like thematic returns in music the same ideas can be presented in different contexts, and repetition can be a sign of a consistency of conviction: “repetition charges the emotional batteries & suspends the critical faculties. What I tell you three times is true. What I tell you three hundred times is profoundly true.”

The repetition in the notebooks, however, is of a different kind. Like Daedalus, who set his mind to unknown arts, Frye uses his notebooks for invention and discovery, returning again and again to the archetypes of his mental landscape in an effort to get the architecture and the verbal formulation right. The repetition can be vexing, but it is nonetheless an example of Frye’s following the principle underlying his most important educational advice: develop the habit of Samuel Butler’s practice-memory. “The repetitiousness of the Koran would drive a reader out of his mind if he were reading it as he would any other book,” and one could almost say the same thing about the discontinuity of Frye’s notebooks: they contain little linear argument, even though there are many occasions where sequences of paragraphs focus on a single, obsessively pursued issue. Still, the entire notebook enterprise is based on a theory of verbal meaning that turns Aristotle’s notion of causality upside down. Frye writes at one point that there is “a convergence causation founded on the analogy of space,” as opposed to linear causation, which assumes that writing is a temporal sequence of effect following cause. Such convergent causation, which is close to the first-phase language of metaphor, is the kind that governs the notebooks.

If one abandons both linear causation and a concern for continuity, then the principles of the figurative use of words become more important than conceptual meaning. Frye’s fertile and energetic mind is always pursuing similarities or, as he is fond of calling them, links. Aristotle says that the ability to perceive likenesses is one of the marks of genius, and if that is true then the notebooks reveal the mental dance of a genius. Perceiving likenesses requires the free play, not of the imagination, but of fancy, as Frye writes in one revealing entry:

I am intensely superstitious; but there are two kinds of superstition, related as selfdestructive melancholy is to penseroso melancholy. There is the superstition based on fear of the future: this is based also on my character as a coward & weakling, & is of course to be avoided. There is another kind which consists of removing all censors & inhibitions on speculation: it’s almost exactly what Coleridge calls fancy. It may eventually be superseded by imagination: but if there’s no fancy to start with there won’t be any imagination to finish with. Let’s call it creative superstition. It works with analogies, disregarding all differences & attending only to similarities. Here nothing is coincidence in the sense of unusable design; or, using the word more correctly, everything is potential coincidence--what Jung calls synchronistic.

Once the similarities Frye observes begin to organize themselves into patterns, then the imagination has taken over: the schematic structures then take the form of the mental diagrams, one of the signatures of Frye’s thinking.

Why all of this imaginative free play, with its incessant spatial projections and schematic doodling? As we have said, it is an uninhibited form of free writing that eventually distills itself into Frye’s books and essays. But more importantly, it represents the many stages in his own religious quest. Frye remarks in Notebook 21 that his “particular interest has always been in mythology & in the imaginative aspect of religion. . . . The whole imaginative picture of the world which underlies both religion and the arts has been constant from the beginning.” Notebook 21 begins by Frye’s announcing that while his immediate object is to collect ideas for his 1971 Birks Lectures at McGill University, his ultimate aim is to work through his “thoughts on religion.” Religion for Frye is not a matter of belief, though it stems from the conviction that life has a point. “All attempts to find out what that point is are religious quests,” which is reminiscent of what Frye wrote in a student essay forty years earlier: “the most fundamental intellectual activity of the human race is . . . an attempt to find a pattern in existence.”

If the ubiquitous spatial projections of the notebooks form the *dianoia* of Frye’s critical and imaginative universe, the forthrights and meanders of his quest are its *mythos*. But a quest for what?

Well, for *The Great Code* and *Words with Power*. “For at least 25 years,” Frye writes in the early 1970s, “I’ve been preoccupied by the notion of a key to all mythologies,” and what he really wants to discover, he writes at one point, is “the myth of God, which is a myth of identity.” Identity is one of the central principles in Frye’s universe, the principle he returns to again and again in his speculations on the paradoxes of literal meaning, metaphor, and the Incarnation. From the perspective of the imagination, the *telos* of knowledge comes from the ability to perceive not differences but identities. While knowledge is clearly not divorced from perception, Frye’s quest has to do more with seeing than with knowing; hence, the centrality of light and sight, of recognition and vision and illumination.

Frye often organized his categories in cyclical patterns, the most familiar of these being the specific forms of drama and the thematic convention of *epos* and lyric in *Anatomy of Criticism*, along with the phases of the four *mythoi*. The quest for Frye, including his own, can be seen as cyclical, a matter addressed in our final chapter, but he distanced himself from some of the implications of the cycle. The treadmill of endless repetition, the dull sameness in the myth of the eternal return, the Druidic recurrences of natural religion, the doctrine of reincarnation—all of these cyclic myths were antithetical to Frye’s belief in the Resurrection, one of his firmest religious convictions. The cycle always preempted what he called the revolutionary *culbute* or overturn in individual and social life-the possibility for a genuine reversal and a new beginning. One of the most powerful verses of Scripture for Frye is Revelation 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” These words at the very end of the Bible signal for Frye a new beginning, a new creation, and this new beginning is in the mind of the reader. To be able to see the possibilities in such a new beginning is another way of formulating the goal of Frye’s quest, but there are numerous other ways to phrase it: the Everlasting Gospel, Milton’s Word of God in the heart, the interpenetration of Word and Spirit.

The quest movement in Frye more typically moves up and down a vertical axis. At the top is the point of epiphany of the Logos vision, the transcendent moment of pure illumination. There is a strong tendency for Frye, especially in his earlier work, to move up the *axis mundi* to the point where Word and Spirit are identical, a place where space and time interpenetrate. The answer for Frye is not to be found in history, which he saw mostly as a series of repeating nightmares. In the dialectic of his thought the search for the moment of pure illumination, the anagogic vision, represents his Platonic, Longinian, and Romantic inclinations. The movement is from Eros to Logos. But the katabatic movement down the ladder is equally important for Frye: in his later writings it appears to be even more important. “Everybody,” Frye writes, “has a fixation. Mine has to do with meander-and-descent patterns. For years in my childhood I wanted to dig a cave & be the head of a society in it--this was before I read *Tom Sawyer*. All the things in literature that haunt me most have to do with katabasis. The movie that hit me hardest as a child was the Lon Chaney *Phantom of the Opera*. My main points of reference in literature are such things as *The Tempest*,*Paradise Regained*], [Blake’s] *Milton*, the *Ancient Mariner*, *Alice in Wonderland*, the *Waste Land*—every damn one a meander-&-katabasis work. I should have kept the only book [my sister] Vera kept, *The*

*SleepingKing*.” The study of archetypes in part two of *Words with Power* begins with the mountain and the garden but it concludes with the cave and the furnace. Thus, the last part of the last book published in Frye’s lifetime treats the archetypes on the lower half of the *axis mundi*.

We have spoken of Frye’s notebook entries as speculations, as he himself does. The word has parallels to its use in Keats’s letters, though Frye’s speculations ordinarily have more shape than those that come tumbling out of Keats’s fertile brain. Keats distances his speculations from what he calls “consecutive reasoning,” and Frye would agree that if there is any truth in his speculations they belong to an order different from that the “reflective” mode of truth in the descriptive writing that Keats has in mind. Underlying both “reflection” and “speculation” is, as Frye notes in *Words with Power* and elsewhere, the mirror metaphor.

If we ask what the speculation is a mirror of, the traditional answer is being, a conceptual totality that transcends, not only individual beings, but the total aggregate of beings. Heidegger endorses the statement that the first question of philosophy is, “Why are there things rather than nothing?” But things are not what Heidegger means by being, and the question leads to another: “Why is there being beyond all beings?”

The being beyond all beings lies in the background of Frye’s own quest, though his search for it typically relies on the language different from Heidegger’s Greek vocabulary. It is time to hear some of that language from the notebooks and Frye’s other previously unpublished writings.

The citation that follows each entry is to the volume and page number of the Collected Works.

\*CW 1 = *The Correspondence of Northrop Frye and Helen Kemp, 1932–1939.*Vol. 1. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996.

\*CW 2 = *The Correspondence of Northrop Frye and Helen Kemp, 1932–1939*. Vol. 2. Ed. Robert D. Denham. 2 vols. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996.

\*CW 3 =*Northrop Frye’s Student Essays, 1932–1938*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

\*CW 5 = *Northrop Frye’s Late Notebooks, 1982–1990: Architecture of the Spiritual World*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

\*CW 6 = *Northrop Frye’s Late Notebooks, 1982–1990: Architecture of the Spiritual World*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

CW 8 = *The Diaries of Northrop Frye, 1942–1955*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2001.

CW 9 = *The “Third Book” Notebooks of Northrop Frye, 1964–1972: The Critical Comedy*. Ed. Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2001.

CW 13 = *Northrop Frye’s Notebooks and Lectures on the Bible and Other Religious Texts.* Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003.

CW 15 = *Northrop Frye’s Notebooks on Romance*. Ed. Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004.

CW 20 = *Northrop Frye’s Notebooks on Renaissance Literature.* Ed. Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

CW 23 = *Northrop Frye’s Notebooks for “Anatomy of Criticism.”* Ed. Robert D. Denham. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007.

CW 25 = *Northrop Frye’s Fiction and Miscellaneous Writings*. Ed. Robert D. Denham and Michael Dolzani. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007.

Citations that do not include “CW” are to the titles of the chapters in *Northrop Frye’s Uncollected Prose* (forthcoming, University of Toronto Press). The entries have been edited with a light touch: I have expanded Frye’s abbreviations (“Christianity” for “Xy,” for example), and I have italicized titles. All material in square brackets is an editorial addition.

Kind thanks to the executors of the Frye estate, Jane Widdicombe and Roger Ball, for permission to edit and publish Frye’s previously unpublished work.

A

**Abstract Expressionism.** I’ve often wondered why I disliked abstract expressionism so much, and

now I think I know: it’s pictorial anarchism, the same thing student unrest begins in, the renunciation of the community. I remember some Clyfford Stills I saw in Buffalo: wonderful pictures, but they wouldn’t endure anything else in the same room except another Clyfford Still. (I was told later that Still was personally almost a psychotic, and of course I disapprove of putting that fact into a causal relation to the pictures, but the effect of the pictures is unmistakable). But going through the Uffizi one can see how the pictures of the most towering geniuses still belong in a pictorial community, and hang in a room with other pictures. (CW 9: 199)

**Abstractions.** Hieratic language abstracts, but evidently there are no original abstractions; they all grow out of earlier concrete images. Abstraction may turn out to be connected with the stage in religion where gods seem to constitute a transcendent order and sit on mountains. (CW 13: 286)

**Accent.** Music is the epitome of life; accented continuity of movement in time. It never stops, never falters, never hesitates. Yet the movement is uniform but my no means unvarying; in history a great man gives accent, emphasis and consequently ordered formulation to an epoch. Similarly the great periods appear as sudden accentuations––the creative jumps in evolution and history alike have the characteristics of rhythmic emphasis. Hence there are three approaches to history as there are to music,––Catholic, Protestant and negative. The last one is of two kinds which merge into the same thing––the first kind say[s] that Nature never jumps, the second that nature never does anything else, the latter being the fortissimo formulation of the former, both denying accent. To say that an age produces a great man, or conversely, the man his age, is an identical error, the recognition of accent carrying with it the conception of action and reaction. Materialistic evolution of strict Darwinism belongs here, setting off a purely catastrophic theory on the other side. Catholic views of history, like Catholic views of music before Byrd, deny the push and drive of an immanent force–– everything is subordinated to a static and harmonious whole, alike in Palestrina and in Thomas Aquinas. Protestant music is incarnated in the great evolutionary forms of the fugue and the sonata, and evolution with a creative factor is the most purely Protestant of conception. (“1932 Notebook,” 23 December)

**Aesthetic and Sexual Objects.** Kant’s formula makes the distinction that the more pedantic Freudians & feminists overlook: the distinction between an aesthetic object & a sexual object, a human admiration for a pretty girl from a male fantasy of entering her body. “Beauty” has become suspect because of its tendency to fall into approved ideological conventions, but it’s really a vision of the universe as play, where flowers are not just sex organs designed to attract seed propagators (birds & insects), & still less artefacts designed by God for man to admire, but part of Pynchon’s recreated paranoia. (CW 5: 385)

**Aesthetic Apocalypse.** It was mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century that the great museums came into being, at least in their present form, and the museums brought together an immense assemblage, not merely of works of art, but of objects that presented analogies to and suggestions for the arts. The result was to provide the artist with an encyclopedic range of influences; it made the artist an academician instead of an apprentice learning from masters. What the museums did for the visual arts modern recordings have done for music.The increase of historical knowledge, of which archaeology formed a central part, was so vast as to make it seem as though the cemeteries were on the march, the entire past awakening to an aesthetic apocalypse. (CW 11: 53)

**After-Life.** “After the first death, there is no other,” says Dylan Thomas, expressing an agreement between those who believe in an after-life and those who don’t. Similarly, the most common, almost the universal, expressed hope for after death is the metaphor drawn from death of peace, repose, sleep, being free of consciousness and will. (CW 6: 679)

**Agawam.** When I was about seven years old our family acquired a book of duets, of which the most difficult & attractive was called the Agawam Quickstep. This did nothing but register on my infantile consciousness, and when I came to teach American literature I found that the two seventeenth-century people who struck me as having most on the ball were Nathaniel Ward, who wrote *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam*,and Anne Bradstreet. Now I discover that this pretty little town of Ipswich was originally called Agawam, & that Ward & she were among the original settlers. It’s difficult to say what simple pleasure it gave me to discover this. (CW 8: 420)

**Aggressive and Hysterical Children.** The sound of children playing is a cliché of innocent happiness. I have listened to it, and what I hear is mainly aggressiveness and hysteria. Living with children is recognized to be purgatorial, differing from hell only in having some sort of end. This is assumed to be an inscrutable but unbreakable law of nature, but I wonder if it is. I think children are aggressive & hysterical because they’re in an aggressive & hysterical society, & would be serene and dignified if society was. Compare the song of birds, which also is sexually aggressive & which we interpret as innocence, tweet rhyming with sweet. Both are aspects of *homo ludens*, an aggressiveness with a shift of perspective seeing it as exuberance or free play. It’s like vanity in man—or woman—which has an oddly disarming & innocent quality to it even though it’s an aspect of pride. (CW 23: 299)

**Ahikar.**I wonder if something about the anxiety of continuity doesn’t belong here. It takes the literary form of a father handing on proverbs to his son, wisdom being traditionally the beaten path. The story of Ahikar: here a father showers an (adopted) son with proverbs; the son betrays & tries to kill him; he escapes, returns in wrath, imprisons his son, & showers him with more proverbs, this time in a more menacing context. The story impressed the author of Tobit (cf. the Tobit-Tobias relation there) enough for him to claim Ahikar as a relative of Tobit; it’s in Classical culture (Aesop) & in the Koran (Loqman) [sura 31]. Cf., later, Polonius to Laertes & Chesterfield: the Hamlet context is significant because of the central importance of legitimacy in the history plays. (CW 13: 115–16)

**Airports and Echoes.** The easier traveling becomes, the more traveling in one sense disappears, as every airport in the world resembles every other airport in the world, and one Hilton hotel is much like another, whether it is in Istanbul or Kathmandu. Similarly, when communication forms a total environment, nothing is being communicated. There is a mass of echoes and a number of prefabricated responses. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**Alice in Wonderland.** I’ve often said that if I understand the two Alice books I’d have very little left to understand about literature. Actually I think the Alice books, while they carry over, begin rather than sum up—a new twist to fiction that has to do with intellectual paradox & the disintegrating of the ego. Borges especially, along with some Kafka, *Finnegans Wake*, some conspiracy novels like Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*, some *elements in* detective stories & science fiction, come down from this. In science fiction it’s the world within that’s really existing, & the world without is only a projection of it. At least, when the within isn’t interesting the without isn’t either. (CW 9: 329)

I’m still perhaps not ready for the Alice books, but it’s beginning to look as though the first book were a descent theme, what with the cards, the red and white, Alice as invariably awkward and unwelcome, and the final trial scene which turns into an attack on her by what are usually agents of fatality. Note the curious dove (pigeon) and serpent episode, where Alice is identified with the latter. The second book is an ascent to the “queen” stage, chess being more usually an Eros game; the white knight as the old man who turns back at Pisgah, the mirror business as going through the Narcissus progress in reverse. The episodes in this book are supplied by nursery rhymes, but don’t overlook the twin theme in Tweedledum and dee. (CW 15: 229)

**American Scholarship.**To get a grip on the bibliography of the period I’m shockingly ignorant of, I dug out Bernbaum’s *Guide through the Romantic Movement*. A primer, with all the critical statements that aren’t utterly commonplace either demonstrably false or meaningless. And even I can see that the bibliographies are very bad. What dreadful charlatans there are in American scholarship, some with formidable reputations! It started me wondering again about the possibility of making some money out of a *Blake Handbook* after *Fearful Symmetry* stops selling. Waste of time, though. (CW 8: 455)

**American Society.** There’s no doubt that the vast majority of people want peace and freedom and an open critical society: that’s superficially closer to what the Americans have, but America is not all that reassuring a model. I’m writing this out because I’d like to work on another big book. *Words with Power*, like its predecessor, dealt with everything under the sun except the relation of words to power: it’s my “excluded initiative” in another context. (CW 5: 406–7)

**Amo and Neco.** I shall not attempt to solve the difficult problem of classical education in the public schools. But why not give Latin and Greek a fair trial, if willing to grant that they are magnificent languages.“All the Latin I construe is *amo*, I love,” says Lippo Lippi [*Browning, Fra Lippo Lippi*, ll. 111–12]. Well, I too started with *amo*, a very good verb, I thought obviously only a decoy. The next one I learned was *neco*, I kill, and all the time I spent on Latin grammar from that time forth was spent in laboriously acquiring a language which talked about nothing else in the world but fighting. Every sentence I wrote in Latin or translated, concerned war, and every word I learned had some military context. It does not take a very fanatical pacifist to see that this method deliberately aims at encouraging the idea that Latin is a very dead language, there being few things deader about a language than those words which deal with violent death.If Latin really was a dead language, therefore, it would be of no use. The excuse is, of course, that we read Caesar first in Latin, Xenophon in Greek, but the excuse is a pitifully inadequate one. The method is obviously that of a crabbed pedant bent on killing the language and stamping on the corpse. Catullus and Horace are eternal. Caesar is not only dead but always was, falling stillborn upon publication like any other journal. The next step is Livy, Cicero, Thucydides. Like learning English by starting with the Duke of Marlborough’s memoirs, if he wrote any, and proceeding through Pater or Burke or Gibbon. We do not make such an approach to any modern language. We do not start German by learning all about their weapons, their armies, the histories of their wars, even if we still think of them as a race of barbarian Huns, intent on conquering the world by force of arms. If I could respond to them fluently, which I regret to say I cannot, I should regard it as one of my primary accomplishments, but I should see the entire Teutonic race in hell before, etc. I would wade through a barrage of military terminology in order to read the war correspondence of Blücher, Moltke, Gneisenau, or von Kluck. There is a good deal of truth in the famous remark that Caesar was a very inferior writer who wrote for the public schools. (“1932 Notebook,” 1 October)

**Anagogic Book.**An anagogic book to follow this one is a theoretical possibility, and here’s a letter from my old student Merv Nicholson urging me to write just such a book. Before I was out of my teens I’d thought that Anatole France’s *Jardin d’Epicure* was in form the kind of book I’d like to write (no, later than my teens). Later (much later) I read Merejkowski’s book on Atlantis, and thought that would be a model if the main subject were less crackpot. (Also, I’d want the Anatole-Francetype book written by somebody (maybe me) with a real brain, not that languid goo in his noodle). But I suppose Nietzsche, especially the *Gaya Scienza*, would be the real model. (CW 5: 172)

**Analogies.** Coleridge’s distinction between imagination & fancy is of great importance for allegory. All allegorical interpretation consists of drawing analogies. Some analogies are imaginative, or, as we say, have a “real” relationship to the work of art. Others are fanciful, & then we say the relationship is strained or far-fetched. In one case we are relating something else to the work of art, in the other we’re treating the work of art as a pattern in a prefabricated universe, & matching it to other patterns. Fanciful analogies produce coincidences, mentally unusuable designs. I might work out an elaborate analogy of *King Lear* to a game of chess, yet everyone would say it was an exercise in ingenuity, not an interpretation of *King Lear*. In pure anagogy, of course, *therearenoanalogiesatall*, and the distinction disappears. This may be the point about alchemy. It’s certainly the point of a hell of a lot of things. (CW 15: 159–60)

**Anagogy.** I can’t help wondering if there isn’t some analogy between my “anagogic” perspective & Kant’s conception of “transcendental aesthetic” as the consciousness of space & time. I feel unwilling though to introduce such analogies into what attempts to concern itself with the organon of a specific discipline. (CW 23: 268)

**Anastasis.** The moment of illumination, the flash of Chik-hai Bardo, the instant that Satan can’t find: that’s the *anastasis* that arrests the time-rhythm of original sin, the Karma of being dragged involuntarily backwards. That is apocalypse: that’s what each life leads to as its own fulfilment. Nobody can move toward it: inspiration, providence, instinct, intuition, all the metaphors of involuntary accuracy, including grace itself, are groundswells carrying us along in a countermovement, forward to the moment. We go by relaxing ourselves, & trying to put ourselves in the organized receptivity, the “negative capability,” of being ready to listen to or look at whatever comes along. If it never comes, that’s not our business. If death brings it, as the Tibetans say, that’s the point about death. But to have something shown you & then refuse to admit that you saw anything of the kind: that’s the sin against the Holy Spirit of inspiration which is not forgiven (i.e. makes it impossible for you to arrive at release or *anastasis*) either in this world or the next (Bardo). You can’t expect something, or you’ll find an oracle in every spiritual breeze that passes over you; you can’t expect nothing, or you’ll have in yourself no principle of escape. (CW 8: 140–1)

**Anatomy: A Form of Prose Fiction.** I read my anatomy paper to Blunden last night. He said I had two hundred very saleable pages there, but that Jane Austen’s admirers would just read my one sentence on her and conclude that there was rape afoot. He lives, somewhat like Ned Pratt, in mortal terror of the scholars, including at times me. (CW 2: 693)

The word *anatomy* is a literary term, but logically it can be applied to any presentation of history, philosophy, religion, economics, etc., which survives through its literary value. Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* could be regarded as an anatomy from the point of view of English literature, and Locke’s *Essay* or Hume’s *Enquiry* are examples of the carrying over of the machinery of the anatomy form into another field, just as the philosophical dialogue carries over the machinery of the drama. *The Compleat Angler* is an anatomy of angling; Berkeley’s *Siris* is an example of a philosophical treatise in which the material is arranged, not so much in accordance with the demands of the subject called philosophy as in accordance with the interests and outlook of its author, and, therefore, ranks as a philosophical anatomy. These are examples of an objective interest of the author treated from a literary standpoint. But the author may be interested in building up his own attitude to a given question, in which case we have such anatomies as *Religio Medici* or *Areopagitica*. Or he may be interested in working out his attitude to society, which may result in a generalized satire, such as the *Anatomy of Abuses*,or in a Utopia such as that of More or Campanella: the Utopia, and the satire on the Utopia, belonging essentially to this form. The archetypal anatomy is, of course, the Bible, and the issuance of the Authorized Version greatly influenced the seventeenth-century development of the form and helped to colour its tone. One essential characteristic of all these anatomies is the display of erudition, which is necessitated by the demands of the form.(CW 3: 390–1)

In the generic referential stage, when a work originally designed to be “non-literary” becomes more and more literary, like the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, the contextual references change in emphasis only:

e.g., the “anatomy” features of Burton’s book loom up in importance as compared with the medical contexts (Hercules de Saxonica and the rest). (CW 6: 545)

**Anatomy Theory in Embryo.** The novel should have developed historically as an organization of the discursive essay. By discursive essay I mean the ordering survey of a consciousness. (The novel is essentially an epic form rather than a dramatic one, I think.) It was developing logically toward this in the 17th c. The Anatomy of Melancholy is the clearest example of the sort of writing I mean; Pepys Diary is another; Burnet’s History another; Fuller’s Works another. Rabelais, Cervantes,

Erasmus, Montaigne all support the tradition; so did Browne: even the character studies, like Earle’s Microcosmography had this epic or discursive basis. The bourgeois deflected this into a study of character & made it objective. Even novelists who knew enough to be discursive: Fielding, Thackeray, etc. [took a] crack at it. Sterne, and Swift to a lesser extent, kept clear of the stultifying tendencies of Richardson, but Jane Austen finished the derailing that Defoe began (though Robinson Crusoe is at least alone). When Tom Jones crossed the picaresque tradition with the comedy of intrigue, a mixed but not synthesized art arose. Jane Austen is one exquisite artist, but in the second rank. Congreve is in the first rank: Sterne also. Jane tried to sit on both stools, to avoid the extreme of sense in The Way of the World and the extreme of sensibility in Tristram Shandy. (“1932 Notebook,” 13 July)

**And.** The word “and,” commonest in the language, has two diametrically opposed meanings. In “bread and butter” it is additive, “one and one make two” being a typical example. It makes a quantitative synthesis. In “red and white” it discriminates or analyzes. In the first case, it means bread plus butter; & in the second red minus white “and” white minus red. Or does it simply depend on whether the mind interpreting the phrase is synthetic or analytic? (“1932 Notebook,” 7 October)

**Androgynous Adam.** Re the androgynous Adam: the anxieties of a patriarchal church denied this (Augustine, natch). I should explain at greater length that an originally male Adam makes no sense in the sequence of the myth: also that the undeveloped doctrine of mother-virgin-bride indicates a heavy censorship in this area. (CW 5: 333)

**Androgynous Jesus.** Jesus is a Son, but the Son & the Bridegroom are different: that’s why the gospel Jesus is presented as a homosexual (actually androgynous). The difference comes out in the wedding at Cana [John 2:1–11], which I have no doubt means a wedding where Christ himself was the bridegroom. But that wedding was not a biographical event in Jesus’ life: it’s a parable of the Second Coming. Whenever there’s a son there’s a mother, and Jesus declares his independence of his mother here. The Bridegroom is the sexual Jesus: the Bride is the people, of course, but Jerusalem is the Second Coming of the Virgin individual carrying the Word. (CW 5: 277)

**Angels.** I should do a bit of thinking about the conception of angels. After all, it’s damn important in the Thomist set up. *Lycidas* joins the “solemn troops & sweet societies” of the city of God & gives it his full attention while being at the same time “Genius of the shore,” a guardian or watcher of human fortunes. I suppose angels are personal archetypes, & belong on the third level with gods & myths as parts of the whole, the whole being the divine-human society. As substantial existences, therefore, they’re covering cherubs, part of the chain of being, Atlases who hold up the sky-god on top of man. That’s what the prohibition about worshipping them really amounts to (in the New Testament). Thus far I’m just repeating the ideas I have now: what’s new is the ambiguity of the collective “intelligence” that watches human society from outside & simultaneously acts within a divine society. In Dante that’s linked with the dreadful pervasive vulgarity which identifies God, not with suffering humanity, but with ruling humanity, & so continually cuts God down to human size, using him just to rubber stamp the standards arrived at by Popes & Emperors down here. Milton has a lot less of that, mainly because his political ideas are in better shape: his heaven is a place of *spiritual* authority, not a series of astral barracks labelled “for officers only.” I only wish Milton had done his poem on the Passion. (CW 8: 264)

**Anglicanism.** I hate to seem intolerant, but I do not approve of Anglicanism. There are two possible approaches to Christianity, or any religion—the Protestant or individual approach, and the Catholic or collective one. Anglicanism never made up its mind which it was going to be, and did not much want to, as it was based on the useful but muddle-headed English idea of pleasing everybody. If you look at the first of the Elizabethan Articles you will see that it supports transubstantiation. The second denies it. Not that that matters, but it shows the Anglican point of view—religion itself is in bad taste—it is only the observance of it that is in good taste.(CW 1: 64)

**Anti-Authoritarian.** Blake’s inversion of the mythical structure of authority is important (for me) because it’s just as Biblical as its predecessor. The authoritarians forgot that the central event of the

Old Testament was the Exodus, the refusal of Israel to live under the tyranny of Egypt, & that its New Testament counterpart was the resurrection, the refusal of God in man to live under the tyranny of death and hell. Also that the final (eschatological) events are repetitions of those, not of the giving of the law or the forming of the church. (CW 5: 324)

**Antichrist.** Revolutionary polarizing: reactionaries who are against sin and for motherhood, vs. radicals who are for sin and against motherhood. More seriously, take Luther’s calling the Pope Antichrist. He had to call the Pope Antichrist before he could define the Church in terms of his

Reformation. This is the germ of truth in the doctrine that Antichrist’s epiphany must precede the Second Coming. For Erasmus, a liberal, the statement that the Pope was Antichrist was simply false: he couldn’t take in the notion of tactical truth. For Protestants today Luther’s statement is again nonsense, because they aren’t in the context of 16th c. Reformation. As a liberal, I find this notion of temporary or tactical truth deeply repugnant: a thing ought to be always either true or false. When this “Maoist” rabble calls me reactionary I feel that I’m dealing with malignant fools, because I’m not where they say I am. Well, of course, they are malignant fools. And, again of course, if they win it won’t matter that they were liars. (CW 15: 296–7)

**Anxiety.** If I hadn’t been so lazy & tired & sleepy & stupid & demoralized it would had been a wonderful day. But it wasn’t: it was just a wasted day. I couldn’t work at my paper; I couldn’t do anything. This sort of thing has been going on for years. I don’t know whether a year off to knock a couple of books out of the way would improve matters or not, but I don’t see how it could hurt. The point is that the situation is so completely *silly*. I don’t really work so damn hard, but I have to pretend to myself & others that I do in order to account for my continuous exhaustion. I doubt if any doctor could put a diagnosis on it: I imagine that the terrible strain of producing the Blake & the feeling of anticlimax that’s followed it has taken its toll: but there I am dramatizing myself again. At the moment, of course, I feel dreadfully bored because two things dangling in front of me all month like the apples of Tantalus haven’t moved any closer. One is the Johns Hopkins offer, the other the English invitation. I’ve more or less written off the former, & the latter is fading. Then again, by not applying for the Nuffield I’ve stuck my neck out on the Guggenheim, & if I miss it I’ve really had it. Oh, well, I suppose I should set all this down, as I have at least another month of it to go through. (CW 8: 241–2)

**Anxiety of Continuity.** The anxiety of continuity, where wisdom is the following of the path, gives great prestige to elders, especially parents, because they are the presbyters or priests of society, of the ideal society of the perfect law as well as actual society. Where the ideal basis of the society is believed in, continuity appears as a kind of minimum requirement; where it is not believed in, the parent has no authority except his own personal authority, so it’s just one ego against another. (CW

134: 125)

**Apes of God**. Wyndham Lewis’ Ap*es of God* is a book I’m busy with at the moment.It’s a brilliant satire on literary charlatanism in London, imitates Rabelais particularly, with some Joyce—probably the best English novel since *Ulysses*, if that is in English. Sometimes it doesn’t quite come off, but after reading it for half an hour I have to dash over to the library with a list of words a yard long to look up in the dictionary, where they are not always to be found. (CW 1: 374)

**Aphorisms.** My lecturing continues a consolidating rhythm I’d hoped to break by going away for a year. I don’t get many new ideas this year because I’m preoccupied by my book. And the old ones, as I get accustomed to them, tend to crystallize into aphorisms. That, of course, greatly decreases their effectiveness, as students aren’t mature enough for aphorisms. What I call the Gertrude Stein style, of hypnotic repetitiveness, is the style of discovery and of teaching. It’s the style of the First Epistle of John & of most mystical literature—Boehme, for instance—and of my lecturing at its best. (CW 8: 529)

**Aphoristic and Epiphanic Sequences.** In the Gospels, & in a different way in the teaching of Zen Buddhism, the aphoristic sequence is connected by being attached to a sequence of events or situations, giving us the *epiphanic* sequence of Mark according to Martin Dibelius. This is something else again from, though still related to, the oracular or associative dream revelation full of puns, like the Koran. (CW 15: 77)

**Apocalypse: Panoramic and Participating.** The two degrees of apocalypse. The first is the spread-out, objective, panoramic apocalypse of the Book of Revelation, which, because it’s only the first stage, is concentrated on the metaphor of law: last judgment and the like. The second is the one that involves the reintegration of nature and the participating vision that succeeds the objective one. In the latter time and space disappear into synchronicity and interpenetration respectively. In that world time doesn’t exist: only synchronic patterns do; space doesn’t exist, but (as in the Greek language) only places do. (CW 13: 304)

**Apollo and Dionysus.**Apollo was originally a sun-god, and Dionysus was a fertility god. Orpheus, the reformer of the Dionysiac cult, was himself not strictly a god, but his descent into the underworld in search of Eurydice is evidently a fertility myth, Eurydice probably representing the earth mother. Now both the sun and vegetation are transient, but they recur: and that fact of recurrence brings in an element of permanence and a feeling of stability. So the paradox is overcome by observation: the sun dies every day, but is deathless; vegetation dies every year, but every year revives. Communion and the idea of a dying and reviving god are inseparably part of the symbolism which works out this tension of one and many. The sun-god and the fertility-god blend into the abstract idea of recurrence. (CW 3: 175–6)

**Applause**. Applause after a concert seems to me to be a purely Neolithic impulse which has disregarded all evolution. Whenever I hear it (I seldom join in) I (think of and) see before me the picture of a squatting ring of Stone Age savages circling a group of dancers, beating out the rhythms with their hands. The difference is that in the cruder entertainment the audience takes a part, while in the later they are precluded from anything except passive recipience. Consequently the rhythm beating is support, applause is revenge. (“1932 Notebook,” 8 September)

**Archetypal Critics.** There are only two groups of archetypal critics at present: those who react to archetypal analysis either with “Why should it?” (i.e. have those features) & “Why shouldn’t it?” The possibilities of further developments in crit. lie exclusively with the second group. (CW 23: 214)

**“The Archetypes of Literature.”** My Ke*nyon Review* paper [“The Archetypes of Literature”] has suddenly started to clear up. It’s clearing up so damn fast I can hardly keep up with it. Part One has boiled down perfectly out of what I had & Part Two came along beautifully this afternoon: it meant cutting out a lot of stuff, but the net result is one of the most concentrated & best integrated articles I’ve ever produced. No splutter, no gargle, no leers, no attempt to fasten pedantic teeth in the arse of somebody else. Nothing but dry fact and obvious truth, expressed with overwhelming

concentration but great simplicity. In short, an article to rank with “The Argument of Comedy” and “The Forms of Prose Fiction,” only on an even bigger subject. (CW 8: 447)

**Architect of the Spiritual World.** I’m haunted constantly by the feeling that I don’t know anything; then I read scholarly books & wonder if my hunches & guesses are really so inferior to their knowledge. Now I’m wondering if I could explore the Great Doodle. Erikson says little boys make tower structures & little girls enclosure ones. Islamic countries have the minaret & the mosque; Christian ones the bell-tower & the basilica; Toronto the C.N. tower & the retractable Skydome. I’ve written about the axis mundi & only hinted at the Great Doodle. I am not a historian: I’m an architect of the spiritual world. I should start with the female or group aspect of God, the Schekinah. The “mankind” synecdoche affects all the spiritual world. The feminists keep yapping about Sophia, but I don’t know what they know about her. Maybe God’s intelligence is a group of emanations of wisdom. (CW 5: 414)

**Art and the City.** Art, as distinct from home-crafts, is purely a matter of the city. Pioneers are only potentially artists. The reason they are pioneers is that they want to express a new national, religious consciousness, or add to the one already existing. A pioneer is never an individualist; he is always part of a group. That is the difference between a pioneer and an explorer, or a hermit. That group consciousness is religion, or an essential pre-requisite of religion, and its expression is art. But this only manifests itself in the focal centres where the interchanging of ideas becomes stimulating. The city gets larger and larger until it finally spreads itself all over the country. Today telephones (there aren’t any here), radios, automobiles, and so forth are all symbols of the ubiquitous city. But why should it not transmit its real culture and refinement to the country, that’s my kick. These people [on the

Saskatchewan prairie] aren’t pioneers. Some of them were once, of course, and all of them pretend to be, but isolated as the community is, it’s a suburb, and the wheat farmers are fundamentally market gardeners. And an artist is a worker, with no National Recovery Administration code in sight. In any well-organized state he should be paid according to the value of the work he does, and should be sure of that. Patronage is a haphazard, fitful, and humiliating way of sustaining art, but until the mass of people become educated it is the only possible one. But the first step in education is to realize that the artist is, if competent, a perfectly sane and honest tradesman, and to remove the superstitions about genius, the hocus-pocus of the modern sale of pictures, and the charlatanism which hangs over modern art in a dense cloud. (CW 1: 269)

**Art as Yoga.** The “real” world is one of infinitely possible ones—not necessarily the best one, as Leibnitz urges, but the one we’re stuck with for whatever reason. Blake says it’s not the best but nearly the worst of all possible worlds; Buddhists say it’s the best of the six “existing” ones but pretty awful. Blake revolves around the conception of art as a form of liberation, & this is something I should come to grips with. Long before the drug-cult craze I realized that Rimbaud had something to do with the yogic nature of art. So do the Eliot *Quartets*. Obviously art can only operate this way if it’s a stimulus to the reader’s creativity. (CW 9: 324)

**Artist in Society.** People always discuss the role of the artist in society as though it were a moral question, & linked with the personal liberty of the individual. But it has nothing to do with morals or politics: to say that society should be tolerant is as fallacious as saying that the artist should be a good man. Both these things are true, but on different grounds. The role of the artist & the quality of art depends primarily on the quality of the audience’s imaginative response. Experience has shown that poetic drama is a major form of literary expression, & so we all want to know what social conditions will produce another Shakespeare. Well, if an audience is ready to accept poetic & symbolic expression normal in drama it will get its dramatic poets. If it instinctively regards poetry & symbolism as a monstrously perverse way of expressing oneself it won’t. (CW 20: 114–15)

**Aristotle.** Aristotle’s contemptuous dismissal of mythological thinking in the Metaphysics is natural historically: it’s consistent with the rejection of poetic & intuitional thinking: i.e., what comes up in bits & pieces directly from the mythological universe. It’s inconsistent with the second part of the *Poetics*, but I wrote that, not Aristotle. (CW 13: 351)

Aristotle seems to me unique among philosophers, not only in dealing specifically with poetics, but in assuming that such poetics would be an organon of a specific discipline. Other philosophers, when they touch on the arts, deal in questions of general aesthetics which they make a set of analogies to their logical & metaphysical views; hence it is difficult to use the aesthetics of, say, Kant or Hegel without getting involved in a Kantian or Hegelian “position,” which of course is the opposite of what I am here attempting to do. (CW 23: 267)

**Articulateness.**Articulateness is the only freedom, and relates only to the individual. All society can do is to arrange for conditions of this freedom. (CW 15: 259)

**Arturus Rex.** Who the hell is Arturus Rex? No evidence that he was ever a god or had a cult; the

British fighter of Saxons is totally irrelevant. I mean the Arthur of Camelot, presiding over the Round Table, sending knights out on quests and collecting their defeated giants. Nobody like him before or, really, since. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

**Ascent.** The whole process of ascent is being delivered from isolation, from psychosis, from the feeling of being all alone in the dark. And as that happens other shapes begin to form around you and you find that you are in a human community and on further levels, the whole order of nature becomes responsive in the way it was in the Garden of Eden. You find yourself interested in conceptions like evolution or you feel that you are part of an ongoing process, which is also a cooperative process. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**At Sixes and Sevens.** I seem to have stopped thinking for the moment. My mind is hovering around a definitive statement of my ritual & myth ideas, destined to lead in the Lankavatara direction. But I can’t seem to keep all this clear of ideas swarming around Mill, Morris & Yeats. Also I’ve just finished the three volumes of *Folklore in the Old Testament*. I get very annoyed with books that are like vacuum cleaner bags: trying to find things in them is like trying to wash gold dust out of yellow sand. (CW 8: 355)

**Attachment and Detachment.**We think of understanding something as grasping “it.” I put the it in quotes because there really isn’t any “it” that is grasped, except an “idea,” and it’s “materialism” of the crudest kind that makes us think of an idea as a thing, as capable of being possessed in a noumenal integrity. (This is the analogy of the proper materialism that identifies Nirvana & Samsara, & shows that just as an idea is only an aspect of the way a mind works, so all things are seen of Mind only). Well, it would be more accurate to say that attachment is ignorance, & knowledge disentangles us from the grip an unreal world has on us. A city man lost in the woods finds bondage in his ignorance of woodcraft: an experienced woodsman can detach himself from the woods by his ability to maintain himself independently of the clutching branches, tripping roots & stalking animals. Once we think of learning as a disentangling & relaxing process, we think of ideas tending toward wisdom, or the growth of a free spirit, instead of to more & more learning. (CW 13: 47)

**Audiences.** Audiences bother me, & always have. It’s partly because I’ve always had a naive desire to participate in a group as intensely as possible, & this makes one priggish. Then, I can see, not only in every whisper, but in every cough & twitch, the sign of a nervous refusal to participate, to set up one’s own song & dance instead. As this is in me as well as them, it’s a corresponding perversity in me that allows me to be distracted. I know this, & when I try to resist it self-consciousness intensifies & helps the perversity. (CW 8: 325–6)

**Austen, Jane.**Read Jane Austen’s *Love and Friendship*, a skit which proves to me, as none of her novels prove, that she is an important & not merely an intelligent & amusing writer. Jane is a blind spot to me: I enjoy reading her for relaxation and I admire her skill and ingenuity, but I never feel much sense of cultural infusion, of the kind I require from a great writer. This boils down to the fact that I have nothing to say or discover about her, & so take her merits on faith. I can’t forgive Jane for the vulgarity and Philistinism of *Mansfield Park*: if she hadn’t written that absurd book I could enjoy her without reservations. But her explicit preference for her dim-witted Fanny to her intelligent and sensible Mary Crawford means that in the long run she accepted her county families, and had no positive basis for her satire of Lady Catherine or Collins or Sir whatsisname [Walter Elliot] in *Persuasion*. In the long run she stands for the “dismal & illiberal,” for the exclusion of the free air of culture & intelligence. *MansfieldPark* gives her away—well, it gives the whole 19th c. away. (CW 8: 31)

**Authentic Prophet.** In modern times we think of the “prophet” as a very un-cerebral sort of person: somebody like D.H. Lawrence, who’s an authentic prophet even if everything he said was wrong. As he comes close to saying himself: “in details I’m sure I’m wrong.” (CW 13: 286)

**Automatisms.** Thinking, of course, is not something I do: it’s something that happens where I am. It gets done in spite of what I do: everything I “do” is mental automatism, running along prefabricated tracks that look like a map of the London subways. There’s the black sado-masochist line, consisting of remorse (in the literal “agen-bite of inwit” sense) over the past & stewing about a future invented for the purpose of stewing about it. There’s the blue line of all the good things I’ve written or said in the past and am going to write or do in the future (the future part of this is the only one I feel as voluntarily-assumed self-indulgence). This is the anecdotage line: I might call it the Narcissus line, except that Narcissus was a comparative realist: the image he fell in love with really did resemble himself, & wasn’t one invented out of mainly imaginary qualities. Whenever this line stops at a station, we instantly transfer to the black line. Then there’s the inner circle, or what Beckett calls the Belacqua line, of diddling & twiddling & meandering around what is in front of one. I resent other people’s automatisms excessively because they run over the same lines, & delay or impede mine. (CW 9: 199–200)

**Autonomous Spirits.** I’ve been wondering, partly as a result of a dream I had, whether our memories & impressions of other people don’t become to some degree autonomous after those people die. Maybe the spirits that turn up at séances are autonomous projections of this sort, i.e., Bishop [James] Pike wasn’t talking to the spirit of his son but to his own memory of his son that had become autonomous. It would be interesting to know if a spirit came to a séance who was the spirit of someone who, unknown to the enquirer, was still alive. If this has never happened, the hypothesis is still possible, but indicates some essential but hidden link with the living person. (CW 9: 331)

**Avison, Margaret.**Lunch with Margaret Avison, who had sent me a long poem to make sense of. She has no narrative or constructive ability at all, & I suggested that she should stick to her one essential gift of seeing things very sharply & one at a time, & let the inner unity emerge from the common intensity of the different visions. It’s almost grotesque to see her fine technique trying to assimilate narrative, like a python swallowing a sheep. Eliot’s *Waste Land* bothered her a great deal, & an unsympathetic critic would have said it was bad Eliot. I never say things like that. I did say that life was as private a matter as death, & ought to be treated with equal respect. This was in an incidental connection, but I had Woodhouse, Joe Fisher & Margaret herself in my mind. (CW 8: 258)

B

**B’s.** A good title for the passage dealing with my attack on Shakespeare’s personality would be “the sanctified & pious bard.” Bard, Bardo, Barth, Byrd & the *Birds* about sum up what the book covers. (CW 20: 115)

**Bach, Johann Sebastian.**The B minor Mass was a glorious performance—I hadn’t heard it since the old Herbert Fricker days, when they had to pause every eight bars to give the old ladies a chance to get their wind back. For the first time I realized what a brilliant & buoyant set piece it is. Our tickets were smack in the middle of the front row of the second balcony, as though we were twothirds of the Trinity. Though a very Protestant mass, with the weight thrown on the Kyrie & the Credo, it’s pure revelation, & that’s why it’s so brilliant & buoyant. It’s such a contrast to the

Beethoven mass, where the predominant feeling is mystery, & the big climax is the Messianic Benedictus, which is dependent on a violin solo. Bach takes mystery in his stride: the key word of the mass, for him, is “gloria,” & he gives you pure mandala vision. He’s also given the real meaning of sacrament, which is commedia, recognition, anagnorisis, epiphany. It’s the exact opposite of sacrifice: in sacrifice, which is tragedy, something is killed: in sacrament something is brought to life. That something is the real presence of a single mind which contains both the Mass & the participating audience. No external God can be adored with music He did not compose. (CW 8: 324)

In the twenty years that I’ve been listening to the St. Matthew passion I’ve changed my mind about it. I used to feel that the narration was something to sit through, & one waited for the arias & choruses. Now I feel that the work is primarily narration, as the arias & choruses, with greater familiarity, fall into the background as commentaries. This, of course, brings out its real tragic structure, as it’s like Greek tragedy, not only in its use of a chorus, but in its *reporting* of the events. Even Christ, though he does his own singing, is contained within the narration. (CW 8: 325)

The Bach festival was three of the happiest days I have ever spent in my life. Not only because of all that glorious music: not only because of getting some social life I was about ready for outside the college: not only because a lot of flattering things happened to me all at once at the same time. A *New Statesman* critic quotes Sean O’Faolain as speaking of “that bridge, which every artist longs for, between the loneliness of his private dreams and the gaiety of the public square.” That’s the sort of thing I mean. Perhaps the moral is that I’ve made myself lonelier during the long winter pull than I needed to—but even so the festival was so completely festive—no routine work was even attempted—that my childish dreams of being a remarked individual in a brilliant company suddenly, for once, came true. (CW 8: 327–8)

**Bach and Mozart.** Thank God for Bach and Mozart. They are a sort of common denominator in music—the two you can’t argue about. Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner—they give you an interpretation of music which you can accept or not as you like. But Bach and Mozart give you music, not an attitude toward it. If a man tells me that Beethoven or Brahms leaves him cold, I can still talk with him. But if he calls Bach dull and Mozart trivial I can’t, not so much because I think he is a fool as because his idea of music is so remote from mine that we have nothing in common. (CW 1:43)

**Bacon, Francis.** Today’s nine o’clock class was on Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning*, which went all right, but wasn’t exciting. This time I’m stressing the fact that while his sense of the practical reference of knowledge makes him a prophet of, more particularly, the social sciences where man is involved with nature, in contrast to the Galileo school who talk of man as spectator & so make nature theatrical, still he’s very far from the utilitarian people who don’t read him say he is: he’s a strong believer in disinterested contemplation of the works of God as central to knowledge. (CW 8: 521)

**Bad Writing.** One sees here [in Wyndham Lewis’s *Tarr*], in the forced, strained vocabulary, the cacophonous sound, the broken-winded stumbling rhythm, the laborious effort at an originality that succeeds only in being bizarre, not competent mediocre writing but merely bad writing. (CW 3: 355)

**Bakhtin, Mikhail.** I gather that Bakhtin’s “dialogism” is gradually replacing “deconstruction” as a buzzword. Of course there’s dialogue between writer & reader, but much more goes on than that: it’s more like an interpenetrating of identities. Montaigne’s “consubstantial” remark shows that the writer’s ego and the reader’s ego *can’t* interpenetrate: they’re like the old-style atoms, or, more accurately, like the Leibnitzian monads. In this century we have to forget that “atom” means the unsplittable (or did mean it) or that the individual is the “individable.” Two egos identifying would be like two billiard balls copulating. (CW 5: 195–6)

**Barbaric Sadism.** Revenge is “evil” because God says vengeance is mine, but the Christian God is so barbarically sadistic, extracting infinite torments for finite offences, that any moral principle here vanishes at once. Tragedy has quite a struggle with the essentialist Christian tradition, which is a comedy in the salvation-redemption part of it & so infinitely below tragedy in the hell part of it. There is of course a less official view of Christianity, an existential view founded on the *experience* of Christ, which makes tragedy more functional. (CW 20: 272)

**Bardo.** There’s a myth that one’s life appears as a total vision at the moment of death or near-death: I have yet to confirm this in my own experience. But I’ve always been fascinated by the Chih-kai Bardo business in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. . . . The complete picture comes to us in a jigsaw puzzle box, and criticism is the art of putting it together. (CW 5: 288–9)

If it is really true that I’m released from the obligation to do any more specific critical studies, except incidentally or episodically, and that two more books might actually include about all I have to say about literature, I might turn my energies to something different. That has always been, since I got over my adolescence, a gigantic anatomy based on the theme of initiation or hierarchic degrees of knowledge. Several themes have been included in it, and they feature the Utopia and some comprehensive treatment of the Bardo world. Ever since I read Dante, I have been fascinated by the possibilities of the ascent or anabasis form (less by the *Inferno*, because so many others, like Orwell and Sartre & Koestler, have done that better than I can do). I think vaguely of seven or eight metamorphoses on various levels of the spiritual world that a dead man’s soul goes through, including a Utopia, a vision of Bardo, an apocalypse, and finally a withdrawal into the Lankavatara “mind itself.” The “novel” interest would consist in the fact that his whole earthly life would have to be reassembled in the process. I should start collecting notes for it, anyway. (CW 8: 561)

Several of my plans have come smack up against a theory of Bardo, & I can’t help wondering if I don’t need at least a literary theory of ghosts, if not of the whole supernatural. I must start with the vampire theme in *Wuthering Heights*& see if I can attach it to my floating notions about the echo & the preservation of identity in *Daisy Miller*, & of the returning ghost in Senecan revenge plays as neurotic, blocked & bound to a pattern of recurrence. The ghost theme in Eliot’s *Waste Land* (water-nymphs recalling the bodiless souls of Purgatory) winds up with a quotation from the *Spanish*

*Tragedy*. Also the Kurtz business, Kurtz being, like Heathcliffe, a “lost violent” soul. (CW 23: 222)

**Barth, Karl.** Barth, as I’ve noted, says the three ways to preaching are dogmatism, mysticism (which he calls self-criticism) and dialectic. It simply doesn’t occur to him that one *must* go through the shadowy valley of lies, illusions, and demonic epiphanies to get closer to the Bible. I have to be emphatic on this point, because *all* the opposition I get is to the suggestion of trying to sell a dialectically-dominated faith (not the Hebrews faith, [that is, the definition of faith in Hebrews 11]). (CW 5: 268)

**Bartolo de Fredi.** We had noticed at Siena a painter called Bartolo di Fredi, because he seemed to have a passion for horses, and stuck them in everywhere he got a chance. Well, he’d done an enormous series of Old Testament scenes on the left wall [of the cathedral in San Gimignano]—much the most complete we saw in Italy—he finished up with a Job series, for instance, curiously like Blake’s in some ways. He’s a swell painter, but a completely secular one—his creation of Eve was a lovely floating nude, and his drunkenness of Noah was the funniest I saw, except a mosaic in Venice—Noah was fairly well clothed apart from his huge erect penis that stood up in the middle of the picture, but he managed to look as completely plastered as I’ve seen anyone look even in Oxford. And, of course, with the Ark or Pharoah’s host drowned in the Red Sea, he just went to town on his horses. Apparently he loved animals of all kinds too. He’d obviously never seen a camel, so he just drew more horses, with impossibly long necks. On the entrance wall there was a Last Judgment—the Heaven was pretty perfunctory, but the hell was a Freudian riot—Lechery was a well-built naked woman with a fiend riding on her back and raping her with his tail; somebody else had a ramrod projecting from his mouth and his behind, and Usuria was lying on his back with an enormously distended belly and a devil squatting over his face and dropping a prodigious shower of turds into his mouth. The expression on that devil’s face, half grinning and half straining, is something I’d go to Italy again just to see. (CW 2: 735–6)

**Basis of Ritual.** I suppose from one point of view it’s the silliest kind of superstition to imagine discontinuity in the continuousness of time, to think that one has a fresh start in a New Year or that one should write tired poetry during a *fin de siècle*. But it seems the basis of ritual, and it’s one of the techniques of detachment. Every year I think with some awe that my lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, and that if one’s luck depended on one’s merit, the burden of responsibility would be too great to bear. (CW 8: 462)

**Bats.** Helen was wakened at six or five or some equally esoteric hour by a bat that had flown in. Helen is deathly afraid of bats, because some fool woman once told her that bats got in women’s hair and hung on. So when this creature appeared she dived under the bed clothes. My moral code is based on the central principle “Never do anything about anything until absolutely necessary.” Particularly when, in the middle of sleeping off a hangover early Sunday morning, one is required to get up and chase bats. The subsection of my code dealing with bats is to the effect that if they can find their way in they can find their way out if one just leaves them alone. So I shut the creature up in the bathroom hoping it would find its way to the vent pipe: I couldn’t see how else it could have got in. In the morning it had presumably done so. This evening a bat flew in the front window— whether a new one or an old one that had hung around all day we shall never know. I wanted to coax it back out the window, but it had got involved in the bedroom by that time and there was nothing to do but kill it. I hate killing things: its plaintive dying squeak will haunt me. The sparrows and squirrels in the park who flock around when we’re eating know this, and they take no notice whatever of the most menacing gestures. (CW 5: 24)

**Beautiful Words.** Lunch at the Heliconian Club for Frances Wees. At the head table with Lotta Dempsey, a fine beautiful creature who asked me what the six most beautiful words in the language were. I’m not very proud of my choice—the first six that came into my head, of course: chrysanthemum, parchment, explosion, multitudinous, oriole & flageolet. (CW 8: 161)

**Beauty.** This notion that thinking the world is beautiful has actual survival value may have nothing in it, but it’s worth thinking about. Otherwise, why do we call both art and nature beautiful? It seems absurd on the face of it to apply the same term to a Mozart divertimento and some cutie in a bathing suit. (CW 6: 622)

Aesthetics seems to rest on the fallacy of idealized forms. We idealize a slender, youthful naked woman’s body & call that beautiful, so when Dégas claims for “beauty” a study of haggard ironing women or thick-arsed middle-aged matrons washing their hairy privates, we get horrified. One of the functions of satire is to break down these external theories of beauty, which at bottom are always theories of propriety & decorum. (CW 15: 91)

I have never understood why the question of “beauty” should have a peculiarly close relationship to the arts; beauty may be predicated of many things that are not works of art. Works of art seem to me to be concerned with a certain kind of structure, or process, found in them but not in other things. Structure if, with the Classical critics, we assert the priority of the hen; process if, with the Romantics, we assert the priority of the egg. (CW 23: 285)

I wonder how much conventional snobbery is involved, not so much in taste generally, where it’s obvious, but in the pure apprehension of form. When Helen and I get middle-aged we shall love each other with a maudlin middle-aged affection, and find each other’s bulging paunches and thickening arses beautiful. Is that just self-hypnotism? I doubt it. Degas found real beauty in thick middle-aged female bodies, which remind me of a mother-in-law of nearly sixty I’m very fond of, & have therefore a physical affection for. Besides, it’s obvious that primitives have rather different notions of what constitutes “the ideal” physical female body. Except in rare cases, the beauty of a nude is addressed to the penis as well as the eye: the highbrow splutter of protest against this elementary fact is miserable hypocrisy. But I’m wandering: my point is that probably most “ideal” forms in art are just conventions founded on something social or physical like (as in this case) the mating season, and that the real artist breaks down the ideal fences and opens up new fields of beauty. (CW 25: 11)

**Beauty and Truth.** It is no use making Keats’ confusion: beauty is beauty and truth is truth: one is subjective and emotional, the other impersonal and intellectual. The fact that it cost me a dollar and fifteen cents to get my laundry out this morning is true, but it is not beautiful; the politicians statement that he will wipe out poverty and unemployment in three months if elected is beautiful, but not true. Symbolism is the field of interpenetration, working a beautiful conceit into an intellectual conception and infusing philosophy with the connection of beauty. (“1932 Notebook,” 17 July)

**Beer.** As far as my body is concerned I’m a teetotaller: it’s dimly possible I may be a vegetarian or food crank of some kind. I can’t write if I’ve had one glass of beer. That is, I can’t do what I call writing. One glass, and my brain gets muzzy, sentimental, nostalgic & generally incapable of hammering what I want to say into the right form. I think Rilke’s experience was similar, and perhaps Milton in his sixth elegy isn’t just yammering. (CW 25: 8)

**Beethoven’s Last Quartets.** What the devil Beethoven was getting at in those last quartets I can’t imagine. Just to follow, the writing is masterly, but considered as a unified work of art, it’s hopeless. When you listen to music, what’s gone before subconsciously piles up, like Bergson’s cosmic memory, and works out its own form if it’s got any, but this thing was just a thin thread of beautiful sound all through—no taking on of form. I feel similarly helpless with all the Wagner I have heard—that’s one reason why I think Wagner a tonic for lazy minds. There are people whose judgment one is bound to respect who think these quartets are absolutely the last word in music. I’d like to get hold of one and pin him down with a few questions. When does one movement stop and another one start? Does the thing finish logically, or does it just get tired and quit, with a coda of two measures?Why does Beethoven repeat exactly the same subject eight times without taking it anywhere? And so on. Beethoven surely must have known that the thing had no form—was it just romantic egoism, or is the whole idea of absolute formal perfection to be given up as pedantic? It isn’t pure music, like a fugue or a sonata, working out its own self-directed laws, nor programme music, depending on the shape of something externally obtruded for its form. It seems to be something intermediate, taking its form from itself, or the mind of its composer, or God knows what, and so falls between the stools. (CW 1: 201–2)

**Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 29.**The *Hammerclavier Sonata* is a romantic’s view of culture––first the immense primeval energy, second, the childlike bliss of early civilization, third, the profound head aching and perplexities of a more mature one, fourth, the birth, in sorrow and darkness, of a scientific, atomistic, determined and synthetic conquest. (“1932 Notebook,” 18 May)

**Being and Nothingness.** Let’s take a familiar example of the confronting of being with nothingness: I am standing in London on what the guidebook assures me was the very spot where something happened in 1150. The gap between my being & its nothingness is, essentially, time: the connection between them is essentially space. It’s Newtonian space, which is why Newton called space the sensorium of deity, following the Christian instinct to call Christ a real presence (space) rather than a real present (time). (CW 9: 60)

**Belacqua Period.** I have some months, I think, to enjoy my Belacqua period, and wander in a palace of possibilities. For creation I shall have to read, or glance through, Karl Barth’s tomes, I suppose. Perhaps the Marxist canon should be studied again: certainly Hegel, at least the *Phenomenology* would bulk largely in it. Law would mean a much firmer grasp of the conception of natural law, in Hooker & others, even though I think the notion is illusory; that is, illegitimately associated with moral law. Perhaps the Hegelian polysemous ladder should be attached to wisdom. (CW 13: 343)

**Belief.** The state of mind that we call belief is neither ancient nor universal. It’s one of those unconscious assumptions we seldom examine that everyone believes. The attitude of the ancient Greek was, obviously, not: “I believe in Zeus the father Almighty . . . and in Dionysos his Son our Lord.” It was rather: “Some say that Dionysos was born from the thigh of Zeus; others that he was nursed by Amalthea,” etc. And today Christianity would go bankrupt overnight if it were supported only by the people who believe. People accept it, realize it’s there, respect it, even turn to it for help, but don’t necessarily believe or disbelieve it. (Notebook 13)

A student recently said to me: “I don’t see how you can keep on believing all that stuff for so long.” That is, she assumed the axiom “faith is believing what you know ain’t so,” & further assumed that belief on such terms was an intolerable strain. (CW 5: 234)

For someone like Mallarmé “believe,” like “praise” in Rilke, is an intransitive verb. What they believe, or rather say they don’t believe, isn’t important: it’s the language they use that’s important. . . . When Mallarmé speaks of “*glorieux mensonges*” (of belief) he doesn’t, with respect, know whether they are *mensonges* or not: he means only that when he talks about “resurrection” he doesn’t want it pinned down to the gospel one. But he means resurrection, not just getting up in the morning. I think this is increasingly what we have to mean by the Hebrews belief definition [Hebrews 11:1], whatever the author meant. (CW 5: 309)

Whatever one thinks of the Tertullian paradox (“I believe *because* it is impossible”), the opposite of it is that trying to reduce belief to the credible is a waste of time and desolation of spirit. One doesn’t bother to believe the credible: the credible is believed already, by definition. There’s no adventure of the mind there. (Didn’t Coleridge say that Donne was a Christian because it would have been so much easier to be an atheist?) Belief is the Wright brothers getting a heavier-than-air-machine off the ground after the most distinguished scientists had “proved” that it was impossible. In short, belief is the creation that turns the illusory into the real. Being kerygmatic, it emerges on the further side of the imaginative. (CW 5: 313)

If we take behavior as the basis of belief, we shall not solve any of the traditional problems of belief, notably the gap between what we do and what we “believe” we ought to do. But behavior is the basis for a study of the phenomenology of belief, as distinct from the *recording* of presupposed belief.

Because what we believe we ought to do is still related to action: it’s *quid agas*, the third level, not the second (*quid credas*)as in Dante. The latter is founded on the *credo ut intelligam*[I believe so that I may understand] fallacy. (CW 13: 311)

When something is certain it ceases to be believed, even though we continue to use the word. (CW 15: 254)

Re. literature & belief: the poet is a craftsman, of no existential personal authority, or very limited: what one meditates on or believes in is the poem in the context of the order of words. (CW 23: 126)

**Belief and Vision.** Well, the dialectic of belief and vision is the path I have to go down now. My ideas at present are as crude as a child’s mud pies. However, the metaphorical kernels of belief and vision are hearing and sight. As long as belief means, in practice, the acceptance of something heard as the Word of God, the church, or corresponding body of believers, is caught in a narrowing dialectic. Any sane person can see the wisdom of separating church & state: religion, Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Hindu, is the worst possible basis for a secular society. Buddhism persecutes less, but is probably just as shaky. (CW 5: 73)

No distinction between belief and what we believe we believe, except as revealed in actions and behavior. This shows us that all faith is powered by some kind of vision, if it’s only a vision of one’s own interests. Faith is the pursuit of the *for itself* in the light of a vision *in itself*, two things it’s practically self-murder ever to separate. (CW 6: 597)

**Bentham, Jeremy.** Mill illustrates in a curious way the regular social rule that doctrines become most articulate in opposition. His utilitarianism is like my Protestantism. He’s deeply ashamed of the intellectual tawdriness of Bentham & can’t understand why more aren’t converted to Coleridge than are; yet he’s convinced that the real dynamic is in Bentham & not in Coleridge. He defends Bentham, not encouraged by the social ascendancy of the utilitarian school, of which he is also somewhat ashamed, but out of a clear knowledge of the intellectual domain in which Benthamism looks cheap, shoddy & almost outcast. (CW 8: 66)

**Bernard of Clairvaux.** Song of Songs: Bernard of Clairvaux, a thoroughly nasty (I would even say evil, because he preached crusades) man, preached 86 sermons on the Song of Songs with the avowed aim of erasing every sexual image in it. Poets have consistently shown a better sense of proportion about it: Spenser’s Epithalamion. (CW 5: 286)

**Beyond Speech.** Imaginative, metaphorical, poetic speech is about the limit with words. The kerygmatic, whether the Vico-Joyce thunderclap or the Blakean “Awake, ye dead, and come to Judgment!,” is presented as verbal, but it’s really announcing a world beyond speech. This world is first of all an alternation between experiencing as a unit & understanding without words, a larger entity: then it goes beyond that duality. (CW 6: 715)

**Bible.** The curious paradox in the construction of the Bible. It’s all bits & pieces, a mosaic of discontinuous concerned prose; yet it’s a unity too. Inspiration seems to apply to the greatest unity & the greatest editorial diversity. There’s one spirit, obviously, but a vast number of minds. So while the shape & unity of the whole canon is important, we shouldn’t *reduce* the variety to unity, but see them both as interpenetrating. The unity of originality, the unity of *Paradise Lost* or *Hamlet*, is a different kind of unity, a function of universality *through* individuality. I think this raises the whole question of objective art (“code of art”), Gurdjieff (as usual, he gives the impression that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about but has derived the notion from someone who did), Beethoven’s music beyond music, etc. It also raises the question of inspiration as belonging to the *reader*. The development of prophecy shows how the superstition that the divine voice had to come from an oracular area of consciousness was outgrown (survives in the tape-recorded theory). (CW 13: 187–8)

The Bible never calls itself the Bible nor does the phrase Word of God ever mean the Bible. Hence one of the things the Bible is is a Bible of misreadings. The misreading paradox turns on a constant recreation, & we can’t trace the Bible back to a time when it wasn’t being recreated. (CW 13: 336)

The function of the Bible is to give us knowledge of myth (and metaphor). Not experience: that’s the reader’s response. The Bible guides and girds the experience: unorganized mythical experience is hysteria or insanity. (CW 13: 352)

**Bible and/as Literature.** The paradox in reading the Bible is, for me, the paradox of treating the

Bible not as a work of literature when it is so full of literary characteristics. I rejected the “Bible as Literature” approach because it meant destroying the form in which the Bible presents itself. But no literary critic can deny the literary qualities, even if they do not categorize the Bible as literature. I agree in general with C.S. Lewis’ comment [those that read the Bible as literature do not read the Bible], but those who do not see the literary qualities of the Bible do not read it either. (Letter to Michael Steven Marx, 11 November 1982)

**Bible Book.** It is beginning to look as though my handbook to Biblical symbolism and my Birks lectures book were merging, & that I really am going to do a “big book on the Bible.” (CW 13: 165)

**Biblical Echoes.** Every word of the Bible echoes every other word; every image echoes every other image. Yet, ideally, every word belongs just there, in its own historical context, and nowhere else. (CW 6: 649–50)

**Biblical Hermeneutics.** There are two directions of interpreting the Bible: a progressive conservative one that moves forward, and a radical reactionary one that moves backward. The conservative one is where the myth-means-everything-it’s-been-made-to-mean point goes. The Bible gets wrapped up in heavier and heavier coats of institutional interpretation and dogma, until at the extreme it disappears. So there has to be the kind of stripping-off of layers we get at the Reformation and which strives to get further and further back to the lowest layer of the palimpsest.

In the analytic and historical scholarship of the last century or so that has reached precisely nothing. So the extremes are bad, and an oscillation between the two is what’s essential. One extreme is the point where any statement is reconcilable with any other statement by adding more sentences; the other is the literal “zero degree” of writing, where the historical kernel of the life of Jesus in the Gospels is reduced to “Jesus wept.” (CW 13: 292)

**Biblical Language.** Hebrew is exceptionally concrete & poor in abstractions. Also it has an exceedingly constricted vocabulary. You don’t expect rhetorical amplification in the Bible any more than we should expect a social-gossip column in a resistance press. Adjectives & adverbs are relatively rare in the Hebrew Bible, & the suppleness & flexibility of Greek was more of a nuisance than an advantage. (CW 13: 189)

**Biblical Potboiler.** I’d like to do a potboiler on the Bible in four chapters, outlining among other things my theory of its symmetry. The Christian Old Testament is divided into Law, History, Poetry & Prophecy. The New Testament illustrates the same things in the same order, but in Christian terms. First, there is Christian Law, or Gospel, not a book of rules, but Christ illuminating a series of existential situations. Secondly there is Christian History, or the Apostolic Acts. Thirdly there is Christian “Writing” (Kethibim), letters designed occasionally to meet existential situations. Fourthly there is Christian Prophecy or Apocalypse. (CW 13: 53)

**Biblical Scholarship.** I have been deeply impressed by the extraordinary elusiveness of data in Biblical scholarship, the very small number of ascertainable & undisputed facts, the amount of straw-threshing, of pseudo-establishing of facts by repetition, of sheer guessing dignified with the word “hypothesis,” & so on & so on. I say this not to belittle the work of scholars who know much more than I do, but to suggest that some other shaping principle may be at work that has been overlooked. (CW 13: 188)

**Biblical Story.** Word & Spirit: my Methodist background with its emphasis on experience. What countered and contained that was not a structure of doctrine, but the story of the Bible. (CW 6: 704

**Big Bang.** I hesitate to record anything from a dream: they sound so urgently important then & so irrelevant afterwards because we’ve lost the context, & despite Freud nobody really knows what the context of a dream is. Anyway, I was dozing along the argument of my Bible book, where one specific myth (Christian) can get to be One Big Myth, containing the whole world. Then there’s an explosion, & the big myth scatters into bits, of which each bit preserves the whole of the big myth. (CW 13: 222)

**Biographical Criticism.** Most critics, and all bad critics, are preoccupied with biography. It doesn’t matter a damn what kind of man an author is: why that kind of man should have appeared in such an age and connected with such an art is what matters. It is the purest waste of time, in discussing the ferocity of Gulliver’s Travels, the shuddering ecstasy of delight in the grotesque and repellent, to talk about Swift’s liver or his disappointment at missing a bishopric. It is the purest waste of time, in discussing the snobbish, tired, prudish, super-subtlety of James to talk about his nostalgic deracination. The point is that the satiric anatomy demands a terrific speed, concentration and vigor: hence it produced Swift as its greatest exponent. A bilious or sulky Swift could hardly have been capable of setting his teeth and going places. Similarly, the novel demands endless careful analysis, sifting of motives, rigorous selection of detail––hence James. Primarily Swift and James were serious artists trying to live up to the respective demands of the very different and almost opposed art-forms they chose. Ferocity & subtlety, etc. are only inferences from that. We do not read these things, we only infer them: we read the book, and the book is an art-form.(“1932 Notebook,” 16 May)

**Birds, Literal and Metaphorical.**One of Homer’s formulaic units is “winged words.” The Word as a mode of communication, from one consciousness to another, is metaphorically a bird, who is also, and necessarily, a metaphor of the Spirit. The tell-tale bird of folktale is a parody of this; the dove itself, or at least the pigeon, has actually been used as a mode of communication. Raven and dove seem to have a relationship like that of spider and bee elsewhere: the subjective brooding contrasted with the flight that lands somewhere. (CW 6: 484–5)

**Bishop, Elizabeth.** I was at a dinner at HarvardUniversity seated beside a poet named Elizabeth Bishop, who was a New Englander with a summer cottage in Nova Scotia. She spent half her time in Nova Scotia, so much so that one or two Americans suggested Canadians really ought to make her Canada’s national poet. I think it was a bit of a problem for her too to decide whether she was Canadian or American, and she finally solved the problem by going to live in Brazil. However, she came back to Harvard. She was a very shy person and was very chagrined at being put beside me, because she was frightened by strangers of all kinds. She said, II haven’t read any of your books.” I said, “Well, I haven’t read them either. I’ve only proofread them.” Then she stared at me a while longer, and she said, “When was it that New Brunswick changed over from a left-hand to a right-hand drive.” “Well,” I said loudly and confidently, “September 1920.” I realized afterward that I had almost certainly got the date wrong. But what I do remember was the fact happening and my mother’s comment that they were going to have trouble with the horses, especially the milk-team horses. In any case, whether I got the date right or not, it must have been around that time that the province discovered that there was a difference between the left hand and the right hand on the road.

**Black Holes.** Mystery of evil: nature is said to abhor a vacuum, but astronomers say there are black holes, & there must be moral black holes too, like the arse of Satan Dante crawls out of. (CW 5: 212)

**Blake.** I don’t know what dimension I’m working in any more. Nothing has mattered, nothing has even existed, for the past six weeks, but Blake, Blake, Blake: I’ve spun the man around like a teetotum, I’ve torn him into tiny shreds and teased and anatomized him with pincers, I’ve stretched my mind over passages as though it were on a rack, I’ve plunged into darkness and mist, out again into the clear light—where I started from in the first place—rushed up blind alleys of comparison and sources, broken down completely from sheer inertia, worked all night on a paragraph no better in the morning. At that I’ve completed, as far as the actual typing out goes, only the preface and the first chapter, which runs to about sixty pages. But what I have done is a masterpiece; finely written, well handled, and the best, clearest and most accurate exposition of Blake’s thought yet written. If it’s no good I’m no good. There isn’t a sentence, and there won’t be a sentence, in the whole work that hasn’t gone through purgatory. (CW 1: 414–15)

Reading the *Four Zoas* all day. Blake *did* write a certain amount of shit, I’m afraid, and a certain amount of automatically produced drivel. Maybe not: maybe the *Four Zoas* is just a draft & every letter of *Jerusalem* goes into its fit place. But he *did* write shit, all the same. (CW 8: 20)

**Blakean Moods.** Well, as I see it, Blake gives us four archetypal moods or states in which poetry can be written. These are the moods of Eden, Beulah, Generation & Ulro: the dithyrambic, or song of rapture; the idyllic, or song of innocence; the elegiac, or song of experience, & the satiric, or song of discontent. Such moods are tonalities: you don’t keep to them all through a poem any more than you stay in C minor all through a piece in C minor—but you resolve on them. The satire, incidentally, is too specifically identified as a song of discontent: it’s really a song of isolation or detachment. The four moods are actually four degrees of detachment, the lowest or zero point being the total identification of the poet with his environment. This really does begin to make sense of some of my “lyric” yammerings. (CW 8: 429)

**Blake’s Emanations.** It is important to remember at all times that for Blake there are no men or women in eternity: the female nature of emanation, as well as the male nature of the Zoas, has to do with something like a Chinese yang and yin system. The “female will” is a runaway or overobjectified nature, which is called female because the mythology of experience speaks of Mother Nature, and because the elusiveness of the objective world is associated with females in some literary conventions, such as Courtly Love poetry. But this, because it belongs to the state of experience, is a muddled and confused analogy of the genuine thing. The Emanations oscillate between submissiveness and feminine wiles not because they are female but because they are fallen. This is an often neglected point about the Emanations. . . . If female figures like Ololon and Jesusalem are better behaved than Vala or Enitharmon, it is not because they are women behaving acceptably according to male standards, but because nature behaves better when it is loved rather than exploited. (Letter to Kathleen Middleton Murphy, 1 November 1983)

**Blake’s Tyger.** The question in Blake’s Tyger means: can we actually think of the world of the tiger as a created order? From Philo down this has been part of a Platonic problems of seeing the archetypal noumenal world behind the phenomenal one, which is possible only to a vision of innocence, as in, e.g., Hopkins’ poem on the stars [*The Starlight Night*]. (CW 134: 288–9)

**Blithering.** I think some 19th-century Catholics, including Newman, tried to resolve the BibleChurch dialogue by subordinating the Bible, and so making Christ a creature of history and tradition and precedent. The Church, even if all its claims are true, continues the body of Christ in time, but the eternal Logos continually confronts it, not because it is continuous, but because it doesn’t change. The Egyptians saw the victory of the apocalypse in every sunrise: the mass of course repeats the whole gospel sequence every day: but a mass that swallowed the gospel would become a black mass. I’m blithering: I’ve forgotten my idea. (CW 5: 160)

**Blocking the View of Charity.**There seems little chance of much reduction in income tax: we will still have to pay interest on the bonds we sold. Curious warped mentality of the capitalist system— we can skimp on relief & essential social services & all the charitable aspects of life & still do nothing *wrong*: but the moment we think of defaulting on debts owed to more-or-less well-to-do people who wouldn’t suffer if the interest were withheld, a tremendous moral outcry goes up. That’s honour, & honesty, the natural virtues of the upper & middle classes respectively, the former in our social system being conceived in terms of the latter. Essential virtues they are too, but there’s a point at which they block the view of charity. (CW 8: 83)

**Bloody Stupidity.** My hunch is that something new in the way of cosmological shape begins with Nietzsche and Mallarmé, but it’s very vague as yet, and Nietzsche is so *Bloody* stupid. What intelligent people like the post-structuralists get out of such chicken-shit as his Dionysus and Antichrist and eternal recurrence glop I don’t know. (CW 6: 508)

**Blue: A Triolet**

My lady makes me think of blue,

No other color seems to suit her, She never wears it: still, it’s true.

My lady makes me think of blue,

That cool and clear and mystic hue

Beloved by poets male and neuter

My lady makes me think of blue,

No other color seems to suit her. (“1932 Notebook,” 10 July)

**Blunden, Edmund.** Blunden continues vague and complimentary. He says things like “I wish you’d write these things down, just as you say them: I think there’s something to be said for a book of table-talk,” or “I don’t care about a paper: it’s enough just to get you talking.”But he doesn’t seem to remember what I’ve told him particularly. He gave me a book last time: a translation of Keats’*Hyperion* into Latin. I think it may mean he feels I should be reading more Latin: I actually do think he’s oblique enough for that. Neither he nor I have expressed any particular interest in Keats. I haven’t done much for him lately: I’ve been working on a history of language paper I’m worried about, and I think I’ve broken its back. (CW 2: 855)

**Blunden, Chaucer, and Shakespeare.** I’ve worked very hard most of the week, on my first paper for Blunden. It was on Chaucer’s early poems, which are all in the usual symbolic, visionary form of medieval poetry, and as that happens to be the kind of poetry I know how to read, the paper grew and grew as I worked on it—I spent every waking hour of Saturday, Sunday and Monday on it, practically. Blunden said very flattering things about it, but he obviously isn’t very fresh on Chaucer. That’s the weakness of the tutorial system, I think: the tutor has to pretend to know everything when he doesn’t, like a public school teacher. Not that Blunden bothers to pretend much. I think he likes me, and spoke of taking me out to see Blenheim palace.However, he absolutely declines to take the initiative in deciding what papers I am to write. Next week I tackle *Troilus and Criseyde*, & may do something with Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* too.I should be rather good on the Shakespeare—I just gave that play a careful reading almost exactly a year ago, and it did something to me—seemed to numb something in me, or paralyze a nerve centre somewhere. I’ve never been the same man since. (CW 2: 603)

**Bodies of Verbal Expression.** There are four main bodies of verbal expression. Two are mythical and rhetorical: one of them is literature, the other the area I’ve been calling ideology. The other two use logos language, one constructively, the other descriptively. In descriptive language centripetal features like figured speech and ambiguity are minimized: they can’t be abolished, but they are subordinated. The constructive sphere of logos is metaphysical: descriptive writing is words in front of *physika*, constructive writing is works behind or after *ta physika*. Constructive writing is generated out of ambiguity and metaphor. Literature represents the maximum concentration of figuration, and the ideological area uses rhetoric kinetically. I’ve always suspected, too, a Hegelian form of polysemy. Descriptive writing, corresponding to immediate sensation, is *aufgehoben* into constructive writing: that in turn is caught up into the metaphorical & rhetorical structure of ideology. Then that’s caught up in the poetic, where the centripetal is at its most concentrated. That may bring me back to conventional meanings of “literal.” (CW 5: 258–9)

**Bodily Thinking.**  Mallarmé says to think with the whole body: producing ideas out of the head alone is like playing a violin on the wrong side of the bridge. Interesting that this remark comes from so cerebral a poet. (CW 13: 372)

**Boehme, Jacob.** When Berdyaev says in an essay on Boehme that Boehme’s whole thought comes out of an intuition about fire, and that this links him with Heraclitus I start running around in circles barking wildly, even if I don’t know quite what he means, and am inclined to wonder if he does. However, I’ve always known that Boehme linked the Father with fire and the Son with light. (CW 5:

302–3)

Start with Boehme and his fire: God is nothing and wanting to be something is a fire. When he gets to be something the fire acquires light. I don’t know whether he actually says that God without light is Satan, but Satan is the darkness that doesn’t comprehend the light. (CW 5: 307)

Boehme is neither theologian nor philosopher, much less a scientist, but he does try to explain why we have a Trinity. . . .A lot of Heidegger & Nietzsche seems to me to come out of Boehme, with his conceptions of the “nothing” & the “anxiety,” so I better investigate. But, oh God, it’s a

discouraging blather: when the alleged simple & saintly cobbler begins to write with knowing winks & leers & nudges, one suspects the wrong kind of spiritual dictation. (CW 9: 213–14)

**Book Formula.** I want to have a book to write that (without being a diary) will be more fun to write than any book will be to read. I suspect Yeats was in this state while writing the Vision, when he could only read detective stories at night. Also Joyce with *Finnegans Wake*. I’m so determined to find the formula for such a book that I may not start writing at all until I’ve either found it or become convinced it doesn’t exist. But of course it does exist: all such things do. I think I’m up there with Yeats & Joyce; maybe I’m down with the Baconian cipherers. The merit of such things is a separate question: this is a world where everybody is what he thinks he is. (CW 13: 132)

**The Book of Oneself.** De Quincey is one of those people whose work is all attached to a huge book of himself, like Sterne, Coleridge, and others: practically everything first-rate that he writes is part of his autobiography.Like many such people, including of course Coleridge, he has a conscience about projecting this into an encyclopaedic objective work: Coleridge’s great treatise of the Logos has its counterpart in De Quincey’s dream of a great work starting with economics, a commentary on Ricardo, and going on to theological and philosophical ideas, including a demonstration of the superiority of Christianity to paganism.Like Coleridge too, he has some remarkable ideas about the language of the Bible, and of religion generally. (“Notes on Romance”)

**Books.** For some time now I’ve been scolding myself for not reading a lot of the “good books” on my shelves, or opening them and not having the guts to finish them. Then I take book after book from my shelves and find that I’ve read it carefully all through, with marginal comments that prove I have. What gives? Is senility just the flipside of human existence? (CW 5: 365)

**Bottles.** Rimbaud’s drunken boat tosses on the sea as lightly as a cork. The image is linked to the floating bottle with the MS in it in a story of Poe; with de Vigny’s poem *Bouteille sur la mer*; with the flask in *Igitur*, and not impossibly even with the baqbuq in Rabelais—at any rate I think the Mallarme flask may be. The black bird in *Igitur* is Poe’s *Raven*, I suppose; but what with the ashes of Igitur’s ancestors one thinks of a parody of the phoenix. The thing floating on the sea with a message in it links to the riddle or cipher often found under the sea (e.g. in Keats’s *Endymion*) or at the South Pole (Pym and elsewhere). Also with the floating ark with the baby-hero in it, the “shield-son-of-sheaf” business in *Beowulf*, and all *that* cluster. (CW 6: 577)

**Bottom: Figurative and Literal.** I glanced through a female magazine article today on bringing up children. Don’t spank them, said the authoress––a child is all right at bottom, and it gives more lasting results to appeal to his better nature. This logic seems to me to be shaky. If a youngster is all right at bottom, why not make your appeal there? (“1932 Notebook,” 19 December)

**Brain Exits.** I wish I could rearrange the exits in my brain, which now is like the C.P.R.Hamilton station, where the trains have to leave the main line and back in. (CW 8: 381)

**Brains.** Once in Pakistan it began to rain: a man from Belfast walking with me had an umbrella & spread it over me, saying he was glad to help preserve “a better brain than my own.” There are many obvious reasons why I should find such a remark irritating: the most important, perhaps, is that I feel that within the very wide area of normal intelligence I think all brains are pretty well alike. I have always loved music better than words, but I think I’d have been a second-rate musician, a commonplace church organist. In other areas, like business, I’d be a dunce. We all start from scratch: the immense differences in where we arrive are largely a matter of luck, plus conditioning of various kinds. That’s one reason why one *has* to believe in a God who knows what people are and pays little attention to what they do. (CW 5: 297–8)

**Breaking the Law.** Moral law is always trying to approximate scientific law. If you jump off a skyscraper you don’t “break” the law of gravitation; you break your neck, & so merely manifest the law. It is impossible to break such a law. Ideally, getting hanged for a murder manifests the law that perfect civilization cannot tolerate murder, & the punishment symbolizes that fact. It’s approximate, because in a perfect society it would be impossible to “break” the 6th law or commandment: the law could only be manifested as an idea, the breaking being in the outward shadows of possibility. That’s the freedom which is the same as necessity. Now such automatic physical laws are not necessarily Druidic: they are part of the solid bottom of art. Down to Nietzsche everyone thought of this solid bottom statically, which is why Blake warned against it: Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht* put such “nature” on a dynamic basis. (CW 13: 45)

**Breath.**  In the beginning was the word, not the breath. Breath is the prime motor, the only begetter of the motion which is the only principle of the natural world, the creative cause for all Deism. It’s a natural principle, as the Word is human, cultivated, articulate, & not, like the breath, part of a cyclic process. (CW 15: 41)

**Bronte, Charlotte.** *Shirley*: full of characters spouting ideologies, including naturally the author’s own. Toryism, radicalism, rationalized laissez faire, the sexist ideology Charlotte Bronte knew so much about; economic miseries of Orders in Council; the understandable but mistaken tactics of the Luddites, all dated back to 1812 from the 1840’s to provide the hindsight of the Chartist parallels. Other books studying these topics directly might have more & better organized information, but if written in ideological language, however detached or partisan, would have to treat all individuals as case histories. What makes *Shirley*& other works of fiction irreplaceable is the assimilation of all this to the primary concerns of food (i.e. jobs), sexual love, work & play. (CW 5: 140)

**Brooks, Van Wyck.** It is a long time since I read Van Wyck Brooks, but I remember being stimulated by his powers of synthesis and his sense of perspective. I heard various people disparage him, including Perry Miller, on the ground that he worked entirely with secondary sources. But a great deal of essential criticism does, and I feel that he had great strengths in narrative construction, wherever his research activities stopped. In short, I think your instinct is very sound in regarding his work as a type of creative criticism very close in this genre to the literature he worked with. (Letter to John Perry, 19 August 1986)

**Browning, Robert.** No other poet since Shakespeare had so comprehensive a grasp of life as Browning; no other poet since Milton had such immense powers of technique and intellectual construction. He had it “in him” to rank with the greatest, but the necessity for expressing and giving voice to his own age baffled him. Hamlet exists; he is not a mask over Shakespeare, but strip the disguise from any portrait in Browning and the poet is there, the emperor descending into the arena. (CW 3: 107–8)

**Buddhism and Shinto.** When Buddhism came to Japan it eventually combined with Shinto (after some tension) by treating it as a positive analogy of Buddhism in which the *kami* or spirits of Shinto became emanations of Buddha. Christianity, being revolutionary, had to take the tedious route of negative analogy: how far can we allow these demonic parodies of our faith to go? (CW 13: 350)

**Building Street.** The street not only is the way through the city; it also makes the city visible by confrontation (cf. the etymology of “rivals,” the river being the archetypal street). Street, road, highway, are horizontal *direction*: they dramatize law & progress by opposition. Buildings are the vertical perspective: they incorporate ladder, mountain, tower imagery. City then is building street. (CW 13: 213)

The two dimensions of the city are the street & the building. In the single building these dimensions recur as the stairway & the corridor: Not strictly Biblical but an easy modulation. To an exploring small child the mysterious parts of a house are the cellar & the attic, & this feeling takes root in the adult. Frost’s story about the Witch of Coös would be nothing without the stairways to cellar & attic. Jacob’s ladder / Steps Going Down: Eliot’s staircases. Corridors of time, of power: wherever the building becomes, in however vague a way, a Castle of Alma or symbol of the mind or body, corridors & stairways become numinous. (CW 13: 232)

**Bultmann, Rudolf.** Rhetoric is figured language like poetry, and shades off imperceptibly into the mythical and poetic. Because it makes assertions, it “answers” to dialectic. It’s Bultmann’s kerygma also, but that illustrates another principle: kerygma in Bultmann is still answering to dialectic & excludes *mythos*, whereas it ought to be totally dominated by *mythos* and should be its antistrophos. Only I imagine that real kerygma is on the other side of *mythos* or the poetic, which again brings us the “code or art” phrase. The metaphors of poetic grow out of apocalyptic vision just as metaphysics grows out of those metaphors. (CW 5: 260)

**Burton, Robert.** The anatomy in England reached its culmination with Burton. *TheAnatomy of Melancholy* is not a book of Burton; it is Burton’s book; the complete expression of his personality. Needless to say, all the characteristics of the anatomy are in it: Utopian scheme, erudition, view of mankind through the generalized technique provided by the theory of humours, ordered presentation of a subject, and the rest, except that what we find partial in other anatomists we find complete in him. It is perhaps noteworthy that the anatomy in its largest and most highly developed and concentrated forms tends to become *the* book of its author rather than one of many; Burton, Rabelais, perhaps Sterne, being examples.  *TheAnatomy of Melancholy* is divided like a prelude and fugue; the prelude, the introduction of Democritus to the reader, being free in style, and the anatomy being capable of exhaustive analysis on a general threefold scheme. The metaphor is not altogether an irresponsible one, for both the anatomy and the contemporary fugue in music are, in different arts, the working out of the implications of a given subject and the organizing of them into a rhythmic unit. (CW 3: 392)

**Byzantium 1 and 2.** Panoramic and participating apocalypse are related as [Yeats’s] *Sailing to Byzantium* is to *Byzantium*. The former is the vision of the new creation, & gives an impression of a construct “out of” nature. It’s only the latter that’s the real interpenetrating vision. (CW 5: 9–10)

C

**Café Music.** Tried to read some of the music I bought: the Soler is most interesting. The Dussek is full of some real feeling, but can’t get far away from its tonic chord. The Schubert, like so much of his instrumental music, is café music. A pretty tune starts, & people look up and notice it; then it goes into commonplace figuration of a Czerny exercise type, and people go back to their drinks and conversation. It’s fine for cafés, but it makes dull reading. (CW 8: 482)

**Callaghan, Morley.** Went to Morley Callaghan’s play, *To Tell the Truth*, a Saroyanesque fantasy with one scene, a brewery counter, & all sorts of people wandering into it to demonstrate that life can be beautiful. It was fortunate that Morley asked me how I liked it in the intermission, when it was still only placidly bad; it was only in the last two acts that its badness became acutely embarrassing. A most inept & fatuous play, but maybe he can sell it to the movies. Its central doctrine, that if you dream of something beautiful that dream really is you, would be very grateful to the movies. I don’t know quite what to say to Don Harron, except that he struggled valiantly with a role that was half male ingénue (or is it ingénus?) & half leprechaun. The audience was mainly sisters & cousins & aunts. (CW 8: 95)

**Calvin and Philosophy.** At some periods the theologian and the philosopher become merged into one thinker: thus, Aquinas was the greatest philosopher of his time because he was its greatest theologian, and vice versa. Schleiermacher in modern times provides a parallel synthesis. In Calvin we have a theologian with a first-class brain; posterity may prove him wrong, but it cannot prove him a fool: why, then, does he not at least touch on the problems of philosophy? A general history of philosophy is bound to mention Aquinas; it finds no occasion to mention Calvin. The questions which are implied in this include two of some importance: First, does Calvin’s theology have any integral connection with the philosophical thought of Calvin’s time, as is the case with Aquinas? Second, has Protestantism such a thing as a philosophical foundation at all? (CW 3: 402–3)

**Camels—Pros and Cons.** I heard a minister . . . a little while ago tell a story in which a camel was obviously intended to be the symbol of a highbrow intellectual. Now it is quite true that camels bite and kick savagely even without provocation, that they have a perpetual hump and sneer, that they are frowzy, dirty, sullen beasts, that they shuffle along in slow processions tied to each other’s necks. What he did not say was that if you want to get across a vast desert space with a very heavy load you have to use camels: the ponies he preferred, with all their cheerfulness and frisking, won’t go very far. (“1932 Notebook,” 18 April)

**Canadian Culture.** Up to the beginning of the twentieth century, Canadian culture was a provincial culture, and it is characteristic of a provincial culture that its standards are imported from other centres. Canadian writers wrote echoes and imitations of what they had read in British, French, American literature. As culture matures, it tends to become more and more of an export trade. One thinks, for example, of the amount of English literature in the twentieth century produced by the Anglo-Irish group, which is certainly not written for the Dublin market. Canadian literature is not as ignored in its own country as Irish literature tends to be in Ireland. At the same time, it has met with a worldwide recognition during the last twenty or twenty-five years. Institutes of Canadian studies have been set up in most countries in western Europe, as well as in Asia— Japan, China, India—and Latin America, besides of course the United States. The United States and Great Britain, as one would expect, were a little slower in awakening to the merits of Canadian literature, but they seem to be more awake now. (CW 25: 222

**Canadian Painting.** For a long time I’ve been wondering why Canadian painting irritated me slightly, and didn’t seem, even at its best, to ring true to actual Canadian conditions. It seems to me that the trouble is that it’s all been consolidated on French impressionism, or at least on some kind of exotic painting which depends on diffusion of light, on analysis of colour, on blending of tones. But when that’s done here, and it’s done with amazing skill and technique, it gives a theoretical, academic effect, because, in spite of it, Canada doesn’t really look like that. This country is glowing in a hard, cold light that cuts out pattern with an edged tool; there is no compromise of outline, no blending or slurring of any sort, nothing but solid hard blocks of shape. The ultimate problem is to organize rhythms, not to analyze colouring. In frosty weather that’s even more obvious. I wish these supercivilized Canadians were forced underground and made to chisel their drawings on cave walls.Then they’d learn something about the rhythms of this country. (CW 1: 445–6)

**Canadian Poets, Younger.** In looking through the works of younger (thirties & forties) Canadian poets, it’s very obvious how much of their work is poetry of protest, and how deeply they are outraged by cruelty & violence & ugliness. But they don’t want any longer (as so many did in the 1930s) to be identified as “left-wing,” say, or ideologically programmed in any way. They’ve matured to primary concern. (CW 5: 400)

**Canon.** Insight is kerygma with a subjective focus: it’s what Nietzsche or Kierkegaard or other prophetic writers have. What’s missing is the sense of canon: many writers making an individual writing community. The context of a writer is, first, his other writings; second, his Zeitgeist historical and cultural context; third, his generic context. But none of this makes a canon. (CW 5: 340)

**Card and Chess Symbolism.**Card symbolism seems to have an affinity to Mrs. Battle’s “quadrate or square,” whereas chess, as Alice discovered, is a mirror game. There’s the major mirror of red & white, & the minor mirror of the doubled bishops & knights & castles. The curious ambiguity of seven & eight recurs: chess, like the I Ching, is ogdoadic: 8 powers, 16 pieces, 32 total pieces, 64 squares. The Tempest chess game is an Eros breakout of the mirror; the Waste Land of course is the demonic narcist kind. Maybe it’s the hermaphroditism of the lovers, though. Tarot symbolism recurs to sevens; also to π, the 22–7 proportion (the Fool being 0, it isn’t quite 22). Note the septenary principle in card-playing, preserved in bridge: four are playing but only three play. Similarly with the medieval Tarot, I understand. The total number, 78, is often mentioned by Rabelais. (CW 13: 173)

**Carlyle, Thomas.** Carlyle is coming clearer: for him conservatism & liberalism are property & work, the passive & active expressions of the integration of the individual with the community. His doctrine of work is intensely Marxist, & so is his emphasis on the priority of instruments of production, of man as a tool-using animal. But his doctrine of property as the Aristotelian (& modern Catholic) *propria*, the things which at once complete a man’s individuality & unite him to the community, isn’t Marxist, I suppose. The names for the different branches of communism, including Marxism itself, Leninism, Trotskyism, Stalinism, Titoism, show how deeply the cult of the leader has permeated Communism in practice. I suppose one could counter with remarks about the Lutheran & Calvinist churches, but they belong to the age of the Renaissance prince. But the Communist leader seems to be a philosopher-ruler, the incarnation of a dialectic, whereas the Fascist leader is rather a historical ruler, the incarnation of an event or Zeitgeist. (CW 23: 116–17)

**Carroll, Lewis.** Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno* is probably the most off-putting book in the language. And yet I may have to go through it, seeing at what points the fairy world of the two children affects the stupid behavior of the adult characters. I suppose the nauseating cuteness of Bruno is his way of coming to terms with little boys. Alice is never cute: that’s one of the things that’s so wonderful about her, and in fact neither is Sylvie. But while the book is a trifle sickmaking, the actual idea, set out in the preface, has a good deal of interest, as I suspect a fairy world closely related to dreams and children, closely beside us and occasionally breaking into our actions and influencing our behavior, is one of the things I’m looking for. (CW 15: 329)

**Cary, Joyce.**Today Eleanor Coutts brought along a copy of a novel by Joyce Cary called *The Horse’s Mouth*, which everyone thinks I ought to read because the hero keeps quoting Blake. I opened it & on page one was a garbled gabble from *Europe* of which the final line was more or less Blake & the other two were, as the White Knight says in Alice, his own invention: I shut the book. (CW 8: 317)

**Catholic–Protestant Antithesis.** The contrast of Dante & Milton has the whole Catholic– Protestant antithesis in it, one chock-a-block with imaginative ideas like the worship of saints, the other bare & empty but leading to the creative void the other seals off, unless turned inside out. (CW 15: 42)

**Cave Drawings.** In the earliest traces of human creativity we can discover, such as the cavedrawings in Altamira or Lascaux, we see pictures of animals, drawn with joy and exuberance under the most fantastically difficult conditions of positioning and lighting. We can isolate various aspects of the impulse to produce these paintings, the most obvious being the magical impulse, to ensure a plentiful supply of game. But no single aspect, magical, religious or aesthetic, brings us to the centre of the titanic will to identification with the objects represented. That seems to be what has been called a *participation mystique*, a sense of identity with the object which is not verbal but existential. We notice that some of the figures are those of sorcerers or shamans dressed in animal skins, another aspect of identification. Similarly, the earliest use of music seems to have been primarily ecstatic. (CW 6: 502–3)

The paleolithic cave-paintings are a most powerful & impressive example of the interiorizing of imagery. Ezekiel, who so often fails to recognize his own allies, denounces what’s done in the dark, in the chambers of his imagery. But that’s where recreation begins, the infant Prometheus. (CW 13: 369)

**CCF and UCC.**The C.C.F. [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] means a genuine labor-agricultural opposition. Again, it should be the typical party of Canada and the political expression of the same movement of which the United Church is the religious expression. The connection between the two is brought out by the New Outlook. That is why it is socialistic.

Government control of industry is essential if we are not to become a mere dumping ground for England and the U.S.A., just as a distinctive religious organization is necessary. (CW 1: 140)

**The Cellar of the Mind.** The descent quest is a perilous quest. There is a quite remarkable poem by the New Brunswick poet, Alden Nowlan, about going down into the cellar of the mind and coming up covered with blood, and he says that two examples of people who have made that descent are St. Francis of Assisi and Bluebeard. And he says the same experiences “instruct the evil as inform the good.” (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Censorship.** The most pernicious example of censorship I know is the edition of Spenser that cuts out the penultimate stanza of the Epithalamion. The complete poem is so delicate, graceful, sensitively tactful: then remove that story and substitute a line of dots and it is suddenly transformed into a grotesquely leering obscenity.(“1932 Notebook,” 16 December May)

The reason for my opposition to censorship is that it seems to me to be bad tactics. As I said [in my remarks to the Canadian Radio-Television Commission], it is easy to pass regulations, but even easier to evade them. My point of view was two-fold: first, to realize that violent television programmes are not the cause of violence in society, but a symptom of it, and that consequently that direct efforts at banning such programmes would do no good; secondly, that the only way to deal with such programmes ultimately is to mobilize and inform and arose public opinion. The analogy that comes to my mind is that of the manufacturers of passenger cars which are death traps. Legislation requiring safety measures in cars now has enough public opinion behind it to force the manufacturers to comply. (Letter to F.G.B. Maskell, 8 September 1975)

**Center and Circumference.** Woman born of man (Eve) type of male-centre & femalecircumference. Man born of woman the wanderer revolving around the *hortus conclusus* [enclosed garden] at the centre. (CW 6: 232)

**Center of a Cross.** I see the work of literature as the centre of a cross like a plus sign. The horizontal bar is the ideological concerns of the poet’s environment, which his work is bound to reflect. The vertical bar is his mythological concerns which give him his literary convention, his genres, and his essential place or tradition in literature. This doesn’t mean the people he read, though it generally includes the people it would have been interesting for critics if he had read. (CW 6: 595)

**Central Mystery of Art.** Gurdjieff talks about objective art: as usual with him, I get the feeling that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about but has talked to somebody who does. I feel that this is the central mystery of art. Everything that, say, Beethoven writes is in his style, it sounds like him, it couldn’t have been written by anyone else, etc. All this is subjective. But coming through it, somehow, is the tremendous authority of objective music, a music beyond any one composer’s music, however great. A very obvious convention gives us a slight hint of an objective quality. (CW 9: 321)

**Centripetal and Centrifugal Meaning.** I started *Anatomy of Criticism* with nothing but a hunch about the contrast between centripetal and centrifugal meaning. The former is (as I’ve expanded it) metaphorical; the latter is usually called referential meaning. What I discovered was that there are two stages of referential meaning, the first one being to the meaning in the context of literature as a whole “outside” the individual work, the second to the verbal tagging of natural & objective data symbolized by the dictionary. (CW 5: 113)

**Changing Weapons.** I don’t see how Communism can fight bourgeois philistinism with the latter’s discarded weapons, but that’s their affair. In fact democracy and Communism seem to have exchanged weapons, like Hamlet and Laertes: democracy fights with promises of liberation & fair play & appeals to crusading idealism and Communism with paternalistic loyalty, prudery, the sanctity of the family, and obvious art. (CW 8: 516)

**Charity and Freedom.** Charity, the goal of social work, is often misconceived as reactionary (privilege-class handouts) or neurotic (good works proceeding from the ego, regarding others as helpless), but is really the activity of what wisdom contemplates, setting people free. Compared with wisdom, both engage the whole man, no chopping up into emotion & intellect; both are unmotivated (you can’t set people free unless you’re free yourself, & you’re not free if you’re dependent on a satisfactory or justifiable compulsion); both work with values rather than morals (this is Blake: value judgements are on states and moral judgements on individuals); both are without purpose or ulterior motive (i.e., in the future. Art never develops, & the cult of posterity is a dismal superstition). Both may hope for general future improvements, but are concerned with making appear what is really here, Blake’s *Jerusalem*. (CW 8: 179)

**Chicago**. Chicago is an ideal place to hold a World’s Fair. It *has* washed its face *so* hard. There is a poem on Chicago by Sandburg in that book of Untermeyer’s. To a casual visitor who does not see the dreary side of things Chicago looks far more naïve than Sandburg presents it. It is such a cheerful, hospitable, adolescent city. They tell me that the clothing advertisers urge Chicagoans to get a metropolitan cut to their clothes to impress the hick visitors. That is typical Chicago. The silly city is far too young to have any of the traditions of a real metropolis, like London, Paris or New York—everybody has grown up with Chicago from a small town or come into it from smaller towns. Everybody looks at you as if they wanted to speak to you, but then you might be a gangster or pickpocket or cut-throat or something, so they don’t, but merely look shy. Like all youngsters, Chicago makes far too much noise; like all youngsters, it spends far too much money on pretty and expensive toys; like all youngsters, it can look disarmingly clean when it cleans up; like all youngsters, it is impulsively generous and hospitable, but with the main eye to its own advantage; like all youngsters, it grows appallingly fast but keeps well-proportioned. No other city in the world is half so perfectly adapted to a World’s Fair. (CW 1: 101)

**The Child Is Father of the Man.** I have a feeling—probably it’s just one of those would-be profound feelings that it’s comfortable to have—that I cannot really get at the centre of a problem unless something in it goes back to childhood impressions. Thus my New Comedy ideas, the core of everything I did after Blake, probably go back to my Horatio Alger reading, and now I think the clue to this labyrinth is the sentimental romance of the 19th century, the roots of which are in Scott. While I lived on Bathurst St. [early 1940s] I was constantly reading ghost stories with similar patterns in mind, & Poe & Hawthorne have always been favorites. Underground caves; the *Phantom of the Opera*, & the like, are all part of the Urthona penseroso pattern. (CW 9: 141–2)

**Children.** The real curse imposed on Adam & Eve was the family: not just a patriarchal family, even though that may be the worst form of it, but simply the family, in which children are brought up in a hierarchical structure with the design of losing their childhood when they become adults.

The genetic child (the child*like*, not the child*ish*) is prehistoric: post-historic man is the creator or recreated (not the adulterated) child. Hence Jesus on preserving the child in us; hence the way that fundamentalist devil-worshippers go in for periodic orgies of child-spanking, preferably, of course, girls. (At least the fundamentalist journals I get sent occasionally seem to have regular cycles of such articles.) The family is a cyclical principle. (CW 5: 319–20)

**China.** Today [19 August 1942] the news was all about the Dieppe raid, & the Russian front also got a front-page splash. The fact that the Chinese stormed & captured Wenchow, a city of 100,000 on the coast, was recorded in a tiny box in the second section. I simply cannot understand this assumption that the Chinese front is of no importance or interest. It’s all the sillier when one realizes that the current of world history is now going through Asia & that Europe has ceased to be of any organic historical significance. China will probably have the next century pretty well to itself as far as culture, & perhaps even civilization, are concerned. (CW 8: 27)

**Christ.** I think I don’t believe in the two natures of Christ: I think what he represents is the identity of God and Man, in which the part of man that isn’t God, symbolized by Judas, goes to his own place. This is straight Blake, & so isn’t new, but the context may be, & anyway the obvious always comes last in my muddled head. But of course Jesus, the second Adam, follows the withershins rhythm of human life. In Blake the Holy Spirit represents the identity of God & Man that man starts with, the imagination or Poetic Genius in him, & which works against the Selfhood or deathprinciple. (CW 9: 262)

**Christmas.** The city-jewel world and the pastoral world are grouped around the infant Christ, the former with the wise men and their gold-shrouded gifts, the latter with the shepherds & the ox & ass in the manger. Gozzoli & Gentile da Fabriano are particularly good on the jewelled-world setting of the wise men. In the calendar the pastoral reclamation comes on Christmas Eve, at the moment of birth: the renewed city at the very end, at epiphany, with the new year in between: millennium, end of the seventh cycle, & apocalypse. (CW 9: 36)

**Church.** There are two kinds of people who realize that the Church should be the window & not the mirror of the Word, & who regard the autonomy of the Church, which produces the interior reflective monologue, as the silver on the back which makes it opaque. One kind is the Protestant who wants a church service focussed on the sermon or recreating of the Word. The other is the dramatic or epic poet (lyric depends on a convention & autonomous lyric or elegy is based on a dogma of fragmentation) who turns the Church into a window by recreating the Word out of the Church & so dissolving the silver & destroying the anonymity. (CW 23: 6)

**Church Going.** Got through the church service all right: I think that it was technically quite a brilliant performance. . . . Elizabeth Lautenslager asked me abruptly why if I believed “all that,” I didn’t go to church. If I was right, weren’t they fools? She’s a very blunt, honest girl, & I could see her point clearly. She works like a galley slave to help her husband, who works like a galley slave to keep a church going, & here’s a high-powered intellectual from the college who draws a crowd & works out a beautiful theological pattern & doesn’t even attend church. It was too complicated however to explain the grounds I base my dispensation on. (CW 8: 156–7)

**Churchill, Winston.** Watching the funeral of Winston Churchill, one felt that a whole conception of human personality was being buried with him: that his heroic personality had something archaic about it, the last of its race. Kennedy, at least an equally admirable person, had nothing of it, but was already in a different world. (CW 20: 294)

**Circumferential Terms.** Meditation on Hegel: some terms, like God or mind or soul, have practically no meaning as point-terms (denotative meaning). They are circumferential terms. Zoology is the study of animals, but it’s of no value to zoology just to think of “all animals.” One spends one’s life filling in a tiny part of the area covered by this circumferential term. But then *all* conceptions are circumferential: when we point at them we see at most only their shells or seeds. Again, I just record this: I don’t know what I’m talking about, but am revolving the notion of interpenetration again. (CW 9: 87–8)

**Clam.** The digging clam must finally reach some kind of antipodes, like Alice. (CW 13: 269)

**Clap-trap.** I’ve often said that Hopkins would have been a very great critic if he could have junked his anxieties, such as calling Whitman “a very great scoundrel.” I think (a) it doesn’t matter what Whitman was, except when his clap-trap injures his poetry (b) Hopkins was something of an intellectual thug himself, and *that* doesn’t matter except when *his* clap-trap invades his poetry. This is the kernel of truth in the critic-as-judge metaphor, but a judge has a deeper responsibility than being a voice of his time, uttering *its* clap-trap as well as its vision. (CW 5:34)

**Classicism/Romanticism.** As Goethe would have said if he’d been a wiser man, Romanticism is life, Classicism death. The classic is the verbal icon, symbolized by Winckelmann’s corpse-statues. The *im*perfect is our paradise. (CW 5: 371)

**Classifying Genres.** The Greek method of classifying genres was by methods of performance. Lyric was τα µελη [*ta mele*], or sung poems, epic was the τα έπη [*ta epe*] or recited (spoken) poems, and drama was presented or spectacle poems. The genre of dialectic implanted in epic flowered in Ionian prose & the Platonic dialogue, and produced a form of the fourth, not in Aristotle, the poem written. This increased emphasis on dialectic developed in Hebrew & other Asiatic cultures— hieratic or hieroglyphic prose scripture or sacred book, which by the comminution of poetry produced the elements of Scripture. (CW 23: 92)

**Clearing away Underbrush.** I have an immense sense of release in finishing *The Critical Path*. The present book is one that I’ve wanted to write ever since finishing *Fearful Symmetry*: it’s older than *Anatomy of Criticism*, which I thought was going to be it. But everything I’ve written since 1945 has been hacking away at underbrush, and I have a feeling that the last big clump of underbrush is now cleared away. Of course there are still unsolved problems: I still have to work out the right verbal formulas for the similarity-identity business. All religions are one, not alike; “that they may be one,” not that they should all think alike: community means people thinking along similar lines & motivated by similar drives; communion means that all men are the same man. The HegelianMarxist “synthesis” is this identity projected as the end of a process, but that’s illusory. These are of course only hunches, but the right formulas are there if I can find them. And identity is important because it’s the key to the interpenetration climax. (CW 9: 266)

**Clementi.** I have been investigating Clementi—he really is a tremendous genius—something of Mozart’s polish and Scarlatti’s vigour held in solution. (CW 1: 97–8)

**Cloven Fiction.** Two Irish geniuses, Yeats & Joyce, sum up the cloven fiction of today. Yeats’ traditions are Platonic, Protestant & concerned with an analogia fides antithetical to nature. Joyce’s are Aristotelian, Catholic & concerned with an analogia entis expressed in the relation of HCE to Finnegan, or at least of Shaun to HCE. The former is naturally Tamas & the latter Rajas, yet somehow they must, by falling into the errors of each other’s traditions (one can see the vacuum suction of the Virgin in Yeats & of elusive vision in Joyce) have interchanged these roles. Yeats’ vision is pure hunch; Joyce’s has a glimpse at least of Albion. (CW 15: 96–7)

**Cock and Hens.**The reason why D.H. Lawrence had to pound his gut and roar about his testicles was that he spent too much time with women and so developed and abnormal sense of sex. He was a Cock who never escaped from the hens. Hence his propensity to darkness and dirt––he had to scramble upon a dung-hill to express himself. Women aren’t as important as Lawrence thought they were.(“1932 Notebook,” 11 May)

**Code of Art.** The Bible teaches the knowledge of myth: the poets teach the experience of it. Again, no one said this more clearly than Blake, who said that the Bible was the *code* of art, & whose gods, Orc & Urizen & the rest, are actually human states of being which we enter & by which we experience mythically. Again, the wrong step means insanity, which accounts for Blake’s reputation. This genius-madman link points to the necessity of dialectic in myth. Most of the occult mafia of our time seem to think that getting taken over by another spirit is always good. (Others may think it always bad, but they’re out of fashion.) (CW 13: 353)

**Coincidentia Oppositorum**. The two great structural principles of literature are the cycle and the dialectical polarization of opposites; but there are two forms of each. There’s the closed cycle and the open cycle, the latter a spiral in which the end is the beginning renewed and transformed by the quest itself. And there’s also the ultimate polarization into heaven and hell, the worlds beyond the cycle; there’s also the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the struggle of opposites inside the cycle, the basis of all the brother-struggle patterns in *Finnegans Wake*. In Blake I suppose the Orc-Urizen struggle of Devil and Angel is inside the cycle, because in its totality it forms a cycle: the Los-Satan one is the outside polarization. (CW 6: 686)

**Collecting Musical Scores.**I went down to Heintzmans & bought threeMacDowell sonatas, the first, third & fourth (they’re called the Tragic, Norse & Keltic), and the Liszt B minor sonata. I got back at a quarter to two feeling I’d had a terrific carouse. It’s difficult to explain why, but when I get to feeling down in the mouth I buy piano music, and to me it’s exactly what buying a red hat would be to a woman. The quality of the music isn’t so very important—if it’s good enough to fill a missing space in my library that’s all I want. I read through the Norse sonata in the evening & realized it was just a crop of corn, but I knew it would be anyway. (Actually, I’m quite fond of that kind of corn). But there’s so much in that eager, starved life of mine that began when I was about nine and lasted until it began to break when I went to Chicago at fourteen that still needs satisfying. A fixation on the word “sonata” and a curious interest in any piano composition that has that name is something I still can’t quite understand. But because of a dithyrambic (and I now realize very silly) article on Scriabine in the *Etude* of (I think) May, 1925, I shall sooner or later have to acquire all ten of his piano sonatas. The fact that he had really nothing on the ball was a great disappointment to me, but doesn’t affect my resolution. I will never play these great floundering sonatas, nor ever much want to. But I have always thought of music, and to lesser extent of literature, as a rich and glowing paradise of variegated genius, and it is with the greatest unwillingness that I have recognized the presence of stupidity, dullness and ineptitude in it. (CW 8: 545–6)

Today was the day I’d been waiting for. I started out half-heartedly to look for a music store, and found one, on 56th Street, just beside Carnegie Hall. Exactly the place I’d been looking for, with stacks of second-hand music to look over instead of having to ask for something specific. I got the first three volumes of the Ricardi edition of Scarlatti—there are five available altogether, I understand—a volume containing the ten Scriabine sonatas, a book I didn’t even know existed, and which fell into my hands like the wish-fulfilment of a dream, some Fux and Glyn’s edition of Weelkes. Every one of these was something I’d been panting to get—as I’ve said before, these things are symbols to me: I don’t pretend there’s anything rational about the feeling. They even had a copy of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book there—it’s still $33.75, and I shrank from buying—perhaps silly when I had a car to transport it in. More important, I now have a spiritual home in New York, an anchor to hold me there. (CW 8: 573)

**College Lecture.** In my opinion it would be unfortunate in emphasizing the virtues of seminars, tutorials and discussion groups, to infer that the lecture is a second-rate or outmoded form of teaching. Many essential teaching activities, particularly those which require expositions or historical survey, can only be done by lectures, and the informal lecture which breaks into question and discussion but carries on as a lecture if no occasion for discussion arises, is not easily replaceable as an all-round teaching method. What students want out of their college course is naturally of primary importance. But one has to distinguish between what students can be prodded into saying they want, at a meeting especially called for that purpose, and what their whole behaviour and attitudes over a period of four years show that they want. Their behaviour and attitudes indicate clearly that what they want, rightly or wrongly, is much more guidance than participation. (“Response to the Macpherson Report”)

**Comedy and Romance**. I’ve been having a lot of difficulty distinguishing the end of comedy from that of successful romance. The Odyssey should have given me the clue: in comedy there’s a new birth; in romance the sense is of return home. The theme of reconciliation is typical of romantic comedy, as it’s halfway between comedy & romance. The ironic cadence, when on the comic side, is a parody of *nostos* [return], a sort of “as you were” feeling. And, of course, as I said in the Milton book, the return home is a renewal caused by finding what you were looking for, or doing what you set out to do. (CW 9:152)

I have the conception of romance and comedy as respectively connected with the urges toward survival and toward deliverance. But there are two kinds of continuity. The kind represented by romance is essentially discontinuous, a series of adventures or complicated situations that the hero and heroine get extracted from. It is this discontinuous sequence that is turned into a teleological plot of comedy by reversal (*metabasis* rather than *peripeteia*, I think, but must check). (CW 20: 300)

Comedy attains, romance contains; comedy drives toward an erotic or dialectical telos, romance revolves around it in the circular quest shape. Comedy is primarily dramatic, romance narrative. The *Purgatorio* is archetypal comedy, *Paradiso* archetypal romance. (CW 9: 244)

**Communism and Capitalism.** Communism began by regarding itself as an evolution out of capitalism; but no capitalist country evolved into Communism; Communism was established in a pre-industrial country and the two systems simply entered an adversarial relationship. The situation repeated that of the sixteenth century, where the Reformers assumed that they represented an evolution of the Catholic Church into a higher form; but no body of the Catholic Church in any country accepted this, and again a mere adversarial relationship grew up. (CW 6: 471)

**Community.** The individual grows out of the community: an infallible communion, whether Christian or Moslem or the Holy Communist Church of China, keeps human beings in an embryonic state. The metaphors of flock and sheepfold are very dangerous. What is the *continuous* function of the church? What chance has one to develop an individual religious consciousness if the communal body isn’t there? (CW 6: 697)

Milton insists that freedom is a release of energy, also that the individual as such has no energy, though he may be able to tap the source of it. Idolatry to him was closely linked with the absolutizing of social communities, the incarnations of which were the bishop in the church, the king in the state & the censor in the symposium. It appears that communities are on four levels: an Ulro or subjective community of involuntary participation through birth, mainly of the family & symbolized by father & mother; a Generation objective community of voluntary participation through choice, mainly of the party & symbolized by the comrade; a Beulah symposium community of affinity, mainly of the university & symbolized by the fellow, & an Eden community of supervoluntary incorporation of one divine & human body & symbolized by the (communion of) saints.

(CW 8: 197–8)

**Concealing Personal Vices.** One of the most important of literary virtues consists in the art of concealing an author’s personal vices. For the revelation of vice is direct address, & so boring. I don’t mind the erotic fantasies in William Morris’ romances, but the masochistic fantasies of Swinburne bore me & bother me, in that order, because Swinburne is just jerking off. However, lechery is, next to gluttony, the easiest vice to conceal. The hardest one, I think, is envy. Wyndham Lewis bores me because his motive for writing is envious. Perhaps it isn’t concealment but sublimation that’s the essential. Pope doesn’t conceal spite, for instance. (CW 23: 296)

**Concern.** Concern may be primary or secondary. Primary is the preference of life to death, happiness to misery, freedom to slavery, the concern implanted by our genetic codes or whatever. Secondary is concern for order, stability, a clear source of authority and leadership, the anxiety of a privileged class to protect its privileges, of the underprivileged to get along as best they can in such a set-up. Secondary concern produces hierarchies, limited orders, unity, comprehensiveness, philosophical systems, specula (only the mirror-metaphor in speculation and reflection indicates the Narcissus origin). It also produces counter-concerns like the cosmos of revolt. The twentieth century is the time when, because of things like nuclear bombs and the pollution of the environment, secondary concerns are rapidly breaking up and primary concern is moving into the foreground. We need more flexible thought structures to live in such an age. (CW 6: 430)

**Confiscated Gods.**The doctrine that if we have one God we can’t possibly have many gods is a construct of the finite human mind, and God probably regards it as horseshit. Sooner or later God must refund us our confiscated gods. Including the divine essence in each of us. (CW 6: 615)

**Consciousness.** Metaphors are not attempts to force identity through overstrained analogies that leave out everything important. They are verbal energy-currents carrying out the first act of consciousness, trying to overcome the gap between subject and object. Creation wasn’t necessarily made for the sake of human consciousness, but consciousness is the human response to creation. (CW 6: 426)

Not much interest in reviving gods or nature-spirits today: rather a feeling of a common consciousness engaged with total nature. Notion of common consciousness in all the serious religions and the scientists too—Schrodinger. Antithesis between religious and secular doesn’t work any more, if it ever did. All religious phenomena have a secular aspect, and vice versa. (CW 6: 545)

The consciousness doesn’t know what the hell goes on in the body: its function is to escape from the body, hence the cooperating essence notion. Or it can control its own version of the body, as in yoga. (CW 13: 184)

**Consistency.** I’ve said that the original writer continues convention at a deeper level: this is an application of the general principle of shallow & deep consistency. Shallow consistency is continuity, habit, doing what one has always done. At certain points a deeper consistency emerges which is discontinuous with the shallow repetitions of habit. Proust remarks that the actions which most deeply reveal people’s character are often overlooked by others as though they were hallucinations. (CW 9: 254)

**Containing Form.** Science begins in “sense” but ends as a construct: the world as it looks to human beings (*scientia*).Many things not really seen till seen aesthetically; hence seeing “beauty in” things is a function of art, if it expands beyond the conventionalizing of beauty.If art is conventional new art remakes old, & so is also an act of criticism.You cannot distinguish art from science by the mental processes involved, but only by the containing form of the subject. (Notebook 9)

**Continuity.** Burke’s continuity of dead, living and unborn does correspond to the facts of human life: historical continuity is the first datum of existence. Hence no poet can express himself as an individual: he has to attach himself to the continuity of a tradition, and his “Muse” acts like an angel, an Other who is also himself. Education, similarly, moves from the student studying under a master to a common vision of the subject being studied, the symposium-world that unites them on equal terms. (CW 6: 658)

The foreground antithesis, a very minor one, is the contrast represented by McLuhan & myself. I hold to the continuous, encyclopedic, linear-narrative Christian structure, and, of course, “discontinuous” is very much an in-word at present. There is no such thing as a discontinuous poem, though there are poems, like Pound’s *Cantos*, that try to force the reader to establish the continuity of what he’s reading, instead of providing it for him ready-made. (CW 9: 232)

**Continuum of Identity.** Education is, or has something to do with, a process of transferring the continuum of identity from the ego and the memory to the individual and the imagination. In the process memory becomes practice memory or habit. (CW 9: 28)

**Convention.** One of the central elements of convention is that it is always pretending not to be convention. You take the rhetoricians, in Shakespeare’s time, for example. The one thing that they are almost certain to say is that “I am a plain, blunt man and I don’t know anything about rhetoric.” And in the sixteenth century with Petrarchan love-poem writers, the most conventional thing they can say is: “all other poets are conventional, they got their emotions out of books but I’m getting mine out of my own real experience.” The abandoning of conceptions of craftsmanship is conforming to another kind of convention. In Dickens you have a convention of a carefully contrived plot, which keeps the readers guessing as to how the story is going to turn out. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

A convention may be a theme, like the cruel mistress; it may be a custom, like the 14 lines of a sonnet; when it’s big enough to enclose the whole project, it’s a genre. A convention is an aspect of a poem’s identity, what makes it recognizable as, first, a poem, second a poem of a particular time & place. As such, it’s the element of welcome or invitation to read. Sometimes, as with detective story addicts, one reads partly for the convention—well, you always do, but my old point about liking or disliking the convention itself is relevant. (CW 5: 76)

**Conversion.** Conversion is imperialism, reconciliation at the price of subjection. If a Jew tells me he can’t accept Jesus as the Messiah, there isn’t, in these days, any question of conversion on either side, merely a realization that we both see the same things from different points of view: in short, interpenetration. (CW 6: 650)

**Copulation.** Ezra Pound says there are two kinds of people, those who think copulation good for the crops and those who think it bad for the crops. There’s an ambivalence here that goes very deep. Sympathetic magic of course suggests the fuck for luck formula; but there’s also a persistent feeling about the magic of virginity: vestal virgins have to preserve their chastity or there’s a drought. (CW 13: 279)

**Cosmetic Cosmos.** A sense of humor, like a sense of beauty, is a part of reality, and belongs to the cosmetic cosmos: its context is neither subjective nor objective, because it’s communicable. (CW 5: 227)

**Cosmic Primal Scene.** My conception of displacement is closely related to the creation myth of heaven & earth as locked in copulation, a cosmic primal scene, until a force, usually the Son-Word, pulls them apart. Every creation myth is some form of big bang theory: the something-nothing explodes into manifestation or phenomenal existence. Boehme too. (CW 5: 57–8)

**Cosmology.** Literature is an art; the context of the art, the cosmology, is its code. This was what was assumed to be true of music in the 16th c. The cosmology in turn is the thematic stasis of the myth, and the myth is *the* story in which all of the others find their genesis & telos. (CW 5: 11)

Cosmology is the effort to create a universe of the imagination: it is, as Valery says, a literary art, and attempts to provide a context for literature. In the age of authority and hierarchy, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the cosmology fitted the general scientific and philosophical view of the world:

when the scientific world-picture blew apart the cosmology became more and more confined to literature. (CW 6: 434–5)

**Crane, R.S.** I went over to hear Crane’s paper on the history of ideas, but instead of staying for the discussion after tea I went off and had three Martinis. Crane’s paper was intelligible enough, but its main thesis, that in literature we study the history of ideas in order to see what writers do with their ideas in works of literature, didn’t strike me as any blockbuster bomb. But of course I never did pay so much attention to the Lovejoy people anyway. Also his treatment of Fielding, his example, struck me as curious: he compared his moral views with the illustration of them in the novels. Well, hell, I don’t think Fielding’s a very interesting moralist: the interesting ideas in him are social ones. When he says great men are nuisances and good men “low,” he’s reflecting the bourgeois revolution of his time, and his Parson Supple shows the relations of church to squirearchy in the 18th century. I wish people weren’t so frightened of Marxism that they unconsciously eliminate material factors from their thinking. I kept going to sleep & waking up again throughout the paper: my mind was still on universal symbols. I find it difficult to switch my attention from a big public occasion anyway, and the difficulty is greater when the occasion involves the thing I’m thinking about all the time in any case. (CW 8: 519–20)

**Crazy Oedipus.** Ideological man cannot go behind the fall and original man, hence he turns out to be a crazy Oedipus killing his father (the source of his life, whether we call it God or not) and fucking his mother (Nature) until the supply of air and water gives out. (CW 6: 544)

**Created Reality.** Art, love & religion are areas in which reality is achieved or created rather than recognized.Religious people are often suspicious of the arts, because they’re afraid the arts create a specialized form of idolatry, a group of what is to be recognized as super-realities.But when we realize that art is designed to transfer a power of vision, & belongs in education, the either-or deadlock disappears. (“Notes on the Massey Lectures”)

**Creation.** I used to say that creation was the revelation of the objective order to a conscious subject, and didn’t exist, as creation, before human consciousness. Not intended as a history of how nature came into being. To say God made the world *ex nihilo* is the Critique of Pure Reason answer: the world is pure phenomenon, epiphany or manifestation with nothing for its inner substance, a conception more Buddhist than Biblical—that doesn’t make it wrong, but I’m looking for the Genesis meaning. “Out of matter” isn’t even grammatical, if I’m right in thinking that matter is energy brought down to the point at which we can live with it. (Perhaps at death the spirit enters a world of higher energy, a tachyonic world where e=mc2 would no longer hold.) (CW 5: 249)

Creation and fall are positive and negative aspects of the same vision. One is of the brave new world, ordered (spiral mountain) and beautiful (Eros ladder). The other is of “thrownness,” of alienation from this world, where all creation is recreation, the recovery of something lost. These two visions recur in Jacob’s dream of the ladder & his fight with the river-god that crippled him. (CW 5: 299)

My original hunch, that because Job is not a participant in the creation he can be delivered from it, was sound, I think. But he’s a participant in the new creation that’s established in chapter 42. The old creation was only God: it climaxed and ended with the creation of a conscious being who could repeat the Sabbath vision. The new creation must have man, because God wants it that way. (CW 5: 360)

To create is to identify the creature, & to identify is to extrude, to cut it away from its surroundings. Hence the creature is “fallen” or separated in the act of creation. Creation means a struggle with the unidentified surroundings, hence the idea of creation suggests wrath, the separation of light & darkness, in which the creature, separated equally from both light & darkness, is partly under the wrath. In the instant of incarnation, a kenosis [emptying] took place in which the Nomos-God vanished and the Father-Son relationship appeared. (This is my version of the “God is dead” notion). In the instant in which Christ was preserved from death the Thanatos world disappeared & the Son-Spirit relation took its place. The Holy Spirit *in time*, therefore, is the reborn elder brother, the Lucifer brought up from the depths. (CW 9: 265)

To create is to transform consciousness, or identity as, into identity with. Creation is thus a raid into the world of the dark, part of a conquest, and its goal is total identity. Milton was right: creation is de Deo, & the ex nihilo business is a pseudo-issue. Because the idea of divine creation is projected from human creation, that tohu-wa-bohu [without form, and void] co-eternal principle just won’t go away. Anyway, to create is to identify with the creature: God is Man, Blake says, because he is the creator of Man, not because he is so perceived by man. Hence creation is the (voluntary) fall of God into death. (CW 9: 273)

Creation can never be a conception digestible by science, for it is not an event or a datum, or still less a verifiable fact, and it has outlived whatever use it had as a hypothesis. It is a different way of looking at the order of nature, which the scientist sees only as an order. To think of light as created is to think of it as potentially lovable, its real source the Word that produces it. Thus the Christian idea of Creation turns out to be the same thing as the Eastern doctrine of Maya: the created world is not reality but manifestation, a fact that doesn’t make it “unreal,” of course. The same ambiguity is in Job’s Leviathan, which means both creation and chaos. It looks as though I can hardly avoid a climax in the triumph of hypothesis over thesis, when the conceivable becomes our closest approach to the existent. That is getting increasingly clear as the goal of my speculations about Christianity, as it has always been my understanding of such things as the Lankavatara Sutra. (CW 8: 497–8)

**Creation and Enslavement.** What we are faced with in our own time, I think––this world of the 1960s––is a kind of social protest, which is often called a radical one, because all protests are usually thought of as radical, but which is actually a deeply conservative protest and which has very many points in common with this humanist attitude. This is the protest against the tendency in mankind expressed by the romance written by Shelley’s wife, Mary Shelley, when she was a girl of eighteen, the famous romance of *Frankenstein*, which indicates how man has a tendency to enslave himself to what he creates. That is, man invents the wheel and he uses the wheel to spin garments and propel vehicles, but before long he is talking about a wheel of fate or a wheel of fortune, in other words, making one of his own inventions a symbol for something alienating, something he regards as dominating his life. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**Creation 1 and 2.** The two accounts of creation in the Bible provide us with a spectacular creation, featuring dividing and opposition, transcendental in reference, and an immanent one, featuring the permeation of life & moisture into death & dryness. (CW 5: 25)

**Creation, Priestly Account.** The Priestly account of Creation [Genesis 1] stresses division and discrimination: land from sea, light from darkness. In short, it’s a vision of *natura naturata*, the kernel of the conception of nature as a structure or system. (CW 5: 104)

The creation story in Genesis was never intended to describe the origin of the order of nature. If it ever had been, one would expect it to have been a little cleverer, and not have God creating the trees before he created the sun. (CW 6: 484)

**Creative Paranoia.** I suppose *The Sacred Fount* really deals with the idea I got from Pynchon: that art is a form of creative paranoia, which counteracts the real paranoia that starts wars and buggers nature. Jean Blackall links it with Ludwig of Bavaria, who had two qualities in common with Hitler: an admiration for Wagner and a paranoid interest in architecture. The latter of course is part of the Ozymandias mentality of all tyrants—the Tower of Babel complex—and Wagner is the clearest example in culture of art as harnessed paranoia. The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* is “crazy,” as the woman says, but he’s a searching parody of the creative process. (CW 5:124)

**Creative Process.** I think a sizeable part of my next job has to do with a Bergonian diagram of the creative process. At the bottom is dream, the shaping of experience into wish-fulfilment patterns. Below it are the aberrations of neurosis, the attempts to impose these directly on experience. By dream I mean, as I meant in *Anatomy of Criticism*, the entire conflict of wish & reality. Above dream the diagram divides. One side is waking life & work; the other ritual & play. Above work is science, the study of the world as it is; above play is magic, which includes some aspects of art. The two sides combine in art proper, the transformation of the world as it is into the world man wants to live in. Above art is religion, for those who believe it to be existential & substantial. Bugs in this, naturally; but the general outline has something. (CW 23: 284)

**Creative Response.** Such words as “classic” or “masterpiece” cannot refer to any inherent or structural qualities. They refer to a certain locus of social acceptance, and this acceptance is a loose amalgam of the critical and the popular, the traditional and the contemporary. Perhaps the nearest one can get to an internal criterion would be the possibility of recreation by the reader. But once this is understood, we should understand too that there is no basis to the conventional view that criticism is second-hand creation. A creative act of response is essential to allow the creative work to exist. Until that, the greatest work of literature is still wrapped in eternal silence far from enemies.

**Creative Writing.** This may be a crazy notion, or it may be one of my central intuitions coming to a head. I’ve always wanted to write something in the conventionally “creative” modes towards the end of my life. I’ve thought most frequently of a book of brief essays or meditations, perhaps a century of meditations like Traherne’s, though naturally of a very different kind. I’ve often said too (to myself) that a book like Anatole France’s *Jardin d’Epicure* would be ideal in format and general conception for me, except that I’d want my book to display a less commonplace mind than his was. (CW 25: 155–6)

**Creativity.** Of all mistakes founded on premature value-judgements & bad generic classification, one of the most inept is the attribution of creativity to the genre itself. Thus it is widely assumed that anyone who produces poems or fiction is “creative,” though he may never have written a creative line in his life, & that anyone who produces “non-fiction,” including criticism, is “noncreative,” though his verbal structures may be far profounder in their implications. (CW 23: 265)

**Credulity.** I have a strong will to credulity, all right, & know that it is capable of misleading me, but when I read about miracles of saints or sorcerers where I have no desire to believe, what I feel is that I have no compulsion to adopt a crustacean attitude of dogmatic skepticism. (CW 15: 39)

**Crime and Sin.** We never get myth free of anxiety, and therefore of ideology. That’s why the legal metaphor of trial and judgment runs right through the Bible from beginning to end. Of course there’s the crucial distinction between crime and sin: that’s part of the argument of Job, who’s innocent of crime but can hardly be sinless. Similarly, Jesus was without crime, though considered the worst of criminals by society. But he can’t have been sinless: that’s a sterile conception. You can’t live in the devil’s world without making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. Even in Job the presence of Satan in God’s court is tolerable. If Jesus were sinless he’d have been discarnate. The Crucifixion convicts the entire world of sin, but Christ takes responsibility for the sin. The Virgin Mary can’t have been sinless in that context either: that, I gather, is why St. Thomas Aquinas denied the Immaculate Conception. (CW 5: 93–4)

**Critical Determinisms.** I have occasionally played around with the idea that all determinisms are elements in a manifold criticism. Thus every literary work would have its sexual, “Freudian,” erotic, or fetishistic aspect; also a cultural or class “Marxist” aspect; also a historical “Spengler” aspect, and perhaps a primitive or Frazerian aspect. The first two, the green & the red, the conjunction of Venus & Mars, seem to me particularly obvious. They’re both evolutionary; the other two are regressive. (CW 9: 12–13)

**Critical Method.** I don’t think my critical method is archetypal at all: I recognize the existence & importance of archetypes, but if I have a method, it would be better described as epiphanic. I look over a writer’s work to see what shape its theme has, and then use the most revealing features of it to communicate that shape to the reader. As a method, it’s a higher organization of commentary, because its basis is archetypal framework rather than allegory. (CW 9: 52)

**Criticism.** Criticism, which since Kant has been the central humanistic activity other than creation, is still full of quacks, mainly because people don’t understand the kind of damage that can be done by incompetence in this field. It’s still judged by the standards of creativity, where nothing is wrong or incompetent in itself. Hence the number of different schools and the heresy-hunting, which, like similar phenomena in religion, is a clear indication that nobody really knows what he’s talking about. What I’m working toward is a conception of criticism which makes it (a) a social science (b) will show that the existing social sciences, besides being that, are also the applied humanities (c) will be therapeutically effective by making people more aware of their own mythological conditioning. It is essentially a failure in criticism that makes people fall a prey to obsessional social mythologies like those of Hitler and Stalin. I have to be careful about saying this, of course, because it sounds so much like just another sales pitch. (CW 13: 309–10).

**Criticism and Direct Experience.** The difference between criticism & direct experience is that the former is an incessant practice repetition directed toward possession. The latter avoids repetition: as an experience, one doesn’t want two performances of *King Lear* in the same day: granted a superlative performance, hardly two in the same year. Criticism purges experience of associative elements––here’s where my “golden rain” story [“Interpreter’s Parlour” (CW 25: 84–6)] goes. (Notebook 13)

**Criticism as System.** All criticism of me of the Kermode type, based on the fallacy of a system where things have to fit, is the exact opposite of what I’m talking about: a system of that kind would he a hierarchy, and we’ve outgrown hierarchies even if we keep on sticking ourselves with them for centuries more. Physically, history moves towards the resurrection of the body; spiritually, it moves toward Joachim of Floris’s ideal of an age of the Spirit. (CW 6: 640)

**Critics A through H.** There is really no such thing as a wrong critical attitude. Take any of the big names at random, say, Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley. Critic A, for instance, is an individualist and hero worshipper who admires the strength and independence of Milton and Shelley, and resents the lack of a strong personality in Shakespeare. Critic B is a tricky sprite who soars off into the blue with Shakespeare and Shelley and talks about the leaden feet and crabbed Puritanism of Milton. Critic C is a classicist and a bit of a pedant with a strong sense of form who feels safe with Shakespeare and Milton and regards Shelley as a precariously balanced epiphyle. Critic D says the English have no feeling for poetry and have never produced any poet, except, by some miracle, Shakespeare. (Usually a German commentator who has never read anything in English literature except Hamlet and King Lear in translation.) Critic E considers Shakespeare and Shelley as pagans, not to be mentioned with the lofty and austere Milton. Critic F has a linear theory of poetry which makes Shakespeare and Milton hopelessly antiquated, no poetry written before the development of modern ideas of which Shelley may be taken as the starting point being readable. Critic G views the contemporary field with alarm and advises a return to the standards of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley. Critic H is sure that only by breaking completely away from the traditions which can only hinder and cripple us, can we do anything new or original in poetry––we must forget about Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley and trust the pleasant future. These, you say, all cancel out and give nothing. By no means. They give you the definite impression that there must be something very extraordinary about Shakespeare, Milton and Shelley. And not being a critic, but a lover of poetry, you investigate and find that your suspicions are correct. (“1932 Notebook,” 13 September)

**A Crucifixion.** We stumbled over another very interesting church in the same town called St. Etienne. There’s one thing in it that’s been giving me nightmares. Just as we were going out of the church, I saw a big wooden statue of a crucifixion. It caught my eye because that’s a very bad and very rare medium for a crucifixion, and as I looked at it, it got worse: the lines were all out and the face was awful and everything was all wrong, but wrong in a curiously subtle and direct way. Finally we got a book on the church and found it represented a legend of a Christian betrothed to a pagan who prayed to the Virgin to make her ugly, and woke up the next morning with a beard. Her father was furious and had her crucified. It’s one of the most wilfully grotesque things I’ve ever seen. (CW 2: 837)

**Cuddling.** Charles Williams has started me thinking about the infantilism of the modern

“intellectual.” The introverted intellectual wants his mamma, he chooses a sedentary occupation so he can cuddle himself, & he’s intelligent enough to know how pervasive the desire to be cuddled is.

He’s full of fantasies of being neglected or snubbed, & so is liable to a chronic childish irritation. Hence, by contrast, a thirst for a genuine cuddle, a happy serenity of love that is an approximation to the virtues of a mother. In *The Greater Trumps* this mother-figure is a virgin mother named appropriately Sibyl. The old man, the father to be put off, is her brother, & there’s a daughter who’s supposed to be a Beatrice & talks like little Nell going under ether. I see this mixture of childish irritability & a childish desire for the sort of virtue that would please a mother in myself, but I also see it in Huxley, in C.S. Lewis, & it’s not unknown even to Bernard Shaw, though he has a clearer idea of what it is. I’m glad to have got this clear, as it indicates that for myself, while I have to avoid the selfishness & irritability, still the please-mamma type of goodness is a dead end. (CW 8: 171–2)

**Cultivating an Accent.** A cousin of Helen’s living in Forest dropped in. She has a voice like a kitchen stove falling downstairs. I can’t understand the superstitious & barbaric notion in this country that it’s sissified to cultivate an accent. The idea that correct & well-modulated speech is a fundamental cornerstone of culture doesn’t occur to my students, many of whom make noises like the cry of the great bronze grackle in the mating season. As it isn’t part of one’s education, I can’t teach it: I’m just the best friend who won’t tell them. The Yankee method of talking through the nowse and hawnking like a fahghowrrn is very widespread; some whine like flying shells, some mutter like priests, some chew & gurgle like cement mixers. Ten minutes of frank talking to this girl and I could raise her several notches in the scale of culture: she’s a bright kid and can take things on. (CW 8: 38)

**Cultural Color Codes.** I have always found it convenient to illustrate historical vistas in colours, and I usually think of Western culture, with its continually lowering vital force and advancing maturity, as a descending spectrum. The gorgeous fierce terror of violet is in the Romanesque; deep mystical indigo ecstasy in the great Catholic period; cold blue abstraction in late scholasticism; lush and often rank naturalism of green in the Renaissance; yellow, with its pomp and its blinding illuminating intensity is in the logic and state-form of the baroque; orange, the colour of gold, for the romantic-positivistic era; and red, the colour of sex, irritation, and restlessness, for our own day. If we are not afraid of symbolism, we may find it a help to visualize the rise of romanticism as an introduction of a red colour scheme into culture. Red is the colour of sexuality, as any animal knows, and is,consequently, the great time-colour which underlies all the rest and which eventually succeeds them, the other two primary colours being both abstractions into space, the one religious and mystical, the other religious and logical. (CW 3: 33)

**Cultural Decentralization.** I have often said that our age is one of contrasting movements: a movement from nationalism to imperialism, huge federated states forming a world-wide Holy Alliance, gigantic cartels and internationalized business in banks, trusts & merged industries is what we are in for politically and economically as the world begins to establish a digestive system. But for expert craftsmanship in wines, glass, linen and all the creative arts, we need a corresponding decentralization. (CW 15: 5)

When we look at political and economic developments in space, we see that they tend to grow and build up bigger units, centralize into empires or aggregations of countries like the Common Market in Europe. Culture, on the other hand, tends to decentralize and articulate smaller and smaller units. Two diseases, separatism and imperialism, result from confusing these two processes: separatism hitches a political fascism or what not to a genuine cultural development; imperialism develops a pompous and anonymous art when it tries to hitch culture. (CW 15: 320)

**Cultural Growth.** Movements allied with the Reformation, the Renaissance, the rise of capitalism, the middle class and a money economy, inventions and discoveries, usually treated by historians of the Reformation in their introductory chapters, show clearly enough that the birth of Protestantism is inseparable from its general cultural *Urgrund*, which we can hardly define, but can only describe, like a colour. Whether we call it the birth of the modern age, or simply an awakening, it is a subtle, pervasive, and decisive change. The growth of a culture is analogous to the development of an individual, with this difference: that in the individual maturity brings with it a steady linear growth and perfecting of intellect, creative ability, and moral responsibility, while in the culture, which is the work of mature men in every age, those values are preserved, maturity being reflected only in the growth of self-conscious awareness in space and time. Art, systematic philosophy, and ethical ideals cannot advance or improve, but history and science do. It is impossible to improve on Aquinas or Shakespeare, but it is possible to supplement Froissart and the Bacons. The general principle of this contrast is that religion, in the cultural sense, the religion in which philosophy and art are embodied, is an organic growth; while the social order, in which history and science are compounded, is a gradual advance. (CW 3: 259)

**Cultural Inheritance.** Andre Malraux has shown how museums & reproductions of music have created a total body of cultural inheritance. The technological achievements which made this possible were started in literature with the printing press, & it’s significant that the first *use* of the printing press was to codify the cultural inheritance of the past—the essence of the movement we call humanism. In the process of criticism past works of art don’t just lose their original function: part of the activity of criticism is in the *recovery of function*. The recovered function may be unrecognizably different from the original function, but it will be there. You can’t have humanism without the idea of Renaissance or rebirth: a gigantic *anagnorisis* or Kierkegaardian *repetition* of past culture. (CW 23: 132)

**Cultural Periods.** In Western culture there have been four easily identifiable periods: the age of romance & epiphany (medieval); the age of the archetypal mimetic, the epic & drama (Renaissance to Baroque); the age of the realistic mimetic, chiefly the novel (18th & 19th cs.) and the age of the ironic. The lyric is first “naive” in Schiller’s sense, largely a paean, then conventionally elegiac or idyllic (courtly love & pastoral), then descriptively (what it describes is the poet’s emotion) sorrowful or joyous, then the self-contained riddle-lyric of *symbolisme* that is begotten in irony. (CW 23: 164)

**Culture as Reservoir of Belief.** One of the functions of culture, including mythology, is to act as a kind of reservoir for belief. Any belief not reflected in behavior is mere acceptance, like acceptance of something taught in a science on trusts but doesn’t know. An intense conservatism in religion ensures that expressions of belief take the same verbal form even when they’ve gone back into the reservoir & returned with a completely new content. (Notebook 13)

**Culture on the Prairie.** One would think that people living so close to nature and the soil would have a better idea of the difference between the simple and the inane, whether in music, art, literature, education, amusement or morals. The artificial culture of the city has its faults, but what these wretched farmers use for culture is more false and hollow than the most glittering and vacuous display of sophistication, as it does not even imitate anything that is good. . . . And yet, I don’t despise the people, I love and respect them. “Indifferent honest” is not good enough. I am very grateful for the way in which they have helped me out and been good to me time and again. I admire the cheerful, quiet, uncomplaining way they get through their long and hard routine. I like the way they joke about the grasshoppers, and then silently set their shoulders to fight them. No, there’s nothing wrong with the people themselves, the raw material. What is so damnably evil are all these things foisted upon them which they are deceived into thinking good: trash for the arts, shibboleths and fetishes for religion. And it’s precisely here that I’m helpless. (CW 1: 240–1)

**Cummings, E.E.**Margaret Avison sent me a play of E.E. Cummings called *Him*. I want to read plays & get ideas from them, but I didn’t get much out of this one—very suggestive, but I’m sure it really doesn’t work out, & it ought to. Too much Pirandello, maybe, & certainly too much 1927 smarty-pants. That’s its date. Everything concerned with the soul of the artist is evidently dead serious, & everything else is brilliantly written but fantastic. The main characters, labelled Him & Me, seem to be indwelling genius & ego respectively, & there’s a lot of by-play about masks & personae: the room they sit in has four walls, the audience one invisible, & of course there’s a mirror on that wall which is sometimes the other self & sometimes the audience itself—but I’m certain he’s just playing around. It’s so damned easy once you get going on these masque & mime paradoxes. It ends in a circus & a barker announcing a series of freaks ending with one called Ananke who turns out to be the woman called Me. There’s also a You, naturally, but he doesn’t get anywhere. I’ll have to look at it again, however, as I haven’t yet got the central principle of the mime. (CW 8: 319–20)

**Curiosity of God.** Some verses in the Bible seem designed to drive the attentive reader out of his mind. One is Genesis 2:19, where God brings beasts & birds to the “adam” “to see what he would call them.” Why should curiosity about such a thing be ascribed to God?(CW 5: 83)

**Current of Energy.** Myth says “this happens,” which unites “this may or may not have happened” and “this probably didn’t happen, at least in exactly this way.” Similarly, metaphor says “A is B” when any fool can see that A is not B. It makes an assertion, but the suppressed denial speaks louder than the assertion does. What it does is release a current of energy between the personal and natural worlds, and the central metaphor is the god. (CW 6: 511)

Metaphor typically identifies personality with natural object, hence god the central metaphor (i.e., polytheistic gods). Socially postulated metaphor, like totem animals in totemic societies. Opens up a channel or current of energy between human and natural worlds. Gods aren’t just projections: they’re evocations of the powers of nature as well. Ecstatic metaphors (Heidegger). Titanic will to identify in palaeolithic paintings. Primitive use of music also to merge consciousness (with Dionysus or whatever). (CW 6:593)

**Czerny.** I was looking over some of Howard’s (my brother’s) music and discovered Czerny’s op. 740 . . . . The discovery is little short of providential, as it is exactly what I need at present. Czerny I always thought a unique character. He had no more creative originality or inspiration than a manure spreader, but he is immortal simply because he came along when the pianoforte was developing and realized so clearly what fun it is to play one. I have not quite decided what to do first in Bach—probably the Prelude & Fugue in B flat from the second book of what must be by now a decidedly ill-tempered clavichord. (Letter to Helen Kemp, 31 May 1932; CW 1:11–12)

D

**Dance.** The rhythmic force of music is incarnated and symbolized in the dance. Hence, men like Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, were all dance composers. The suite or collection of dances in one key was a standard art form, and later, when the sonata sublimated the dance rhythm of the suite into a stricter form, the minuet, in many ways *the* typical dance, was very often retained. With romanticism the dance was overthrown, and idealized dance replaced it—the dance in which the rhythmic propulsion is subordinated and does not stand out in its pure energy. Weber’s *Invitation to the Dance* starts the attack on the waltz. With Beethoven, and generally from him onward, the minuet is replaced by the scherzo. Scherzo means joke, and the Beethoven scherzi are definitely parodies of the minuet—they retain the rhythm but burlesque the spirit by rushing the speed and thumping the accents. From romanticism on the popular dances—polka, schottische, and so on—drop out of music. (CW 3: 55)

**Dante’s Commedia.** I’ve always felt that for all the Trinitarian symbolism there were really four planes in the *Commedia*: the hell, purgatory and heaven of the three cantiche, and an intermediate world that stretches from the beginning of the sphere of fire at the colloquy with Arnaut Daniel in *Purgatorio* 26 and ends with the vision of Rahab at the limit of earth’s shadow in the sphere of Venus at *Paradiso* 9. This may not work out or be important if it does. (CW 6: 721)

I felt I rather wasted the day—I’m not implying that anybody wasted it except me, of course—and consoled myself by starting to read the *Inferno* for the fourth time, with the general idea of really getting a grip on Dante. I think I may, too: I noticed how the encounter with the three beasts indicates Dante’s break with the conventional epic structure. (They represent, by the way, Milton’s chaos, sin & death.) He’s in the position of a knight-errant ready to encounter the monster, but he has to dodge the monster & go a roundabout way. What he does, of course, is enter the belly of Leviathan. The fact that the agent of his redemption is Virgil with his *belle stile* makes the identification of the “hero” & the poet complete. He & Milton are thus progressive in relation to the dialectic of the epic: Spenser & the Renaissance Italians, in going back to the Christian worthy, were regressive. (CW 8: 228)

I hate the *Inferno*, because Dante so obviously believed, not only in a substantial & objective region of torture that never ends, but in all the legal quibbles that entrap divine “love” into sending people there, such as failure to have been baptized. It’s too easy to work out the imaginative aspect of it, the symbolic reasons why Virgil can’t be saved & a perfunctory Christian can be. One still remains stupefied by the perversity of the human mind. Dante saw everything in hell except the fact that to create an imaginative hell and then suggest that it’s real is an act of intellectual treachery to the God in man lower than that of Judas, who may conceivably have acted from better motives. I can’t help feeling that there *is* some development in literature, for all I say to the contrary. George Orwell’s *1984* presents a real hell, not just one we happen to be more scared of, & his book is morally an infinitely better book than the *Inferno*. Surely this moral superiority has some relevance to critical standards. (CW 8: 229)

**Darwinism.** I don’t question the general accuracy of the Darwinian picture of evolution, though there are some things that puzzle me about the gradualism, such as the evolution of the warmblooded animal. Most people, I imagine, feel that something central in the exuberance & beauty of nature isn’t covered by the explanation. The other extreme, that it was all designed for man’s sake, is, as I said, sick: yet that must represent some kind of truth in some other context. Otherwise, Voltaire’s *Micromegas* is right & Blake wrong. Of course, that could conceivably be true; but I think Voltaire is right only from the ego’s perspective. (CW 13: 328)

**Davies, Sir John.** One of the most beautiful poems in English literature about the harmony of the spheres is *Orchestra*, by the Elizabethan poet Sir John Davies. This poem presents the whole movement of nature as a co-ordinated dance, with everything from the remotest stars to the lowest elements moving within a prescribed rhythm. It lies behind the vision of correspondence in the “Garlic and sapphires in the mud” passage in *BurntNorton*. Its relevance to us at the moment derives from the fact that it is presented as a love-song sung to Penelope by the leader among her suitors, Antinous. (CW 15: 222)

**Daydreaming.** Curious that memories of my childhood and adolescence are beginning to swarm into my mind at this time. I find myself doing the same daydreaming & rebuilding of my earlier life that I did last summer. I suppose it’s partly reaction to going away, but I’d better snap out of it once I get to work. It’s a good thing to know what you have done wrong, but a bad thing to take refuge in dreaming about an ideal life that didn’t happen. The Bible is certainly right when it says that the essential traitor in the soul is the accuser of sin. (CW 8: 399)

**The Dead.** Ancestor-worship is, I think, a projection of a much deeper impulse telling us that the dead have to be redeemed by the creative & charitable acts of the living. Christian doctrines are projections of the go-away-and-don’t-bother-us feeling. The dead can do all sorts of things for us, I imagine, but they’re not superior beings, or are in only one aspect. Another aspect lives on in time inside descendants (or others: the feeling that one *must* leave descendants is nonsense) and is beatified by them if they’re lucky. Reincarnation may occasionally be a form of this. My conception of typology broadens. It’s an element in the gospel stage (*nunc dimittis*). (CW 13: 345)

**Death.** *Below* death is self-annihilation or kenosis: the creating of a vacuum. This links with the end of Job & the institution of the Eucharist: nature abhors a vacuum, and a new society rushes in to fill it up. Percival in Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*. It’s the uncanniness of murder and the reintegration of society with new meanings. Death, in short, is followed by the death of death. In *Burnt Norton* the bottom of the descent (section 4) is followed by a conspectus of art in section 5. (CW 5: 320–1)

Certainly the anxiety about death is crucial in religion, but everyone seems to talk about this purely in individual terms. There’s also the social side, much of which—in war & the like—is based on the *dulce et decorum* stuff, a perversion of the genuine virtue of fortitude or courage, but the other side of the death-fear. (CW 13: 182)

Reid MacCallum died very suddenly & without any kind of warning yesterday. At a retreat with the Cowley Fathers in Bracebridge; lay down on his bed after Church, & evidently his heart just stopped beating. It’s a baffling business—I never realized before how strong the impulse is to find a satisfactory cause of death. Up to now I had always believed in a sort of “will to live” that made all organic deaths predictable. Now I seem to feel detached from life much more. The company of the dead increases in attractiveness as one goes on—*migravit ad plures* [he joined the majority]. I can’t think of any death closer to me personally: I keep thinking of all the ways I shall miss him, & it doesn’t take long to get quite a list. (CW 8: 198)

**Death and Dreams.** There are books on near-death experiences, but no return from actual death, so death is still a mystery, & the helpful spirits & tunnels with light at the end may be reconstructions—anyway, we can’t prove they aren’t. Same with dreams. All we know of dreams is what the waking mind remembers, & we can’t prove it’s not reconstructing. But if so, why reconstruct in a language so different from its own? Why do we never (apparently) dream in prose sentences or explicit statements? That’s connected, I think, with the mythological basis of the arts, and the fact that they can’t be *finally* reduced to ideological products. (You can’t “return from the dead” by definition: if you do you’re not dead, even if you’re as stinky as Lazarus.) (CW 5: 132–3)

I’ve been saying that art drives a wedge between being & not-being. Wonder if it also drives a wedge between life & death. By death I mean not simple extinction, but shadow-life, Hades, the world we perhaps enter in dreams. I’ve always felt that the literary dream-world was different from the Freudian repressed erotic. (CW 9: 5)

**Debate.**Went to Eric Havelock’s for a debating society executive meeting. Eric has taken quite a shine to me evidently & he certainly does work hard at debates. They varied between political and local-scandal subjects, suggesting “should formal parties be suspended?” I said it would be more interesting to say “should formal dresses be suspended?” They came to no conclusions but are planning a group of inter-year debates. (CW 8: 47)

**Deconstruction.** “Deconstruction” is actually the analyzing of the ideological content in order to get down to the underlying myth. Notice how stories with a strong narrative (mythical) interest are placed like buried treasure, told by someone else or discovered among old papers. (CW 6: 543)

My function as a critic right now is to reverse the whole “deconstruction” procedure, which leads eventually to the total extinction of both literature and criticism: people are naturally attracted first, and most, by the suicidal and destructive. One should turn around to a reconstruction, which is a matter of seeing a narrative in its undisplaced form as a single complex metaphor. (CW 20: 302)

**Deductive Method.** To write such a book as this [*Anatomy of Criticism*]by the methods of naive induction would be to project a survey of literature that could never be written in one man’s lifetime, could never be published, & would never be read. I have proceeded deductively, setting down the essential principles as axioms, & being rigorously selective with examples & illustrations. Even the mass of notes I have collected, infinitesimal as it is beside the mass that might well have been collected, would dismay the most sympathetic reader. (CW 23: 201)

**Defilement.** I think the business about those not defiled with women in Rev. 14:4, which sounds so damn silly, is a deliberate contrast to the watchers of Enoch, who were, allegedly, so defiled. Actually it still is silly, but the typological symmetry redeems the silliness. Why it should and how it can I don’t know, but it just does. (CW 5: 257)

**Defining Positions.** When we read the history of Western philosophy we pass Aristotle & Plotinus & then find ourselves suddenly reading about “Christian” philosophers. Where did these Christians come from? Well, from Jesus. And what was his philosophical position? Well, he didn’t exactly have one. Philosophy disappears into a vortex at that point. So with the Buddha here, who stigmatizes every attempt to make him define his “position” as “materialism,” who answers all Mahamati’s 108 questions by ignoring them all completely & then trying to make him grasp the mental attitude that will make answering them unnecessary. Buddha is not Mephistopheles, promising esoteric knowledge in exchange for your soul, & you can’t talk to him in those terms. The Buddha is very subtle in analyzing the unconscious motive of panic in the desire to understand. Knowledge grasped at out of fear & bewilderment of ignorance remains grasped knowledge, that is, imperfect & inadequate knowledge. (CW 13: 47)

**The Definitive Encyclopedia.** Christian humanism sees the eternal. Milton was neither Prince nor Courtier, but saw Christ as the king. Christ reveals himself in the Bible. The Bible as a definitive encyclopedia. Extending from it is all other learning. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Deifiers of the Void.** The deifiers of the void [Blavatsky, Boehme, Yeats, et al.] do get me down: they start with a conception so wonnerful there ain’t no words to describe it, & then they weasel & slither their way down through as many intermediate stages as possible before they approach with a shudder of distaste what’s at the bottom, which is our old friend Mother Nature. Cabbalists, Neoplatonics, Gnostics, the lot. This kind of stuff is naked mythology, uncorrected & unchecked by a genuinely creative impulse. (CW 15: 293)

**Deism.** If one translates the terms of conventional theologies into psychological terms, one gets some interesting results. Deism is psychologically the low water-mark of the religious life, with God sound asleep in the soul and the soul carrying on automatically. (CW 13: 3)

**Deifiers of the Void.** Whenever I read Blavatsky & other deifiers of the void, I realize that Christianity & the other great religions are, so to speak, phenomenological: they deal with the infinite only in terms of what the infinite has revealed. Speculative cosmology is not the basis of any religion. The Eckhart notion of a God *behind* God, a *deus absconditus* or “Denis his hid divinity” is all right, & is implicit in Christianity, which has never denied that God *in himself*is bigger than his revelation. (CW 13: 207)

**Democracy.** Assimilation to the “selfish gene” is the demonic aspect of food *and* sex *and* power, the aspects of gluttony and lechery and pride. The basis of democracy is an utterly unquestioning acceptance of original sin, the certainty that everyone will abuse power if he gets a chance. Also that every organization capable of exerting social pressure becomes over-organized and presses too hard. (CW 5: 379)

Man can’t live continuously in freedom, only in cycles of concern. But maybe that’s only that he hasn’t yet done so. Machiavelli, even Vico, regarded republics as unstable because up to their time there had never been a permanently successful democracy. But man has at least proved that he *can* live in a democracy. Even if he doesn’t much want to. (CW 13: 244)

**Demonic Archetypes.** Not that I’m likely to make the elementary blunder of assuming that the more archetypes there are in a book the more serious it is: I’ve expressed myself on that point a good many times. As I’ve said, the book with the greatest number of demonic images in it I ever read (the *Inferno* of course doesn’t count) was Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*. And I’ve certainly read better books than that. But still the images have to be noted, and noting them will eventually lead to some enlightenment about the shape of plot-structures. (CW 9: 343)

**Demonic Parodies.** Curious the number of times people have sold out to some silly cause because they couldn’t distinguish the demonic parody from the real thing. Heidegger has some remark in an essay about National Socialism being essentially the struggle against technology: he wanted so much to have peasants woo-wooing around the soil that he didn’t see that the Nazis were interested solely in demonic technology. Similarly with all the jerks who went in for Stalinism, and disregarded all the evidence that Stalinism was the demonic opposite of Marx’s goal. On a very small scale, McLuhan contrasted a linear abstract spatial perception with a sensory and immediate spatial perception, and then spent the next fifteen years gradually realizing that the contrast of reading and televisionwatching he’d got it identified with was its demonic opposite. (CW 13: 304)

**De Quincey, Thomas.** DeQuincey interests me because he moves from a world of consciousness to dream, in the opposite direction from displacement. He resembles Coleridge in planning huge projects & being too dependent on subjective insights for sequence to get them off the ground. (CW 5: 40)

**Derrida.** I wish I could see something more in Derrida than I do: the écriture business still seems to me to be crap; & the Derrida cult hysteria. But, of course, I must be wrong. I’ve said that the primacy of the spoken word is a literary, or rather a poetic convention: true, we say that a poet “writes” poetry, not that he speaks it, but still the meaning of the poem is being referred back to a repetition of an oral performance, like the score of music (reading here aural for oral). (CW 5: 26)

I still can’t grasp Derrida’s *écriture* concept. One does not understand the logos by hearing it, only by speaking it and listening to what one says. Writing, to me, is essentially this action of speaking and self-listening. Reading writing leads to saying “I see what you mean.” (CW 5: 45)

I still can’t make any sense out of Derrida’s assertion that metaphysics excludes writing. But of course his *écriture* includes everything that’s visualizable. I have studied the metaphorical diagrams underlying some metaphysical systems, and however shallow such study may be, it’s convinced me that *that* is the écriture basis of conceptual thought. In *The Great Code*] I showed that the same visualizable structure, more obviously metaphorical and imagistic, informs the Bible. Hence the crucial importance of its apocalyptic conclusion, the epopteia or vision of the Word illuminated by the Spirit “when every eye shall see him.” (CW 5: 49–50)

Criticism (Stanley Fish) is the act of community response to a text. I still think Derrida is making far too much of what’s really just a convention, that the written words are being spoken by somebody. Of course it would be true that in oral discourse the words are unborn, attached to an enclosing presence; but the text is the presence. I think the analogy of the convention that a poem is sung rather than spoken goes a long way. (CW 6: 543)

Derrida’s logocentric text is a straw man, or rather a cloth-bound man: the real logocentric text is the dogma, the *logos* that’s opaque, intolerant, and malignant. The *Logos* of John is a use of the word in a greatly extended and more flexible context (coinciding ultimately with mythos): the traditional translation “verbum,” which *logos* never means in Greek, expresses something of this. From Heraclitus to Philo *logos* means a rational principle within nature: the *logoi spermatikoi* of the Stoics are something else again, but they aren’t anything corresponding to the diffusion of spiritual energy, at once divine and human, that is meant by *logos* as *verbum*. (CW 6: 614)

**Descent Archetype.** Descent is the wonderful servant archetype, the collecting of forces, Satan rousing the devils, men raising Cain, or the city of Cain. The quest for Siddhis—one shouldn’t chase after them, but one certainly should collect them. (CW 5: 318)

**Detachment.** It is necessary for one deeply interested in books to acquire the detachment from one’s reading that ordinary people have who are not much interested in them: to have something of their massive indifference which is not blown about by every wind of doctrine. (CW 13: 20–1)

**Detective Stories.** A detective story whose solution is not fairly obvious by page 100 is not worth reading. (“1932 Notebook,” 7 July)

The reason why detectives in detective stories are so prenaturally intelligent is that they’re angels. Guardian angels of society; avenging angels for the murderer. Everyone is guilty of something, so all the major characters are suspects. (CW 5: 95)

. . . the detective story, which in turn is based on the primitive feeling that no one dies: one is always, so to speak, murdered by death. It takes a long time even to admit that it’s death: before that you look for a tangible murderer. When at last it’s recognized to be death, you get the ritual of “carrying out Death.” The expulsion of the scapegoat or death figure is an essential part of the Frazerian feast: that’s what really draws the survivors together in a new unity. I’ve not seen that clearly before. . . . it’s the thriller where hero or heroine fell into the clutches of the villain, who explains the plot up to then to them in the context of the vision of the whole-of-life-before-death convention. They’re nearly always threatened with death, escape by some wriggle or gimmick, & may acquire their knowledge of the conspiracy at the price of some wound or injury. Odin loses an eye: Christ rises with the five wounds. (CW 5: 312)

In my detective-story frenzies I’ve read Ngaio Marsh’s *Light Thickens*, her last book. Very so-so story, one of the large number set in a theatre, but the performance is of Macbeth, & she’s quite eloquent about the unique compulsiveness of that play. The reason I’ve given elsewhere: its convention is the Tudor mystique about the king as Messiah-figure, which lifts it out of the category of murder stories.

We say we can’t “believe in” this convention any more, which is irrelevant. We can’t believe in Dante’s hell either. Literature is a mass of fallacies from that point of view. The myth is the ideology presented as imaginative possibility. That should go with the gospel myth of the Passion holding the personal plus of the myth. I know what I mean: I haven’t found the words yet. (CW 5: 372)

I’ve been wondering why I have so strange an obsession about reading detective stories in bed at night: I seem to have to have them. I’ve wondered even if it were some kind of masturbation substitute. Well, it may be, but I note something similar in Yeats when he was working on the *Vision*. The detective story is written *backwards*, & belongs to creative & dream time, not to the ordinary beginning-to-end, cause-to-effect time. It’s written in the way one composes a dream after having the alarm go off. This event-to-cause order is the mythical as distinct from the historical order. I think my *dream* life demands these stories. (CW 13: 197)

Two difficulties in relating a detective story to a novel: (1) 99.9% of all the people who get murdered thoroughly deserve it. The rest are victims of homicidal maniacs who aren’t allowed in detective stories. A motive strong enough to lead to murder is a justifiable one, nearly always. That’s one reason for letdown, the feeling that the law isn’t worth maintaining. (2) Most detective stories turn on a concealed clue: the character of the murderer. Hence character-analysis is out of place. For that reason I think the orang-utang of Poe was a good scheme, though my students don’t like it. There is no mystery in *Crime & Punishment*, as the whole point of the book is that Raskolnikoff has the only character in it capable of murder. (CW 8: 16)

The main themes of the detective story are as follows. It is primarily a dramatization of law, & therefore turns on the rightness of sacrifice, which is possible only in terms of moral justification. A detective story is regularly a murder story, in which a criminal murder at the beginning is polarized by a judicial one at the end—usually offstage, & sometimes barely indicated, depending on the author’s priggishness & his relish for hanging. Suicide often does as well. The sacrificial pattern is made more explicit by the regular device of throwing suspicion on one character & then making him the victim of the next murder. The general shape is like a chess problem: white to mate (i.e. kill) the black king in so many moves from a given situation. But the real appeal is a gambling one: of a group of characters, the reader picks his, the roulette wheel spins, & if the reader’s number is called he feels he’s been completely logical & has beaten the system. The nearer the story comes to justifying his choice as mysteriously & not obviously right, the better it is. The gambling instinct is closely connected with the sacrificial one, where the victim is chosen by lot, & all through the story the reader watches the vacillating hand wavering about among a group of characters until it stops & indicates one. In this, as I’ve said elsewhere, we reach pure caricature of the novel form. The novel is designed to reveal character, the detective story to conceal it, as the fact that one of the characters

is capable of murder is the concealed clue. Hence there must be a general woodenness of character—in short, poker faces. (CW 15: 75)

**Devil-Myth.** I have been writing about the devil-myth ever since my undergraduate days: if I could establish its opposite, the myth of God, which is a myth of identity, I’d have cracked a tough nut. (CW 9: 69)

**Devil’s Dung.**  I have a hunch that at a certain point we re-enter a world where the stars are again visible. The greatest Thanatos works of literature are the *Iliad* (ultimately that, I think, rather than Adonis tragedy) and the *Inferno*. In the latter the undisplaced journey begins with Dante entering

Satan’s mouth & being shot out of his arse at the bottom of everything, so that Dante is literally a Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, a God-born devil’s dung. The interval being the point of mysterious return frequent in epics, corresponding to the cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey*. (I wonder if I really can work it out on this kind of map: I’ve been assuming that the cave of the nymphs was the two-gated Beulah or Garden of Adonis, which I think is right, but in what sense, other than the fact that it’s a romance, is the *Odyssey* an Eros poem? I’ve got a hell of a lot more thinking to do). (CW 13: 119)

**Dialectical Rigidity.** The age of dialectical rigidity between capitalism and socialism, which Lenin took advantage of, ended in 1939 with the growth of fascism into its inevitable end of war. Nazism was closest to a type of anarchism or nihilism, and it spread ripples (I mean that attitude did) over the U.S. in the sixties, and over much of Africa & Latin America. The Soviet Union is trying to outgrow the Leninist dialectical rigidity, and some elements in the U.S.A. are trying to outgrow its counterpart. But it’s hard: Reagan is the great symbol of clinging to the great-power syndrome, which is why he sounds charismatic even when he’s talking the most obvious nonsense. (CW 5: 397–8)

**Diary Keeping.** This year [1949] I want to tackle the diary scheme again on a bigger scale, as a means of systematizing my life. I’m not working hard enough, and I feel that a diary would be useful, as my job is mainly thinking & writing, & I need some machinery for recording everything of importance I think of. As a moral discipline, too, it’s important for a natural introvert to keep his letters answered, his social engagements up to date, and his knowledge of people and events set out in greater detail. There is hardly any phase of my life that a diary would not be useful for. Reading the morning paper & mail leading to recording the social side of my life, marking essays affords material for a possible book on how to write English. Conversation, even at Victoria, occasionally produces ideas; lectures are very productive of ideas I often just let go to waste. The thing is not to be alarmed at the miscellaneous character of one’s life & stylize the diary accordingly, as I’ve tended to do. It should be a continuous imaginative draft, not itself a work of literature. I also hope it will be of some moral benefit, in passing a kind of value judgment, implicit or explicit, on whether I’ve wasted the day or not, whether my schedule is in shape, whether my unanswered letters are piling up, etc. The feeling of meeting my own conscience at the end of the day may cut down my dithering time. I should be careful, however, not to ascribe exaggerated values to secondary duties merely because they are duties & I don’t like them, but always to put writing, thinking & reading first. (CW 8: 51–2)

I have occasionally wondered why I couldn’t keep diaries. The answer is that I’m too busy with other writing—the only times I succeeded in keeping a diary more than a week or two were in doldrum periods of writing. Now I’m so full of commissions & deadlines I can’t even keep notebooks. What’s more, I can’t even read anything except bloods. In Michael Innes I notice the device of deliberate over-designing, a parody for sophisticated readers of the absurdities of schoolboy romances. It’s a structural analogue to deliberate doggerel. (CW 23: 288)

**Difference and Identity.** The development of linguistics into semiotics, from Saussure to Derrida and others, is based on the concept of difference. A word is a signifier arbitrarily related to a signified; it has meaning because it is different from other words. Nobody can challenge such postulates; but I think metaphor provides an identity beyond difference, a construction beyond deconstruction. In metaphor the statement “A is B,” being usually absurd on the face of it, carries with it the implication “A is not B, and nobody but a fool would imagine that it was.” This latter implication is the basis of the present linguistic development. The assertion itself is made in order to open up a current of energy between subject and object: from the point of view of the denial, metaphor can never achieve anything except hypothesis. I got this far in the Anatomy, and am now trying to see how further I can get with the Bible, which is metaphorical and yet is clearly concerned with something other than hypothesis. (CW 6: 512)

**Difficulty.** Every great work of art is profound, profundity being an essential part of the conception of greatness. Difficulty is the first stage of profundity: it represents the antithesis, the resistance, the otherness, in a work of art. Every work of art worth absorbing is difficult: the next step is the acceptance, the absorption, which is profundity. Difficulty is all that a teacher can deal with, & the job of a teacher of literature is the thankless one of showing that what looks easy really is difficult.The obviously difficult—Joyce, Blake’s prophecies—is the more teachable: what seems easy—Blake’s lyrics, Jane Austen, Dickens—is less teachable, & therefore (because it’s another way of saying the same thing) the conviction of its difficulty is more strongly resisted. (CW 9: 61)

**Digressions.** The average sermon is full of digressions, because parsons are occupationally anxious, anxieties being what the will substitutes for the grace of belief. (CW 9: 59–60)

**Disasters.**  It occurs to me that the newspaper convention of reporting disasters is completely irresponsible. Not that they should ignore the odd ten-year-old girl who gets raped by a pervert and concentrate on the beautiful lives of all the ten-year-olds who don’t, that’s silly. But a chronicle of the diseases of society ought to be coherently related to the analysis of society which would show those evils in perspective, give some idea of what their causes are, & what steps are or should be taken to prevent them. As it is, the newspaper tradition that interesting things are calamities, & that they are interesting because they are calamities, is pure nihilism, & breeds the feeling that peace provides no “moral equivalent of war.” I imagine that in every gang of tough kids there are a few genuinely bitter ones who hold it together, & the rest have as much strain in living up to their tough persona as everyone has with any unnatural stylization of character. (CW 8: 73)

**Discarded Notebooks.** I started dusting out my bookcases, accompanying myself by composing indignant speeches about the way things are run around this place. I cleaned out the whole of the bookcase opposite me, & feel far less cluttered & panicky. Curious experience, throwing out all the various excreta I’d been saving since before my Oxford days. Notebooks full of dead wood. I don’t know why I have such a passion for collecting notebooks when I don’t think I’ve ever filled one completely up. Even the original Blake one has a couple of blank pages at the end. . . . More dusting, this time of the other bookcase. I turned up my 1943 diary [nonextant] nd decided I was expressing myself with more vigour than I am now. It was very pleasant then, even with the war on, drifting around pubs & restaurants when Helen was working, meeting Eleanor Godfrey& talking to my students as an equal, & we seemed to go to more parties then. It’s more lonely being a mature & successful figure, with a reputation growing in three countries. (CW 8: 364, 366)

**Diseases.** John, writing a spiritual gospel, presents parables as events: the synoptics try harder to separate fact and fiction, though there’s plenty of incredible fact in them as well. I can see glints here and there: diseases are normally produced by our psychic complex, i.e., we get the diseases that are an essential part of our nature; hence all healing of disease is the casting out of the devils. Disease is the nemesis of nature; it’s a product of hell-world we live in and eventually it kills us. Healing puts disease in a purgatorial context, as something we suffer from but can escape from too on our way to the spiritual kingdom. (CW 6: 669–70)

**Displacing Ideology.** It’s not only Henry James but all the 19th c. novelists who squeeze ideology out of their books so that their characters can spend more time talking about sex and money. Of the four primary concerns, food (with breathing), sex, property and freedom of movement, the 19th c. spent most of its attention on property. (CW 15: 368)

**Dissipation.**Oh, God, I wish I could just sit down & start writing, with no essays to read or lectures to give or magazine to edit or speeches to make. I feel that I’ve been dissipating my energies for so long that it would be a tremendous relief just to concentrate them for a while. Two more weeks of it. This is the month the Guggenheim is supposed to do its stuff. The part of me that I’m interested in living with doesn’t give a damn whether I get next year off or not, but dreads not getting it because of the hullabaloo that would be set up by the part of me that I’m not much interested in living with. Hell of a mixed-up state of mind, when they’re both me. I feel dull & spoiled, like a constipated lapdog. Next week I’m going to do some concentrated essay reading &get *that* out of the way, & then I may be able to see where the hell I am. . . . I’m really not working or being worked hard: it’s just the vast size of this thing in my brain that’s trying to get born. (CW 8: 292–3)

**Dissociation of Poet and Worshipper.** Hopkins, a Jesuit priest, having, on the one hand, the whole intellectual completeness of a scholastic view of the world, in which everything was pigeonholed and explained, and, on the other, a powerful emotional feeling of the boundless inexplicable variety of the natural world, presents explicitly what is only implicit in Newman, the dissociation of poet and worshipper. (CW 3: 301)

**Doing One’s Job**. Some of the things I’ve done recently have been really good: I can still do my job. And I think the first four chapters of *Words with Power* are good. But that second half haunts me with the feeling that I’ve tackled too big a job, which probably means that I ought to rewrite it on a different basis—if I can find the basis. (CW 5: 201)

**Dominance of Feeling.** In Schleiermacher’s theology the individual soul apprehends God through a synthesis of subjective factors in which feeling or emotion predominates; the same thing happens in art, and so the realities of religion and art become, by a ready inference, united in a basis of symbolism. This implies that all approaches to the good are united alike in religion and in art, as in Keats’s identification of truth and beauty. (CW 3: 281)

**Double-Crostics.** I was developing a headache, so I staggered out to lunch & went home again. My morale is so low that I’ve bought a book of crossword puzzles—the Elizabeth Kingsley doublecrostic kind. It’s a form of nervous doodling that preoccupies me and is probably less lethal than smoking—though I sometimes think I make a mistake by not smoking. For the most part the puzzles are very easy to do—in fact, if they don’t break open in three or four minutes I go on to another puzzle. (CW 8: 527)

**Doublethink.**Orwell’s doublethink is the soul-body civil war where the consciousness hypnotizes itself into thinking it believes what the repressed consciousness knows to be nonsense. Fear of external authority creates internal repression. All genuine imagination is doublethink as Orwell defines it. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

**Dove and Raven.** I notice how in free association I seem to have a white dove & a black raven or screech owl on my shoulders. One keeps trying to turn the associations into pleasant & complacent reflections, mostly about phrases & other bits of writing or speaking or story-telling I’m pleased with. The other, far noisier & more aggressive, keeps gibbering and croaking away about all the damn fool things I’ve done, all the embarrassing or humiliating things that have happened to me. This must be a pretty standard setup—I wonder if the old conceptions of good & bad angels or daimons, or, closer, an advocate (go’el) and an accuser, arise from it. (CW 9: 224–5)

**Drama.** Drama, whether poetry or prose, is *threefold* in structure, & its three forms, once more, are respectively narrative, visionary & conceptual. The three essential forms of drama are thus tragedy, comedy, *andsymposium*, which ought to . . . clear up my old ideas on this. All drama is fundamentally *eventual*, assimilated to ritual: it’s ταδροµενα [*ta dromena*], the things done. What happens in tragedy is catastrophe; what happens in comedy is triumph; what happens in symposium is illumination. The process of symposium, or dialectic, moves toward this: it implies commitment. (CW 8: 278–9)

**Dramatis Personae.** Strange the variety of dramatis personae we contain: we have mockers, accusers, even saboteurs and traitors, and doubtless at the centre a judge with a black cap, waiting to put it on. We objectify and project all these things first as gods, then we dramatize them in human society. The extent to which we dramatize is only just beginning to dawn on me. With the death of the king, press and radio are full of people asserting solemnly that they feel emotions they can’t possibly feel. They must be either congenital liars or actors in a play: it’s more charitable to assume the latter. The people who acquire feelings after they’ve been suggested to them, or have emotional vacancies in their lives that need filling, are another matter. (CW 8: 506)

**Dramatist and Poet.** The two most elementary facts about Shakespeare that he was one of a group of Elizabethan dramatists & that he was one of the great poets of the world. These two facts are in superficial contradiction, & it is difficult even for an experienced scholar to keep both facts always together in his mind at the same time. Hence the number of writers who have overstated one fact because some predecessor has overstated the other. The drama, a major form of poetic utterance that still has to give the public what it wants, itself suggest show the combination can be achieve, & when Middleton Murray says that the drama is an impure form of art, he comes to the heart, not of course of Shakespeare, but of a modern difficulty in understanding Shakespeare, a difficulty of romantic growth which thinks of the original as the aboriginal, the atomically individual, & forgets that originality is a return to origins, as radicalism is a return to roots, the articulation of the archetypes of the human mind. Similarly, we think of what the public wants in terms of an unconditioned will. The public does not know what it wants, but it knows what it expects: in other words, it is somehow trained to respond to conventions. No writer exists in a vacuum, but no public does either. The question is not what is popular, but how it got to be popular, i.e., conventional. We talk of the “poetry and the drama” in Shakespeare or Marlowe, but don’t talk of the prose and the drama” of Shaw, but prose for us is the natural medium for a play. How did the other kind get to be natural, & the dominating literary form, when it seems to us an artificial & arbitrary one? (CW 20: 137–8)

**Drang nach Osten.** I’ve been suffering all weekend from a terrific *Drang nach Osten* [yearning for the East]: I spent hours on Sunday staring at an atlas. There are many psychological reasons for that, but there are others beyond wartime claustrophobia and a disinclination to work. That is, if authorities said to me that they wanted a young man with ideas to take charge of an English department in Hong Kong, or India, or Perth, say, after the war, to interpret the West to the East and at the same time study Eastern philosophy & literature, I’d jump at it. I’d even reconsider the Hyderabad job. The great appeals are two: one I’d yank my personal & social roots out of Toronto and start afresh where adolescent blunders, dropped friendships, unanswered letters and so on haunted me less. Nothing short of the other side of the Pacific would do that. Second, I’d drop my connection with the Church and would be in a position to see more clearly exactly what my Christianity amounts to. I’ve just discovered how very important that is to me. (CW 25: 8–9)

**Dream(s).** The dream expresses desire, concern, warning, quite genuinely, but always in slightly oblique language. There is only one gate of dreams, horn on one side and ivory on the other. But then there’s the image-cluster that generates myth & addresses the waking consciousness. The two factors affecting the content of the dream, the events of the previous day and repressions going back to early childhood, correspond to the ideological and the mythological perspectives. (CW 5: 133)

Yeats says dreams are really dreamed by the dead, & create worlds we enter at sleep. Has anyone explained why we need all that sleep? Hours & hours of it. It can’t be to “rest the brain”—the brain doesn’t work all that hard. And what, if any, is the biological function of dreams? What use are they if nobody can understand them, least of all the dreamer? It’s the same question that gets asked about the arts. (CW 9: 5–6)

We’ve heard a lot about the Promethean aspect of dream, its revolt against “reality” (i.e. ritual habit) in the name of wish-fulfilment. But primitive dreams are full of a sense of the perils of the soul, which may never get back to the body. The sense of guilt in breaking off from the group is always there, hence de Quincey’s remark (which Joyce got, according to Budgen) that every dream recapitulates the fall of man. (CW 9: 272)

If I’m right in saying that the therapeutic value of dreams is ultimately to expand consciousness, then primarily it sets up a fight with consciousness proper, & the result is the Freudian dream, a blind stupid nihilistic pleasure-pain assertion of unconscious will, Titans chained under a sky-god censor.

But if the authority of the superego begins to dissolve, & the censor consequently loses his authority, & we pass out of the hellish reversed perspective of the sky-god as the real Satan & the bound Titan as a Promethean friend to men, then what happens to the dream? Isn’t it all set now to go on the Jung journey? It will still have the erotic content & the comic resolution, but its form will become autonomous. (CW 13: 62)

I told my Milton kids this morning re Eve’s dream & her decision to work alone next day, that dreams do slightly condition one’s waking life the next day. I’m beginning to feel that dreams rise in level through a normal night’s sleep, from an unknown depth in beauty sleep, which is never, or practically never, remembered, through symbolic archetypal dreams very seldom remembered, at least in detail, through erotic fantasies occasionally remembered, though too carefully disguised to make much impression, through will-to-power fantasies or Adlerian dreams relatively easy to remember, into dreams which are substitutes for waking actions, which are often dozes following the alarm ring. If we study conscious behavior we see the same thing. The subsidence of consciousness into doing things without noticing corresponds to substitute dreams. Listening to street-car conversations of the so-I-says-to-him variety shows how near the surface of consciousness the will-to-power fantasy is—even “normal” people are continually mistaking it for reality, or at least allowing it to condition reality. It’s the real “guardian of the threshold.” The erotic wish-fulfilment fantasy demands what for “normal” people is a deliberate withdrawal from reality, a voluntary escape. Below this is the creative world of art & thought, which demands not only relaxation from the world but concentration as well. Below this is the world of meditation, which seizes the moment Satan can’t find, & in which the soul emerges through the mind as well as the body. Blavatsky says that if you could remember your deep dreams you could remember your previous incarnations. I don’t think it’s necessary to accept this, but it’s possible that if you could take a golden bough with you all the way in the original plunge to sleep, Alice’s fall down the well, you would never need to sleep again. The Tibetan Bardo has something of this idea of an initial plunge & then a gradual rise back to the same old grind. The trouble is you have to hypnotize yourself somehow to fall asleep: without some initial giddiness you just get insomnia. This progression, if it exists, corresponds roughly to the Spenglerian progression of a cultural cycle, & if so is doubtless involved in the argument of *Finnegans Wake*. (CW 8: 79–80)

Dreams are the soul’s journeys through another world, but like the control & other messages that come through a medium they can only affect our minds in a form conditioned by our minds. I have a strong sense of a different world in my travel dreams, but the details are always reminiscent of the familiar, so far as I recognize or remember them. As in waking life, the mind shuts out or ignores what it can’t take in. (CW 23: 125)

**Dream Book.** Another dream book of mine is a novel where the hero dies, or eventually discovers he’s dead, and is about the world of the dead and the appearance this world makes from that perspective. I dislike Charles Williams, but I have to admit he had the guts to try this. The point would be to make it like Alice’s Wonderland, so good-humored the reader wouldn’t think “morbid,” & yet so convincing he’d shiver. (CW 5: 239)

**Duh?** I’m again at the point in the book where I wonder if I know what the hell I’m talking about. (CW 5: 331)

**The Dunce Man.** The humanists were concerned to defend the social importance of the use of words. Their ideals revolved around the idea of the gifted amateur or more specifically the orator. The technical philosophers were ridiculed and attacked as people who talked a kind of jargon which nobody could understand. Of course, the great philosopher of the Middle Ages, Saint Thomas Aquinas, still held some of his authority, but his great critic, the nominalist philosopher, John Duns, called Duns Scotus, who taught at Oxford, became a synonym for the old obsolete way of thinking and writing, the old jargon way. And the people who held by him were called the “duns men” or the “dunces,” and so the name of one of the greatest critical intellects in the history of thought became a byword for stupidity. (“Communication and the Arts”)

E

**Earthly Paradise.** The purgatorial journey is towards the original place of birth, or earthly Paradise.

It goes up a mountain or upstream to the source of a river. Hence the “happy valley” in a mountainous landscape. It’s the Israelite wilderness wandering toward the Promised Land: note the paralleling of Virgil & Moses. Similar journeys to rebirth occur in Eliot’s *Ash Wednesday*& several poems of Yeats. Often the earthly Paradise is a place of sexual fulfilment, but more often the journey is towards the pre-sexual world of “innocence.”Dante’s ring of fire is like a recognition of a birth trauma. The drive of Menandrine New Comedy is toward a sexual fulfilment which is also a *social* birth. The pastoral world is often innocent (*and* poetic) in the same sense. Freud’s Erosjourney is also a recapitulation of childhood, a continuous recognition of blocks with the birth trauma at the end. (CW 9: 128)

**Eckhart, Meister.**Eckhart speaks of a *Gottheit* who is nothing because he’s transferred everything to God. Sounds like what the God-is-dead people say about kenosis. It’s the void that’s the antitype of “vanity” (apocalyptic fullness, rather), the absolute spirit that’s the apocalyptic contrast to *hebel* or mere breath. It’s the silence that’s the echo of speech: Eckhart associates *Gottheit* with the *resting* God of the seventh day. And, of course, it’s the clear light that’s the apocalyptic opposite of the hell-fire that burns the fennel-stalk of the self. (CW 5: 35)

**Ecstatic Identification and Ironic Distancing.** On one side of the metaphor is ecstatic identification, the mob frenzies of the Bacchanals, the self-hypnotism of the shaman, the hysteria of the sorcerer. Then comes the ironic distancing of the hypothetical poetic metaphor. On this level art is possessed: it doesn’t take possession. But beyond this is the counter-ironic aspect of metaphor, the sense of revelation recaptured by a (spiritual) community which is what the word “gospel” is all about. (CW 5: 16)

**Eczema?**  I have just had an itchy and uncomfortable eczema skin eruption all over me. I suspect a partly “psychosomatic” factor: I’m the most irritable and irascible of men; I’m aware of the folly of expressing this in front of innocent people, so the irritability comes out in this form. To compare small things with great: were Job’s boils his body’s protest against his patience? If so, something in him agreed with his wife [Job 2:9–10]. (CW 5: 405)

**Eddison, E.R.** There is a story by E.R. Eddison called *The Worm Ouroboros* which is the most Nietzschean book I have ever read in English literature. It’s also a completely pagan book. In this story, there is a war of light and darkness like the one in Tolkien. The ouroboros is the emblem of the powers of darkness. They are ruled by a series of kings who are all the same king, reborn as soon as he dies. After the dark forces are completely conquered, the heroes begin to droop and pine because there is nothing further left to fight. The heroine arranges with the gods that the whole enterprise should take place over again, and so the last line of the book repeats the first line, and the action goes around in a circle. Thus the ouroboros wins after all. (CW 15: 300)

**Educational Dagwoodism.** The old notion of four years of gentlemanly training in preparation for life during the mating season is on its way out. There’s no longer that kind of race against time—the Spencer kind, I mean: how much can be squeezed into preparatory years? What’s essential & what belongs to the fill-up-the-cracks stage. These questions are obsolescent. Herbert Spencer said: why learn the archaic superstitions of Greece & Rome when you could learn contemporary facts & ideas that would be useful? We say: why learn contemporary facts that will be archaic superstitions in ten years? Why try to “adjust” to a society that won’t be there when you’ve adjusted to it? Educational Dagwoodism, trying to jump on a bus that’s just vanished around the corner. (CW 9: 62)

**Egg.** After saying that a hen is an egg’s way of making another egg, Samuel Butler goes on to say why we find the statement bizarre. We can trace the silent processes by which the egg becomes a hen, but when a hen lays an egg she cackles (and we’re very impressed by noise) and we see an egg where previously there was no egg. So a hen laying an egg connects in our minds with (a) revolution an (b) special creation out of nothing by the word. An egg becoming a hen connects only with evolution and repetition. (In the Priestly account of creation cackle and bird are separated into different persons, but they’re both there: the egg ought to be there too, as it is in Orphic and Hindu (Phanes, Hirayana-garbha) myths.) I’ve always been fascinated by the Hiranya-garbha myth, the seed of fire in the midst of the waters (Radhakrishnan says its the Logos), the prototype of Prometheus’ fire in the fennel-stalk. In the Priestly account there’s the waters, the brooding bird, and the light. I suppose an egg would have stuck another “literal” object in front of the idolators. (CW 5: 355–6)

**Ego.**My ego has intruded into my writing and caused me to write nonsense. My adversary has not, like Job’s, written a book [Job 31:35], but he’s written *in* all my books, and not always on the margins. I’d like to write one book free of the ego before I go. I also wish that my clearest intervals of thought weren’t accompanied by laziness and selfishness. (CW 5: 62)

I’m getting crotchical, and have to make a deliberate effort to recover my good temper. It’s the stampeding of the old aggressive ego: I’ve been thinking a good deal lately about the primacy of the aggressive instinct. I suppose I have a lot dammed back, what with my childhood: physical and social disadvantages combined with a terrific will to power in my own sphere. (CW 8: 551)

**Egyptian Book of the Dead.** The Egyptian Book of the Dead seems to be a gigantic gnosis in which the dead man recovers the powers of all the gods, partly by knowing their names, partly by having lived without what was later called mortal sin. Many affinities with yoga, especially in *samyama*, the acquiring of the power of what one concentrates on. Patanjali speaks of the elephant’s strength: perhaps the animals of Egyptian religion have a similar meaning. (In later chapters there are “books of breathings,” regarded as a great secret.) (CW 5: 159)

**Egyptians.** Under the influence of inadequate canons of historical thought, one forgets that

Alexandria was in Egypt, that Ptolemy, Clement, Origen, & Iamblichus are all Egyptians, that

Hellenistic culture is not late Greek, but late Egyptian expressed in Greek κοινη [*koine*], as Christianity is late Hebrew in the same tongue. (CW 15: 44)

**Elemental Spirits.** Another theme I’ve never got clear is the role of elemental spirits, who are so often sulky, unwilling & dangerous—demonic, in short, & quite often devils. But, as in *Comus*, they can include guardian angels. Goethe’s *Faust*, in spite of my growing disillusionment with Goethe, has a lot to do with this: Erdgeist, Homunculus, the lot. (CW 5: 318)

I’ve been fascinated by the role of elementals in early Milton, especially *Comus*, where every character except the Lady and her brothers is an elemental spirit. Also speculation on the point, the only permitted speculation, just about, except the question of spirits neither heavenly nor hellish (closely related), comes into *II Penseroso*. Milton was heavily indebted to Puck and Ariel, especially Ariel, in

Shakespeare, and Shakespeare to Lyly’s *Endymion* and Peele’s *Old Wives’ Tale*. (CW 15: 328)

**Elements of Thought and Elements of Existence.** Something I haven’t quite got about the relation between elements of thought, or the imaginative identity, & elements of existence, individual human beings.In Blake the birth, development, death & reincarnation of imaginative units are described in such a way as to suggest that Blake is talking about actual human life, both during & after its earthly existence.Perhaps he intends this overtone, as the role of Milton in *Milton* suggests.But Yeats, it seems to me, completely confuses the two, & projects the immortality of imagery (*Byzantium*) into actual existence.If I could solve this problem, of course, I could do anything.Certainly I could write my third book easily enough. (Notebook 9)

**Elizabeth Brown, Who Became Mrs. Northrop Frye in 1988.** This was a holiday [Victoria Day,

1950] I’d been waiting for, & we got off to the train for Brantford by 9:30. We hadn’t seen Jim & Elizabeth Brown for years, & were very keen on going to see them. The visit was exactly what, I think, both of us hoped it would be. They have a charming little house in the middle of town, about at 1865–70 date, & three of the cutest kids I’ve seen in a long time. Jamie, so he informed me, was four. Cathy was a little older, six or seven, & the baby, Sarah Ellen, is about Peter Kemp’s age. I never was much attracted to Elizabeth as an undergraduate, but as a plump matron of forty she’s really something. (CW 8: 359)

**Emancipated Monad.** Comedy describes a drive toward identity in which identity ceases to become barricaded or exclusive identity (I am myself) which is symbolized by the ritual-bound humour, & becomes the identity of being-there-with-others—in short, an identity that maintains itself by interpenetration, the emancipated monad as full of windows as a Park Avenue building. (CW 20: 266)

**Emigrés in Time.** I’ve said that American youth coming to Canada as draft-dodgers suffer from an emigré mentality: they’re not coming to Canada, but only leaving the States, & they live in a social limbo awaiting an amnesty or similar change. However, they may get their amnesty: they’re not as badly off as the *emigrés in time* of the younger generation, who expect some gigantic revolution which will not come, or if it does will be in a form more disillusioning than the status quo. I don’t see much future for them except psychoneurosis. It’s all very well for Blake to say that fear & hope are vision, but when both fear & hope are concentrated on what are not & cannot be there, the vision becomes fantasy, of a drugging and will o’ the wisp kind. (CW 13: 113)

**English Literature.** As soon as one begins the serious study of English literature one makes two paradoxical discoveries about it. One is that there is no such thing as English literature, and the other is that there is no such thing as literature. The former is because the two obvious criteria, “literature written in English” and “literature written in England” don’t coincide, and because, for instance, Virgil is a vastly greater name in English literature than the *Beowulf* poet. The latter is obvious. Yet, just as a written orthography exercises a constant check on pronunciation, so a language exercises a constant check on a literature, even before 1600. Again, some kind of normalizing principle, perhaps the metre of poetry, exercises a constant check on literary form. (CW 15: 6)

**Ensemble and solo.** An ensemble performance belongs to organic growth. The ballad and the Gothic cathedral alike are fundamentally communal art, as were the Elizabethan madrigals. When the solo performer who must have an audience comes into fashion, a more critical note is sounded. Romantic music brought with it the virtuoso and the popular approval. Modern dramas consist of characters fighting with each other, this antagonism being in fact what holds the drama together. But the real popular attitude is exemplified in the football game, where an ensemble performance is given for the sole purpose of destroying another. The audience watches and gloats on the suicide. (“1932 Notebook,” 15 November)

**Ephesians.** Some people say Paul’s Ephesians are just shorthand notes filled out by a scribe who “got carried away” in such things as the spiritual wickedness in high places verse [6:12]. One has to remember that all this is guesswork, however well informed, not hard evidence. The reason for postulating the scribe is the difficulty in believing that Paul could write out of the orbit of his normal style. This is a genuine issue—Paul could never have written Hebrews—but not insuperable in Ephesians, I think. (CW 13: 327)

**An Epic Epic Reading Program.** I musn’t tackle another book without getting at least the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*& the *Commedia* firmly into my noddle. (CW 23: 270)

**Epigrams.** I’m not often impressed by epigrams, but here’s one that is impressive: “to the living we owe understanding; to the dead only the truth.” Only they have to be good and dead: the recently dead, whose personalities are still rippling towards the shore, have to be treated with understanding too. (CW 13: 142)

**Epiphany.** I’ve been reading Jung’s autobiography (dictated mostly to a colleague at the age of eighty, but by a long way his best book). He says that that Kenya tribe he visited had a word meaning, more or less, God, which they applied to the sun, but only to the sun at the instant of rising, and to the moon, but only when the moon was in a certain phase at a certain place in the sky. In our object-obsessed language we say “those guys worship the sun, & maybe sometimes the moon.” We overlook the fact that for them a “god” is not just an object, or even an object at all: it’s an event or epiphany of what may be an object. The event or epiphany is primary, also more primitive: its objective aspect coincides with a subjective moment of self-awareness. (CW 5: 185)

The first & last epiphanies of God, creation and apocalypse, correspond to the first & last appearances of the human being, birth & death. I’d like to know how far words can go in exploring the silences and mysteries surrounding these events. It’s partly the old Mallarmé problem: black words on white space: what does the white space say? the nothingness from which the words emerge? What is said *around* the words? Mallarmé himself said that when you reverse black and white the white turns into the definitive book, the (rewritten) Torah. But. (CW 5: 250)

I must find out more about why Joyce was so interested not merely in the word “epiphany” but also in the word “epiclesis.” He didn’t know much Greek, and I doubt that he was an expert on liturgies–the word “epiclesis” is outside the Roman Catholic liturgy anyway. Cf. Dylan Thomas’ *Winter’s Tale*. Incidentally, the book that eventually became *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was built up from epiphanies (which were often “actual” images, experiences, & reheard fragments of conversation, etc.) What I “incidentally” started out to remark on was the fondness of Canadian writers (not just Alice Munro) for novels made up of short stories. *Dubliners* is also an epiphanic sequence of Dublin. Could the notion that the Gospels were a discontinuous sequence of epiphanies have filtered through to Joyce somehow? (At the time of his schooling Irish Catholics were brutally ignorant of Biblical scholarship.) (CW 5: 280–1)

Epiphany is not a new experience: it is the knowledge that one has the experience: it’s recognition or *anagnorisis*. The wise men did not need to journey to it: it was their own wisdom in the only form wisdom can take, the divine infancy or fresh beginning. Epiphany is the containing of change, or the other, by bringing it into line with identity: in short, it’s the awareness of growth, when the line pointing from the object to the subject reverses its direction. Death Chih-Kai Bardo, or Resurrection (ultimate *anagnorisis*). (CW 9: 34–5)

**Erdman, David.**The rest of the day I spent mainly in reading the manuscript for Erdman’s book [*William Blake: Prophet against Empire*], which is 750 pages long. Yet it’s full of good stuff, and it’ll be difficult to know where to cut it. The main things—the influence of Barlow on *America*, of Gillray on *Europe*, of the Stedman drawings on *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*, are clearly spotlighted, and the development from Blake’s (presumed but probable) early Wilkite sympathiesthrough the two revolutions to a gradual withdrawal from political questions in the major prophecies is clearly traced. His (Erdman’s) political prejudices rather spoil the end of the book—I don’t mean his contemporary political views; I mean a general prejudice in favor of Blake’s having a political interest. He greatly underestimates Blake’s quite genuine disillusionment with Deism, plays down the “I am sorry to see my countrymen trouble themselves with politics” passage, and regards his later attitude as dictated partly by personal cowardice and partly by what he calls a “fetishistic” view of art. Within limits—and they are limits that commend themselves to a good many Americans— his evidence & argument are very strong, and no doubt somebody will say that he’s made a fool of people like me. In fact the exactness of his research makes me feel very grateful that, unlike Schorer & Bronowski, I didn’t commit myself to more guesses about the historical allegory. As I told him, I assumed that somebody like him would come along sooner or later, and so I went straight ahead on the central dialectic issue. He treats me with great respect, no doubt because he’s obliged to me, but his lack of sympathy with anything like a religious, much less an apocalyptic, attitude is not going to clarify Blake criticism to the extent that I feel so good a book should. I don’t know what recommendations to make about cutting, except in general that the end of the book is fatiguing, and there are certainly some prolixities. But he suggests cutting footnotes, and he’s the sort of writer

who is at his best in footnotes. It’s really a terrific job, and he certainly shouldn’t have any trouble with his career once it’s out. (CW 8:575–6)

**Eros Cult.** The Eros cult in poetry as the imaginative turning point to Romanticism, where *natura naturans* comes back into its own. The important thing is not sexual love but the affinity of man to nature. The transformation of the demonic descent into Promethean imagery of the future and Atlantis imagery of reclaimed land follows but is inseparable from this. (CW 6: 571)

**ESP of Books.** I wonder about extra-sensory perception of books—I don’t mean simply the capacity of people hag-ridden by erotic fantasies to open any book at whatever erotic passage it contains. I have had some experiences of having the books I wanted fall out of the shelves at the time I wanted them. Four years ago I bought, on a pure impulse, a Viking Library collection of novels of the supernatural. I regretted the impulse instantly, kicked myself for wasting the money, &, trying to salvage the purchase, dawdled through de la Mare’s *Return*& Machen’s *Terror*, also an opening story by Mrs. Oliphant which actually gave me a calendar idea, though it was more an instance of an idea than the idea itself. Yesterday, for no reason at all, I suddenly pull the book out of the shelves & read Nathan’s *Portrait of Jennie*, which I’d completely ignored before, & it turns out to be an anima story that may be an opening lead into my romance study. (CW 8: 107–8)

**Essay on Criticism.**  It’s growing on me that my next published book will be the “Essay on Criticism” after all. But I think of it now as richer & more complex than my original idea, also more unified. I seem to be at the point of looking down on literature from a height, no longer working inside it. I have three major ideas, each a part of a logically coherent structure. First is the area covered by my *Kenyon Review* articles, on meaning & the verbal universe, or archetypes & genres, & on the structure of symbolism. Second is the area covered in my three-volume Guggenheim prospectus, the analysis of the essential modes of verbal expression, scripture, epic, drama, lyric & prose. Third is the area covered by my “Church & Society” article & my interest in 19th c. subjects, especially Morris, Butler & Yeats. This is actually an apology for criticism: a statement of the social function of the arts & of the place of criticism as a social science. Several things are not clear to me yet, & one of these is, curiously enough, the precise way to tackle the epic. Another is the relation of the elements of the trivium, grammar, rhetoric & logic, & of the function of dialectic as a verbal element. I have a hunch about “verbal determinism” that may not work out. So my draft of the last four chapters, or Part Three, is loose. (CW 8: 456–7)

**Eternally Recurring Cycle.** The great enemy of God is fate, the making of natural law into the *model* of moral law. What you do with fate is submit yourself to it, & thereby become an agent of it. As that over-rated thinker Nietzsche, with his head fogged by notions of eternal recurrence, never saw, slave morality & master morality are the *same thing*, just as sadism & masochism, manic & depressive states, are ultimately the same thing. The important thing is to *get off* that roller-coaster, which is the cycle seen in polarized or double-helix shape as an extreme which already contains the other extreme. Heaven & hell are, I suppose, demonic polarizations of the same kind. (CW 13: 245)

**Eve.** The first Eve was taken from the body of adam, in contrast to the world we know, which is the world of mother nature, where all new life, male or female, is born from a female mother. The second Eve was (in whatever “sense,” spiritual or other) born from the Holy Spirit, and so to speak, isolated the “feminine” aspect of that Spirit. The simplest solution to my present question is: the real Gospel is not the Word simply, but the Word fertilizing the (female) spirit in the reader. That’s clearly too simple, I think. (CW 5: 170)

**Exclusive and Inclusive Critical Approaches.** Sidney’s theory of poetry implies that one course is right & two wrong, the two wrong being the exclusive & inclusive approaches to the integrity of the art. Exclusive gives Poe’s theory of poetry, Cézanne’s of painting, & a lot of music, concentrating on the accidents. In painting there is a prudish fear of content, of an explicit subject, clear in Canada. Inclusiveness leads to the black mass, Wagner & Scriabine, to literary painting & pictorial music. The right way is to use other subjects in e.g. painting, but make a pictorial synthesis of them. Also the difference we feel in saying Spenser is allegorical & Shakespeare isn’t means that Spenser is explicitly a teacher of allegorical language. Note that the inclusive *social* theory of response is sentimental (Tolstoy) & won’t work; the exclusive one is snobbish (ivory tower) & won’t work either. If Shakespeare is greater than Spenser, it’s not because of his greater range of appeal; if Auden is greater than Edgar Guest, it’s not because his audience is more restricted. (CW 23: 16)

**Ex Nihilo.** To create from nothing makes reality an epiphany or manifestation, a phenomenon, *Schein*. But an epiphany of what? According to Eckhart, of God’s desire that there should be something rather than nothing. (CW 5: 296)

**Exhibitionists of Conscience.** Recently a woman sought naturalization as a Canadian, & made a great to-do about being horrified to discover that Canada was a monarchy. (It can hardly have been a discovery.) Such people are exhibitionists of conscience: they seek out issues so that they can parade down the street with their beautiful consciences naked. (CW 5: 411)

**Existence of Saints.** The Roman intellectuals of the later Empire said that gods were imaginative creations of man. Hence there was no limit to their creation: every phenomenon that repeated itself could be deified. Hence the catalogue satire in St. Augustine. One could raise the question of psychological archetypes: what gods “exist” in the sense of being projected mental states? This is Blake’s preoccupation. There’s an interesting analogy with saints in Catholicism. When the Pope says that St. George & St. Christopher never existed, that’s a question, or could be one, of historical fact. But when he goes on to say that it’s all right to venerate them even if they never existed, that raises some very complex epistemological problems. Surely once the distinction between divine revelation and human imagination, and of the corresponding contrast in what they create, is given up, traditional Christianity pretty well goes down the drain, and you can no longer ignore the challenge of Blake’s identification of the two. (CW 9: 238–9)

**Existential Identity.** A literary metaphor is hypothetical only: this was as far as I got with the *Anatomy of Criticism* set up. But Theseus’ lunatic & lover are behind the poet, suggesting an existential identity beyond the literary kind. The relation of the existential lover and the hypothetical identity of the metaphor is deeply involved in poetry (Donne’s *Canonization* and *Extasie*). Theseus is trying to keep it all within the orbit of his authority, hence “lunatic,” but mystical identity above time and space is what’s involved. (CW 5: 107)

**Existentialism.** The “existential” attitude rejects the tendency to think of reality as objective because this makes man an object, depersonalizes him and destroys his freedom. The total movement is: awakening from unconscious being into consciousness, & the *mirror* of awareness: from here to there, *Sein* to *Dasein*; and back. The awakening is exhilarating, a will to power turning around to look at itself: the emancipation of comic into discontinuous prose forms. (CW 9: 25)

The existential philosophers, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, build up structures containing moods or emotional reactions like absurdity, anxiety, nausea, & the like. But that’s because they *choose* these moods. What they’ve really chosen, as the key to reality, is the tragic structure. Comedy includes the victory of dialectic, hence the essential philosophers, from Plato on, are choosing the comic form. (CW 20: 262)

**“Exotic” and “Hectic.”** The word “exotic” seems to be changing its meaning. “An exotic plant” forms the most usual context for it. And as most exotic plants come from a warm climate, they are usually ranker and lusher than the indigenous. Hence “exotic” is used––improperly, of course, as yet––in a unique and almost indefinable sense which will be valuable later on––a sort of recondite, romantic glowing splendour seems to be the general idea. I do not disapprove of this in the least. Movie producers and perfume advertisers are the worst offenders. In this sense it seems to be a sort of telescoping of “erotic” and “exquisite.” “Foreign” or “extraneous” would do as well for its present meaning. Another word which is changing is “hectic” and I am glad of this change, as it brings a euphoniously affective word from technical compartments to ordinary use, albeit with a radically different significance. (“1932 Notebook,” 27 June)

**Exposed Limbs.** There may be good-looking women in London, but I haven’t seen any, and short skirts in this country are a mistake. When the male limbs were exposed and the female ones covered, England was a great nation and produced Chippendale, but now that conditions have been reversed, everyone fusses because the country is not on sufficiently solid foundations. (CW 2: 566)

**Eye and Ear Religion.** Eye religion makes, eventually, the physical order of nature the symbol of God—remember the horror of Plotinus at the Gnostic suggestion that the order of nature might be evil. Thus there’s a *meta*physical world which is the invisible world behind the visible order which is its symbol. The tendency of this is to drop the anthropomorphic mask of a personal Deity, to move from an essential Him Who Is to a That Which Is, the ground of being. Ear religion leads not to a metaphysical but a spiritual world. The word spirit contains the metaphor of breath, air, wind. We can’t see air: if we could we could see nothing else. Similarly with light: we don’t see light; we see *by* light: what we see is a source of light. Creation begins with light: the *source* of light comes on the fourth day. Here’s a conception in which the invisible is the *medium* of the visible, the power by which the visible is brought into being. This is a revolutionary, existential & phenomenological conception. What’s invisible is the inner Word of God, which is not projected on the outer world. (CW 9: 330)

F

**F’s.** I went to the President’s reception for the F’s at four. Margaret Fairley, Robert Finch, the

Fords, Miss Fernauld, Wally Field, the Fishers—some of my best friends are F’s. Some W’s & a few B’s, or sons of B’s. (CW 8: 141)

**Fabulists.** The fable writers are the popular philosophers, just as the maker of proverbs is. Aesop is a black slave––that’s the legend about him. Phaedrus, who collected the Roman fables, is a slave, and he says so at the beginning of his book. And there is something in the fable that makes it a popular possession and a potentially revolutionary form. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Facing Demons.** In a recent experience of mine all the screaming demons of accusation and insecurity came to me, in a form I described as “jealousy.” It would be very pleasant to say that I faced them and fought them down, in the metaphor of the heroic dragon-killer. But of course I didn’t face them; they faced me. Now I think I understand a little more clearly something that’s always puzzled me in Dante. Three beasts appear to him [*Inferno*, canto 1]: they face him, but he doesn’t dare face them; he turns away, and the whole inferno–purgatorio–paradiso journey is the result. You only gain your vision by running away; cf Bhagavadgita. (CW 15: 307)

**A Fair Life’s Work.** The Four Books, as I think of them now, are still in front of me, still to be written, and I have been assuming for some time that one or at the very most two would be all I should ever live to write. Possibly that is still true. But I have a reasonable expectation of finishing Liberal, the Bible book; and Tragicomedy, the book on the literary universe, is so closely interwoven in scheme and general design with it that it may also get finished. That would be a fair life’s work in itself, even with retirement; but perhaps trying to get numbers three and four clearer in my mind would also help with the first two, as it’s happened so often that the ideas I put on the most distant horizons turn out to be the next ones I want. (CW 6: 721)

**Faith.** The word “faith” tends to mean acceptance without evidence, which isn’t a virtue. Real faith is the creation of reality (in one’s life) out of a fiction (the Word, which has to be recognized to be a fiction according to Stevens). Faith is the *hypostasis* of things hoped for, the *elenchos* of things unseen. I think hypostasis is substance, as the AV says [Hebrews 11:1], rather than assurance: Paul uses the word in the latter sense, but Paul isn’t the author of Hebrews. Cf. Hebrews 1:3. (CW 6: 431)

The Western Church, being Roman, legal, authoritarian, & rationalizing sterility as a sense of reality, found a deep kinship with Aristotle: St. Thomas set up realism, the nominalists knocked it down, & so created a schizophrenic split between experience & knowledge, which buggered the conception of “faith,” by taking it out of the area of realized vision. (CW 9: 327)

**Faith, Hope, and Charity.** Secondary faith relates to the past and its traditions and continuity (faith of our fathers); secondary hope to a future either in this world for posterity or another one for ourselves; primary faith and hope are identical with charity. (CW 6: 439)

**Faith vs. Reason.** The controversies between faith and reason are usually presented simply in their own terms, and as late as the novels of Grace Irwin, some of them written in 1969, that is how they were still being presented as the realities of faith colliding with the unrealities of human rationalizing. But I think that the cultural dimension in the display is in the long run more important. Perhaps the rationalizers and higher critics of the Bible, however admirable their motivation, did not realize the extent to which, in assigning the magic and miracle of the Bible to unreality, they were making the entire world as tough and gritty and competitive as the world of ordinary life. (“Victoria’s Contribution to the Development of Canadian Culture”)

**Faithful Watching.** Wind bloweth where it listesth: we do not do things, but try to let them happen & remove obstacles {mainly parental ones, as in Milton}. Wu wei is Keats’ negative capability: I can’t find it yet in Blake. We must imitate Milton’s God in withdrawing from causation & watching. This faithful watching is the literal apprehension of the work of art. For this taking out of conscious obstructions, cf. Bergson. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**The Fall.** The beginnings of a scheme are forming in my mind: the male quests (and quest is something I haven’t yet worked into my theory of primary concerns) is the descent to the belly of the monster. The archetype for this quest is derived from the fall story that was later added to the Priestly creation story [Genesis 1], which is the fall of the demonic, not the human. The Jahwist creation story [Genesis 2] is centered on woman as initiating both the fall and the redemption of man. (CW 6: 546)

**Fallacy of Premature Consensus.** Watch out for the fallacy of premature consensus: nothing sensible ever gets said or done except by an individual, so it’s no good holding a conference to determine a consensus. The consensus emerges much later, and secretly. God’s purposes in regard to the world are deeper and more secret still. (CW 5: 413)

**Falling in Love.** One falls in love with a person, not with an assemblage of virtues. It is just the same in literature: in Elizabethan drama, for instance, all Massinger’s virtues will not persuade us to like him, nor all Marston’s faults succeed in making me dislike him. (“1932 Notebook,” 22 October)

**False Analogies.** The harm done in the world by what Samuel Butler calls “the specious misuse of analogy” is incalculable. Many old women died in torment as witches, many harmless people as heretics (saints & martyrs are never harmless) on the false analogy of the black death & its contagiousness. (CW 15: 4)

**False Gods.** There are, of course, genuine and false gods. The god of progress, who demands that we sacrifice everything for a posterity we know nothing about is a Moloch demanding adult sacrifice for (unborn) children. (CW 5: 273)

**Falstaff’s Supply-Depot View of Women.** One of Falstaff’s less attractive characteristics is the lack of any sense of woman as human beings: he regards them as supply depots for food & drink, sex, and (if they’ve got any) money. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*legend is probably wrong because Falstaff can’t love women, & Queen Elizabeth would have been quite sharp enough to see that

Falstaff in *The Merry Wives* is only on the prowl for money. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Familiarizing the Mysterious.** As the historical progression goes down the levels from mythical to low mimetic, the mysterious becomes the familiar. Words of high romance, like “awful,” “grisly,” “ghastly” & the like, become colloquialisms or the splutter-words of middle-class females; ghosts become thrilling, fairies, at one time malignant demons, are transformed into household pets, & the witch of Puritan Salem becomes the Mother Goose of Victorian Boston. Along with this goes the real progress of making evil tangible & real. (CW 23: 168)

**Fashionable Fiction.** My instinct about fiction has always been that undergraduates write pedantic fantasy &*cena* discussion, & academics favor more rarefied developments of the same thing. So without a good deal of experience & acquired technique in the straightest kind of commercial writing any ranging over to such stuff courts disaster. Meanwhile there’s a solid basis of fiction-writing to please a public that in its essentials hasn’t changed an iota since the Middle Ages, & which is the foundation of Chaucer & Shakespeare, as well as all the novelists. Right now the novel is a fashionable form, & marketable fiction hasn’t changed much since Richardson. Arnold Bennett & H.G. Wells & Somerset Maugham are the foundation of modern fiction, however much we decorate the façade with Finnegans Wake & New Directions. I know all about the value of these latter things, & will do the cause of literature & my superego no good by trying to produce sniggering imitations of them. Well, shut up & get busy. There’s a “block” about plots to get over, & don’t try to fight it: *just* keep a hook baited & wait. (CW 25: 117–18)

**Father-Raping Stories.** Freud is now said to have made a serious mistake when he decided that *all* the father-raping stories he heard from women patients were hysterical. True, it led him to the conception of child-aggressiveness and the Oedipus complex, but it meant that women who *had* been raped were out of luck. (Apparently the reason for so extreme a swing over was an equally hysterical crush that Freud had on a goofy charlatan named Fliess.) If he’d kept things in balance, he might have discovered a Lear complex quite as central and important as the Oedipus one. (CW 13: 379)

**Fear of Insecurity.** The source of the vulgar cult of the useful (i.e., what good is Latin?) is a sense of social insecurity. Now a lot of well-meaning people feel obliged to sympathize with that, in order to consider themselves liberals with a radical undertow: in order, in short, to retain their amateur standing as lovers of humanity. But this fear of insecurity has in the vast majority of cases nothing whatever to do with real fear of losing one’s sources of food & shelter. It’s a polite social fiction to speak of oneself as poor—everyone does it—but it is insolent cowardice for a privileged, well fed & well provided for middle class to claim for themselves the sympathy that belongs to the genuine victims of social inequality. The middle-class fear is a fear engendered by the general scrambling hysteria of competitive society: the feeling that one has not hoarded enough of what it is really going to be hard to get. (CW 25: 9)

**Fearful Symmetry.**This morning I went down to finish up odds & ends—letters to Jack Nicol & Richard Ellmann, a letter to the *New Statesman* bawling the beejesus out of them for a review on Blake that hadn’t mentioned me, etc. After listening to the voice of the accuser for a long time, I’m gradually getting a slight feeling of deliverance from the law. That is, I’m really completely detached from my book, as I think I’ve said, & I don’t mind in the least squawking like hell about it on occasion. I feel almost that I am outgrowing, not only the desire for dignity, but the desire for integrity. It has something to do with shaking off my animus role, which I hope I’m gradually doing. Intelligent & sensitive women have often quite literally laid down the law to me. (CW 8: 147)

I don’t ordinarily write at my best without my roots growing around me: the Blake [*Fearful*

*Symmetry*]emerged out of pure routine. But the Blake after all was an intensely personal book, a kind of subjective academic lyric, a hymn to the Father, and I think I’m entering on a more public phase of my life. (CW 8: 215)

**Female Principle.** What Frazer unaccountably leaves entirely out of his scheme is the female principle, who represents the earth itself, which is potentially still fruitful all through the winter. This is what Graves adds; I’ve always known that, but haven’t had the stages clear. The four phases in Graves are: first, virgin-mother with infant son (not very clear, but in his “ark” passage in the Juan poem). Second, the agon or sea-dragon fight, which seems to be oddly simultaneous with what’s the real second phase of the white-goddess cycle, that of lover and bride. Third, the white goddess turns into an elusive siren or enchanting witch, beckoning and smiling, often with marine overtones like the mermaid, or, of course, Aphrodite the foam-born. Here the lover becomes the forsaken, abandoned, or tantalized lover: this is the phase at which the Eros poems start. Fourth, the white goddess becomes hag or crone, the sinister witch of so many witch-hunts, and her ex-lover becomes the victim. Then she renews her and looks round for a new lover. (CW 6: 687)

**Fiction and Nonfiction.** Prose fiction today seems to fall into a general negative antithesis of fiction and nonfiction, the former being about things admitted not to be true, and the latter about everything else. Fiction and facts are, thus, placed in opposition, and the distinction is between the imaginary and the real, the imaginary and the imaginative being, of course, identified. With the extraordinary vulgarity of this distinction we take immediate issue, for the word *fiction*, like the word *poetry*, means etymologically something made for its own sake. We, therefore, extend the term to include any form of prose writing which belongs to literature rather than to another subject. The distinction between the literary and the nonliterary is admittedly a very approximate one, but surely it does exist; and we have no hesitation in saying that the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, because it survives obviously in literature rather than in science or philosophy, is fiction, and that Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* or Doughty’s *Arabia Deserta* are both fiction and nonfiction, depending on what one reads them for. (CW 3: 383–4)

**Fiction-Writing Fantasy.** I’d like to write an anatomy sometime in the form of a dialogue with a computer, which replies in various idioms, as the oracular, light verse, Zen koans, & the like, gradually changing the character of the inquirer from a bumptious and arrogant know-it-all to a penitent confessing before what he finally has projected as God. All kinds of things one could do, once I’d figured out the point. (CW 9: 98)

All my life I’ve had an ambition to write fiction, either as a series of novels, or as one big novel. Some of the motivation is dubious: I want to prove to myself and to others that I can be “creative” in the conventionally creative genres. The idea of a series of novels has gradually faded or has left me with the desire to leave, like Santayana, a single work of fiction behind me. (CW 25: 147–8)

**Fictional Settings.** When it comes to the setting of a novel, all settings are strange to their reader, and if they aren’t they ought to be made so. Hardy is no easier for British readers than he is for Canadians, unless the British reader happens to come from Dorset, and certainly Joseph Conrad would be equally strange to both. Similarly with Canadian fiction: not only are some very good novels, like those of David Knight and Margaret Laurence, set in Africa, but of those with Canadian settings Buckler would be strange to a Westerner, Sinclair Ross to a Maritimer, and the Ontario of Robertson Davies and the Quebec of Ringuet are as far apart as the earth and the moon. It is possible to catch a student’s interest by telling him that the book he is about to read is the work of a fellow countryman. But even if it is set in the very same milieu as the student himself grew up in, the effort in teaching out to be towards making the description of that setting as strange and remote as possible, so that the student will be able to see his own culture objectively. Naturally this applies to time as well as space: all novels, including contemporary ones, ought to be reads by the historical imagination. (Letter to G. Milburn, 24 May 1973)

**Fifth Form of Prose Fiction.** For years I’ve been pondering the possibility of a genuinely new formula in prose fiction. I’ve been interested in turn in all of my four forms, but I don’t see anything new in any of them (for me, that is: I’m not making a general judgement). There remains the fifth form, the *Finnegans Wake* cyclic myth. I’ve thought of a novel on the life of Christ, & will collect things to put in it: but I wonder what would come of a Bardo novel. Huxley appears to be one of the few who have tried the story of the persistence of consciousness after death, & I gather it’s a bad novel (*Time Must Have a Stop*). Yet here might be a formula to handle my interest in fantasy & the tale of terror in that novel way I’ve been looking for. Let’s say a man dies. His personality splits into a ghost that hangs around the body & another focus of consciousness. He realizes that he’s “saved,” whatever that means, because he’s committed his consciousness to the latter. Those who commit themselves to the former are demonic. He becomes the centre of a world, or rather its circumference: the world is apparently in dream space. He’s a *Lare*, a fixed point, no longer a living body rolling from place to place, but a watcher, & things come to him—a psychoanalytic analysis of his past first, a pure vision of his “damned” self (on my principle that the mouth of hell is the previous moment), other perspectives of the world, & so on. There isn’t anything that couldn’t fit a scheme like that. (CW 8: 129)

**Fighting with One’s Faith.** The only religious minds of any real interest today are those who struggle with their faith like Jacob with the angel, like Emily Dickinson, Blake, Baudelaire, etc. The notion of fighting with one’s faith was denounced in Catholic circles until very recently, and of course still is in nearly all official circles. But it’s gaining ground even there. (CW 6: 633)

**Finnegans Wake.** [In response to a question about the most outstanding books in the past thirty years.] Thirty years would include the publication of James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* in 1939. This is the only twentieth-century book that I find myself living with, in the way that I live with *Tristram Shandy*, Burton’s *Anatomy*, Dickens, and the greater poets. It is an inexhaustible word-hoard of humor, wit, erudition, and symbolism; it never, for me, degenerates into a mere puzzle, but always has on every page something to astonish and delight. (*Finnegans Wake*)

The richness & complexity of Biblical imagery in *Finnegans Wake* is extraordinary. Finnegan is the dreamer; the other characters are shifting identities in the dream (i.e. the sleep of history). Finnegan never wakes, because his zodiac of mourners hold a “wake” to keep him asleep. They tout HCE as his successor (i.e. his Narcissus reflection or chief piece of self-alienated ego in the dream world). For his two sons who become three soldiers in the dream, see the Genesis pattern of two & a shadowy third—the murdered Abel, the cursed Ham, Abraham’s three angels who seem to be Jehovah & two angels. Also James & John (sons of thunder) with Peter (?), Moses & Elijah with Christ. The amnesia & twins theme of romance. There’s probably a microcosmic dreamer too. (CW 5: 27)

**Fire.** Hopkins’ Heraclitean fire: the Resurrection is the fire of life that turns the burnt-match carbon of the natural body into the diamond-carbon of the spiritual one. Here the Heraclitean fire is the fire which consumes, not the fire of life. “It is death to souls to become water” [Heraclitus, fragment 49], but there’s also the water of life. (CW 5: 291)

**Fire and Wheel Metaphors.** Engineering metaphors or thought models start of course with fire and the wheel. One gives metaphors of spark, scintilla, energy & the like: most of our organism metaphors take off from it. The wheel is of course the source of all cyclical conceptions of fate, fortune & nature. The pendulum is involved in all Yin & Yang theories like those in Plato’s *Politicus*; it’s also part of Hegel. But in Hegel, as still more in Marx, we begin to get all the “feedback,” “governor” & other self-regulating metaphors that run through 19th c. thought from Burke to Butler. (CW 23: 262)

**First Four Books.** I have long had a sense that the four books [the primary half of Frye’s ogdoad: Liberal, Tragicomedy, Anticlimax, and Rencontre] had some kind of connexion with the four years of my undergraduate career here, though of course nobody can understand how except me. My first year [1929–30] was bits and pieces academically, and in retrospect the New Testament Greek course was pretty central to it: anyway the Bible book is connected in my mind with that year. The second year [1930–31] brought Pelham Edgar teaching Shakespeare, the stock company at the Empire Theatre, and my discovery of Colin Still on the *Tempest*. That’s the bedrock of Tragicomedy. The third year [1931–32] was the discovery of Blake, and I’m just beginning to realize that Anticlimax is in many respects a book revolving around Blake: my treatment of Blake was, after all, very largely a conceptual and Urizenic treatment. The fourth year [1932–33] was the year of the Romanticism essay, and that has always seemed to have some relation to Rencontre. (CW 15: 308–9)

**First Law of Philology.** The Bible at its earliest is familiar with the rhythm of the rise & fall of civilizations. Egyptian texts speak of a Habiru or Apiru, who sound very like “Hebrew,” which is not the name of a nation but means something like “dispossessed people” or proletariat. (This association is, of course, subject to the first law of philology, which is that every association of words that looks in the least interesting has been shown by scholars to be a mere coincidence.) (CW 13: 353)

**Fisher, Peter.** I think at this point I should try to collect my impression of the Lankavatara Sutra. My feeling that there is something crucial for me in this book was inspired in me by Peter Fisher, who gave me my copy, and the childlike confidence I had in his judgment & the soundness of his instinct is curious in another man, as I don’t think he’s necessarily a “greater” man. I think Fisher is looking, as we all look, for a real home, of which one’s physical home is the analogy, & was therefore searching for the real form of an original Baptist environment very similar to my own. (CW 13: 45–6)

**Fleming, Ian.** I’ve just been reading a thriller of Ian Fleming’s, and am astonished at the stockness of the material, combined as it is with a certain sophistication in handling concrete detail. Hero and heroine kidnapped by fiendish villains, who instead of killing them at once leave them alone & allow them to escape. Villain takes advantage of the situation to recount his life story as a cognitio; heroine threatened with torture, taking the form of displaced rape. For some strange reason the word “thighs” didn’t appear, as it almost always does in that place in thrillers. Many years ago Edmund Wilson, in a *New Yorker* review, connected the Houdini situation with the dying & reviving god. (CW 23: 293–4)

**Folk Tale Themes.** Folk tale themes and motifs: the animal helpers, the elemental spirits, the grateful dead, the animals who carry out impossible tasks, all belong to the theme of lost but recoverable powers of nature, the identity with “animal forms of wisdom,” as Blake calls them, that we’ve given up or never realized we had. (CW 5: 326)

**Form and Content.** The opposite of the verbal perception is the presentation, the communicated message, what Marshall McLuhan talks about. Marshall says it’s the form & not the content of the message that’s important, which is why the nature of the medium is also important. It seems to me that the form has this importance only as long as we’re unconscious of it: to become aware of the form as a form is to separate the content. At that point the presentation goes into reverse & becomes a perception: the form comes from us then. (CW 9: 15)

**Form and Formula.** What is implied by the fact that revision is possible in writing a poem? It seems to me clear that a poet enters into and discovers a form in the act of writing. There are no pre-existing forms, and if a bad poet writes a sonnet the fourteen lines & rhyme scheme won’t give him form: it’ll only give him a formula. As such, it won’t give form to mediocre thinking or sloppy technique, but can only act as an external or drill-sergeant discipline. But forms, as distinct from formulas, are part of the real presence revealed by art. Once a critic has discovered a form, and nobody but a critic can discover one, it’s apt to become a formula for future poets. But in itself it’s the formal cause of poetry, which expands from the work of art to the genre, from the genre to the archetype, and from the archetype to the verbal universe. External & objective formal qualities, such as the twelve books of the epic, belong to accident instead of substance. (CW 8: 432)

**Foul Creature.**To speak of the purposes of God in regard to man runs up against the flood archetype, where God says to hell with mankind: why did I ever create the foul creature? Note that the opposite notion, that nature exists for human purposes, is considerably loosened up in the New Testament. Considering the lilies [Matthew 6:28, Luke 12:27] is a different thing from picking them to make a bouquet. (CW 6: 626–7)

**The Fountain.** I have finished Charles Langbridge Morgan’s *The Fountain*, and have started it again. It is very beautiful and very fine—parts of it I disagree with and dislike, but on the whole as fine a novel as any I know. Someday when war has become an evil dream and economic unrest an obsolete problem our lives will be complicated by all sorts of new problems arising from an advance of knowledge and a transcending of the old crudities of hunger and shelter and the rest. Scientists prepare for such an era; artists assume it is already here, and *The Fountain* is such an anticipation. (CW 1: 297)

**Four Falls.** There are four falls in Genesis: the fall from innocence in Eden, which is explicit in the

Jahwist account; the fall from the vision of creation (angel with sword); the fall of civilization (Noah’s flood) & the fall of language (Babel). (CW 5: 29)

**Four Humours.**I’ve been convinced for a long time of the essential correctness of the humor theory. Not that I think there are humors, but I am sure there are four types of temperament, sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric & melancholy. I, for instance, am sanguine, & Helen, like all the Kemps, is melancholy. Her mother is sanguine, Blodwen Davies is phlegmatic, & so on. It’s possible that, as in Jung’s four types, there’s a differentiating & an auxiliary humor: thus Bill Little is choleric & phlegmatic & Norman Endicott choleric & melancholy. This is fun. It’s a big advantage having it simply as types, without pinning it down to actual bodily substances, though there may be such substances. The astrological types would complicate it a good deal more, of course. (CW 8: 321)

**Four Symbolic Men.**Latin had, at least since Tertullian’s time, been doing some very un-Ciceronian and un-Virgilian things, but it wasn’t until Goths and Lombards and Franks and Anglo Saxons finally took charge of Europe that the direction of its development finally became obvious. The arts now acquired a quality described by the French as *barbarique*, which may be translated “something we can’t be bothered trying to understand.” At the court of Theodoric in Ravenna there were four men who may be taken as symbols of this new cultural development. One was Theodoric himself, hero of Teutonic sagas and mentioned as a matter of course in *Widsith*, or the first vernacular poem. Another was Boethius, with his great dreams of translating the whole of Plato and Aristotle, for popularizing Ptolemy, Euclid, and Pythagoras, who transmitted to posterity not quite this, but a kind of epitome of the Classical attitude to life. The third was the unknown mosaic artist who designed the Mausoleum of Gallo Placidia, and who, like Boethius, shows us the culture of the Classical world purified of its decadence by Christianity. The fourth was the Goth Cassiodorus, of great importance in the history of education and one of the men who made it possible for the monasteries to preserve learning. Cassiodorus it was who invented the “High style, as whan that men to kynges write”. . . .He was a musician, and had the same feeling for the infinite mystery which we (that is, I) have found so often in English: in Davies’ *Orchestra*, Cowley’s *Davideis*, Browning’s *Saul*, Milton’s *At a Solemn Music*. And because of that not only is he ready on any occasion to talk about the music of the spheres and universal harmony and rhythm, showing the capacity for expanding allegory, which is so precious a heritage of medieval poetry, but he becomes intoxicated with words as pure sound, making them echo and call and respond through his turgid sentences. (“Intoxicated with Words”)

**Fragmentary Vision.** The problem of Yeats is the problem of a modern mythopoeic poet who isn’t content, as Rimbaud & Rilke were content, with the lyrical or fragmentary vision. Critics haven’t done their job properly, which is to elaborate the grammar of the language of poetry & construct a system as definite, concrete & self-consistent as a metaphysic or a theology, but in imaginative terms. This is anagogy, which formerly could remain inside a single religion (Dante), but which is now bursting the limits & blowing up the foundations of all rational systems whether religious, philosophical or scientific. (CW 15: 90)

**Frames.** In a Renaissance painting the frame defines the shape of the painting; in a typically Baroque painting the frame contains its expansion out of the canvas. (CW 6: 561)

**Fraternity.** Fraternity, which I’ve stressed so much, has its centre in exodus or revolution: revolutionaries call each other comrades. A revolution, or at least the Biblical one, is tribal, and it settles in the top rank of society when the counter-revolutionary establishment appears, as it inevitably does. Arnold’s term for the aristocracy, “barbarians” points to the tribal. Besides aristocracies, there are priesthoods and sacerdotal tribal groups of “brothers” and “sisters.” Another fraternal development is the guild or craft or caste, the tribal in terms of social function. The fact that every tribal group is or appears to be potentially conspiratorial accounts for certain aspects of anti-Semitism, the Jews being scapegoats for the Nazis who could project their own tribalism on them. Similarly with the “illuminati” and freemason scapegoat myths. Sparta is the archetype of the tribal: the efforts to graft Athenian ideals on it, which extend from Plato to Castiglione and beyond, are bound to fail. (CW 5: 95–6)

Hebraic and Hellenic traditions are both tribal, based on the sense that a real community (i.e. a spiritual one) has to be a small group, small enough for the individual to emerge. Hence the amount of work society as a whole does to support a small aristocracy with all the privileges of social life. Only a small privileged group can possess the third great revolutionary virtue of fraternity, which is why all revolutionary movements to promote liberty and equality founder on the shoals of producing yet another exploiting dominant group. The difficulties of the “king” metaphor about God who’s entitled to the best of everything are linked with this. (CW 6: 678)

**Freedom.** The notion that being involved with an infinite personality is an infringement on man’s “freedom” seems to me exquisitely idiotic. What has “freedom,” at any recorded period in history, ever meant for more than one per cent of the total population? What did it really mean even for them? Certainly freedom is one of my primary concerns, but it always includes deliverance from everything society thinks is freedom. (CW 5: 205)

**French Structuralism.** It was a signal honour to me for you to contribute to my *Festschrift*, apart altogether from the inherent interest of the article itself. I have never felt that I was going in quite the same direction as the French structuralists, and I am all the more pleased to have that fact noted and clarified. (Letter to Paul Ricoeur, 1 August 1984)

**From Ritual to Drama.** It is now rapidly becoming a commonplace of literary criticism that out of the pagan rites—chiefly the chthonic ones—were born the great rhythmic and communal art forms, music and drama, the essence of all objective art, forming a sort of corolla of the liturgy. The cultus begins with the spasmodic actions of sympathetic magic, leaping in the air to make the crops grow higher, walking in a processional circle to isolate a sacred area in enchantment, inarticulate ecstatic cries, and so on, gradually developing into a ritual dance, generally intended to re-enact the adventures of the god invoked. Out of this ritual dance grows a disciplined and mature drama. Tragedy was originally a goat sacrifice, like the Jewish scapegoat offering to Azazel, the goat being an incarnation of Dionysus, and Dionysiac ecstasy being the primary impetus of Greek creative activity. The fall of the tragic hero is in essence the death of the sacrificial victim. For the hero is the incarnation of the aspiring ego, the desire of man for self-apotheosis, and his fall brings the profound cathartic reaction of a reabsorption into society, like Samson (an important but frequently overlooked example of a sacrificial victim) justified by death. (CW 3: 135–6)

**Frustrated Poets.** Just as a critic has no business telling a poet how he ought to write, so he has no business saying “there’s a man who’s writing what I think should be written.” That means that the poet, like the child of a possessive parent, is being recreated in the critic’s image of himself as the poet he wishes he had been—what I’m saying is that any critic who is really a frustrated poet is a menace. Look at Ruskin on the pre-Raphaelites—they could only paint by ignoring him.

Nevertheless there is that dialectical relation between criticism and poetry as a whole. (CW 25: 200)

**Frustration.** The use of frustration in art, the separated lovers of romance & the suspended episodes of serials, are closely connected with the presence in art of linear time. This element is in the serialized & episodic romance but *not* in the epic, which begins *in medias res*; it is in the chronicle play, where the rejection of Falstaff symbolizes the continuous frustration of life (the separation of the green world from the court), but not in tragedy or comedy. It is in tragedy only to the extent that tragedy is incomplete comedy. Soap operas & comic strips are as close to endless art as we can get: their unreality has something to do with the intolerable realism of their form. (CW 8: 139)

**Frye Is God.**The mail we found when we returned wasn’t as important as we’d expected. . . . There was a letter from Irving attached to his new essay for the Americans.A story in it about a freshman coming to Victoria to take an Religious Knowledge course from Professor Frye. When he begins it he believes in God: when he gets to Christmas he believes in Frye’s God: when he comes to the end of the year he believes Frye is God. As a matter of fact I’ve known for some time that undergraduates used to refer to me casually as “God” in their conversations. It’s a strain to live up to that, & doubtless of some theological interest to know that God gets a hell of a dose of hay fever every year at this time: maybe that’s why so many wars start in August & September. (CW 8: 449)

**Fucking.** Fucking is for fucking’s sake. Beauty, in the *Critique of Judgment*, is purposiveness without purpose. Nature says: fucking has the purpose of begetting children & perpetuating the species. Every genuine fuck, even when fertile, cheats silly nature. I don’t mean all this, but the hunch is worth recording. Sublimation goes up the other way, toward the sense of the sex partner as *person* or individual. Children are loved as part of the community: the love for them has an educational factor. (CW 5: 412)

**Full Professorship.** Woodhouse told me Don Cameron Allen of Johns Hopkins had written him asking him if he thought anyone in Canada was capable of filling a full professorship there: 19th c. preferred, but failing that, history of criticism & general problems. At the end of his letter he said “What about Frye?” I said “please don’t slam that door.” Salary $7000, leading (they don’t say how soon) to $8000. (CW 8: 231)

**Function of Art in Jung and Blake.** In Jung art is a technique of extending the understanding: in Blake this is more explicitly a technique of criticism. In both the key question about truth is: how do you visualize (or concretize) it? Concretize is a barbarous locution, but gives some idea of it. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**The Fundamental Authority of Art.** At a certain level, say, of the Bach B Minor Mass, or the Jupiter symphony, or Schumann or Tchaikovsky, you are listening to what music was made to say: this is the voice of music, this is the fundamental authority that that art is all about. And that is what you get, say, in Shakespearean romance. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Funerals.** Marjorie King has just phoned to say that Harold [King] is dead. Heart attack striking without warning last night. Harold was as lovable a person as I knew, & I shall miss him intensely: it’s one of the few deaths I have experienced that hurt. She wants me to do the funeral: I always refuse marriages, but I don’t see how I can refuse this—actually my attitude to marriages may be ungracious. I suppose when people ask me they want either a personal touch or less religion than they get from professionals. Personal touches are out of place at funerals—there one wants only to see the great wheels of the Church rolling by. It is much more of an imposition than Marjorie realizes, as the death is a considerable shock to me, even if it cannot be compared with the shock to her. As for the religion, all one can do at a funeral is proclaim the fact of resurrection: any funeral that doesn’t do that is just variations on “Behold, he stinketh” [John 11:39]. (CW 8: 66)

My head is full of this bother about the funeral—I went over to the funeral parlor this afternoon to talk to Marjorie about it. Margaret Fairley was there, & remarked that there shouldn’t be any compulsion for the audience to join into anything, as there’d be everyone there from devout Baptists to party members. I dismissed the idea of a hymn, which produces a terrible caterwauling at funerals, but I think there should be a prayer, in spite of the brethren’s scruples, for the sake of the relatives at least. I shall read the paragraph in the Book of Wisdom about the souls of the righteous being in the hands of God, & the paragraph following about people who die in the prime of life [Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–9]. Marjorie asked for “These Things Shall Be” & Blake’s Jerusalem, & something about social justice from the Bible, which I’m afraid isn’t very interested in social justice, as such. Margaret suggested Amos, but he’s rather thundery weather for funerals. I thought of James, but I dunno. Jeremiah is too dismal & Isaiah just hits & runs. I’d like to read the paragraph in *Religio Medici* which is the teacher’s statement of faith, & I’d dearly love to find something decent about painters, perhaps from Van Gogh. The only Biblical thing I can find, & that’s not very good, is from Zechariah. (CW 8: 67–8)

**Furniture Terms.** The Restoration consolidated a shift which stopped halfway between creation and criticism. The central art forms become a blend of music and drama on the one hand, and of architecture and sculpture on the other. The former, which brings a dramatic situation directly into the accented rhythm of life, is actualized in the comedy of manners; the latter is more obviously furniture. The trend is, however, toward the spatial: thus, the comedy of manners becomes far more effective and powerful the nearer it approaches the spatial or pessimistic side of satire, as with Swift and Hogarth, and the psychology of artistry is more concentrated on furniture than on the comedy. When we speak of the poetry of Dryden or Pope, we judge it in furniture terms—polish, elegance, symmetry, finish, smoothness, and so forth. (CW 3: 66)

**Future.**There’s a contrast between the apocalyptic and the millennial, the pan-historical vision focused on a future versus the vision of the expanded present, the world of physical concerns taking on a spiritual dimension. Hegel really tried to reach the apocalyptic conclusion in spite of his panhistorical perspective: Marx isolated the millennial element in it, the pure donkey’s carrot of just you wait. The great strength of the New Testament was in the fact that its future was thought to be just around the corner: hence the abysmal fatuity of Paul whenever he gets on such subjects as what do we do right now with our women. As centuries passed, the future kept retreating, and now after two thousand years we ought to be getting the point that there’s never anything in the future except more future. (CW 6: 653–4)

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**Games People Play.** Every fad of its time probably has a symbolic significance, thus only a tissue of great eclecticism, superficial interest in everything, attempt to gain an ordered semblance of knowledge and unbounded self-satisfaction and optimism could have produced the cross-word puzzle, while those busied with the problem of building up a synthetic unity out of chaos become hypnotized by jig saw puzzles. But to call these things symbolic in the high sense is a vile prostitution of a noble word. They represent the negative side of the Zeitgeist; the refusal to cooperate, the refusal to live. There is thus an element of pure suicide in them. People absorbed in them do not waste time; they kill time. But time is life, ––as the Mad Hatter said, it is not wasting it, but *him*. This nervous and feverish energy in pursuit of something dead is part of race suicide. The amount of skill, ingenuity, wisdom and sheer genius sapped and sucked up by bridge would have brought about a Utopia, properly used, long ago. (“1932 Notebook,” 20 May)

**Garbage.** In Cambridge garbage is fed to pigs, & has to be distinguished from “trash.” To distinguish them you have to decide whether you’d eat it or not if you were a pig. (CW 8: 424)

**Genius.** One of the chief difficulties in the interpretation of any art is that the eye sees more than the heart knows, & what the artist sees as an artist is always more comprehensive than what he believes as a “man.” The whole romantic conception of genius is balls to start with: there is no such thing as a great man; it’s only that some men can do jobs well that we think important, & greatness always relates to the job & never to the man. Again, genius is a knack & nothing more: everyone agrees to call Beethoven a genius, but no one who had studied his life carefully would maintain that he was an unusually good man or wise man or even intelligent man: he was only a man with a knack of writing music, & equipped with the distortion of character that such hypertrophy brings. (CW 20: 113)

**Genius of the Genre.** My remark in the Stratford paper that Shakespeare was not a great poet who wrote plays, but a great dramatist who used mainly verse, suggests the important critical principle of the surrender to the genius of the genre. Ancient poets appealed to Muses to write their poems for them, and the Muses were generic: you wouldn’t begin a love lyric with an appeal to Clio or Urania. (CW 5: 75)

**Genre.** Looking at a row of books by Carlos Castaneda, I note that the early ones are labelled “nonfiction” & the later ones “fiction,” although there is no generic difference between them. Doubtless an interesting story behind that, but not one to illuminate genre criticism. *Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is a confession-anatomy form also labelled “non-fiction,” though the author’s preface emphasizes its fictional form. People are stupid. (CW 5: 79)

**Geometrical Metaphors.** Geometrical metaphors come mainly from the spatial orientation of the body. Ladders, staircases, chains of being & pyramidal hierarchies of steps are all “up lifting” thoughts: divers & miners suggest profundity, depth, & the resurrection of gold & pearls from the dead. “On the other hand,” we have metaphors of parallelism, balance & dual symmetry. Church, army & feudal system are degree-models; metaphors of discontinuity come into the absolute monarch, Providence, & the Cartesian soul. (CW 23: 262)

**Ghost Stories.** Why should it be relevant to discuss whether a story is or is not a ghost story? We don’t ask if Kafka’s *Castle* or Mallarmé’s *Igitur* are ghost stories. The reason is the Victorian convention centered on the Christmas issues of periodicals; where, in deference to the winter solstice, there are explicit ghost stories. *The Turn of the Screw* is solidly encased in this convention, though it got out of hand. Speaking of *The Turn of the Screw* and of Mallarmé, note how the effect of the story is achieved by not naming but painting the effect on the other characters. Henry James says explicitly, or implies implicitly, that to identify an evil is to lessen it, or rather to bring out what Hannah Arendt calls its banality. (CW 15: 352–3)

**Giants and Dwarfs.** The killing of Kwasind by the Pygmies [in Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*] is part of the general archetype of there being both giants and dwarfs in the underworld: that’s why *Gulliver’s Travels* begins with little people surrounding a giant, then reverses the perspective. Similarly in Norse mythology, and in Greek too for that matter—both giants and subterranean gnomes or kobolds. Wonder why. Anything to do with the objectification process, giant as object, perceiver as dwarf? Note that dwarfs are almost invariably workers, miners: giants can work but are more usually presented as lazy and exploiters. (“Notes on Romance”)

**Gilson, Étienne.** I went over for Gilson’s paper on medieval scholarship. Terrific crowd, so that we had to move into Room 8. I know a Frenchman’s idea of a formal lecture is different from a colloquium, but he wasn’t as disconcerted as he pretended to be. The paper had a great deal of wit & charm, & only when one thought it over afterwards did one realize that after all the old bugger

really hadn’t *said* anything. Or at least, what he did say, that historical abstractions like “Renaissance” are not things, I didn’t need to be told. (CW 8: 486)

**Glibness.**Lectures all morning. In Milton I dealt with the paradox of evil as a metaphysical negation & a moral fact, comparing it with the conception of cold in physics. Somebody asked me why chaos existed. I said all conceptions of the universe, not just the Einsteinian, are limited, & chaos marks the limit of that which is created by God yet is not God. There can be nothing beyond chaos, because there can be nothing beyond God; but God’s power radiates to the limit of matter, or creation, hence there has to be chaos, or as near to pure matter as is conceivable, at that limit. I said that God’s power is a vision to angels, a mystery to men, an automatic instinct in animals, plants &, according to the 17th c., minerals, and operates as luck or chance in chaos, hence Satan’s footslip. That the 19th c, influenced by the prestige of biological & other sciences, had looked downward from the human mystery & seen the world as a mechanism, and that the 20th c., peering through that, had struck probability & the “principle of indeterminacy” at the bottom of it. A touch of glibness there, as there is in a lot of what I say. (CW 8: 64)

**Glossing over Historical Facts.**  Scott’s*Ivanhoe* is a good example of the way romance glosses over historical facts, but it also makes clear that they are being glossed over. That is, Isaac is stuck in Front-de-Boeuf’s dungeon and threatened with hideous tortures, and Rebecca is condemned at a socalled trial, actually a rationalized lynching as a sorceress. They both get rescued by a good-natured novelist, whose readers wouldn’t have tolerated anything else, but historically Jews were tortured and burned for witchcraft on no evidence. Scott emphasizes this (a) by notes: he even interrupts his narrative with a quotation from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to show what happened to people without rescuing novelists (b) by allusion: he says Rebecca got her medical knowledge from Miriam, who was burned at the stake as a witch (c) by the device of the inset tale coming in the opposite direction, as when the story of Ulrica, whose name for some reason has been changed to Urfried, demonstrates that kidnapped blonde dolls don’t always get away unscrewed. (“Notes on Romance”)

**God.**To me, God means the unlimited nature of the human heritage. (CW 5: 288)

**God and Gods.** I suppose the slow conviction that the just shall live by faith took shape in

Judaism, with its conception, very rare in any religions except those that have derived from it, of “false gods.” As soon as you begin thinking of truth & falsehood in relation to gods you’ve gone about halfway to monotheism: I don’t quite know why at the moment: it just seems obvious that if you *believe* in *a* god he starts to become *the* god. (Notebook 13)

**God as Maker.**Except as a metaphor, and as thereby validating human creativity, the notion of God as a maker is vulgar. It leads to the puerilities of the divine watchmaker of Paley, and of the “if the world exists, somebody must have made it” argument. It is less vulgar, however, than adding the unconscious gloss: “God made the world for us.” That leads to theodicy and the judgment “the cosmos is unjust,” a judgment about as relevant as a dog’s judgment on a picture: “inedible.” (CW 6: 723)

**“God Is Dead.”** The phrase “God is dead” may have made some sense in the Nietzschean context, but as a slogan it’s sheer idiocy. It is far more likely that in the twenty-first century the birds in the trees will be singing “Man is dead, thank God.” What really is dead is the antithesis between a subjective man and an objective God. Nietzsche, by the way, was a power and will worshipper, and because everything man *does* goes in a circle, he *had* to wind up with his identical-recurrence horseshit. (CW 5:313–4), 27 January 1983)

**God’s Last Name.** You may recall that when Tom Sawyer explains to Huckleberry Finn that kings had only a given name, Huck Finn said that he wouldn’t want to have only a given name, like a nigger. God has no surname because he is (a) royal and (b) has more in common with “niggers,” that is the disposed and wretched of the earth. If he had a surname he would be a gentleman, and as *King Lear* says, the Prince of Darkness is that. (Letter to Frederick G. Brack)

**Going Bust.** It’s typical of my schemes—perhaps that’s the reason I have them—that they go bust immediately. (CW 13: 177)

**The Golden Age.** I have always been very touched and very deeply moved by the scene where Don Quixote meets some Spanish peasants and they share their dinner of acorns with him. And, then, he starts talking about the Golden Age, and then you realize, suddenly, that this is what Quixote is all about. And his own psychotic dream of rescuing beautiful maidens from giants is all overlaid on top of this. But there is a real vision there. He wouldn’t be so unforgettable a madman if it weren’t. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**The Golden Bough.** *TheGolden Bough* is admitted on all sides to be a magnificent piece of scientific research and perhaps the most important and influential book written by an Englishman since the *The Origin of Species*. Certainly Frazer has, aided by what must be something very like a regiment of assisting field workers, compiled a huge nineteenth-century *Anatomy of Melancholy* for which all lovers of *quidquid agunt homines* [whatever men do] will be grateful. But, as one bores his way along the shelf of books, one is conscious of the Macaulay-like tone of the supercilious middle-class Victorian contemplating the wasteful and gloomy pageant of history, which cuts under the majestic piling up of details and illustrations with the cheap sarcasms of a second-hand Voltaire. It may perhaps be said, without undue presumption, that Frazer in establishing his thesis has been far more aware of its extent than of its depth. We are dealing with forces which, while they appear outwardly in absurd and generally repulsive antics of savages, constitute inwardly a powerful evolutionary impulse which has given us everything we hold valuable today. Consequently, it is very disappointing to come to the twelfth volume and find that Frazer’s inferences from his investigations toward a philosophy of history are only a rehash of that incorrigible sentimentalist among philosophers, Auguste Comte. (CW 3: 140)

I am aware of the danger indicated by Ruth Benedict (*Patterns of Culture*) of taking examples from primitive societies isolated from the social contexts to which they are related. But I am dealing with literary criticism, not with anthropology, & hence I follow the method of *The Golden Bough*, a book which is possibly more useful to literary criticism than to anthropology. (CW 20: 165)

Frazer’s book purports to be anthropology & is really criticism, as its practice of separating the ritual from its cultural context indicates. The Cambridge Classical school, expanding into Chambers & Gaster, comes next. Their work is solidly established as literary criticism, not necessarily as source- hunting historicism. The necessity of clinging to historical categories means that when the historical links aren’t there, you have to postulate secret ones, & hence arrive at a conspiratorial theory of history; this happened to Jessie Weston & Robert Graves, besides Mme Blavatsky (it’s in Harold Bayley too). (CW 23: 164)

**Good.** Western civilization from the time of the Greeks onward has made many attempts to express the nature of the good, and has not yet got very far away from the Platonic division of the *good* into the *just*, the *beautiful*, and the *true*. If these words have a more sentimental connotation than *good*, it is only because the less earnest minds today prefer to use *good* as a euphemism with a more noncommittal meaning as a blanket term for the other three. But a little reflection will show us that these three words refer to different aspects of behaviour. *Just* relates to action: it is the compulsion the *good* exerts on the will. *Beautiful* relates to emotion: it is the compulsion the *good* exerts on feeling. *True* relates to thought: it is the compulsion the *good* exerts on reason. Each of these aspects of the *good* is systematic and constructive, as it leads toward an ideal. So we get three systems of compulsion of the *good* to a definite aim. From *just*, *beautiful*, and *true* we pass to *justice*, *beauty*, and *truth*. We now have morality, the system of justice; art, the system of beauty; and logic, the system of reason. (CW 3: 314)

**Good Music.** I heard some good music: the Philharmonic did a Haydn, very stodgily, & the Mahler first. I find Mahler very pleasant & easy to listen to—the theme of the Funeral march haunted me all day—but I certainly don’t find the profundities in him that I gather I’m supposed to find. Or, if they’re there, they’re romantic & introspective profundities only: no objective plumbing into the world. Two lovely Bach things—Fourth Brandenburg& one of the Ricercare. Now those really are profound. (CW 8: 257)

**Gospel Writers.** We sense that the Gospel writers were rather plain & simple people—true. This is not an established fact, only a subjective impression; but it is widely enough shared for me to feel that it is something more than subjective. We tend to assume that plain & simple men would write “literally,” in the language of accurate descriptive historical narrative. But the Gospel writers were still plainer & simpler than this: plain & simple enough to write in the language of myth & metaphor. Also—far more important—they already regarded what they had to say as too important to be entrusted to the language of description. (CW 13: 73)

I keep saying the Gospel writers are not clever but simple men, that being the accepted sentimental-

orthodox statement. But *were* they so goddam simple? Isn’t *that* part of the disguise, like Mohammed’s protests that he couldn’t write? (CW 13: 254)

**Grammar of Mythology.** Robert Graves called his *White Goddess* a “grammar of mythology,” and while my view of it is very different from his, I still believe that there is such a thing as a grammar of mythology, & I think my work gives a few paradigms of it. {Fluidity of concepts here}. In my younger days a senior colleague, disconcerted by my leaps in metaphorical identifications, said, “Well, you can just do anything, then.” You cannot, if you are speaking with some fluency, “do anything,” but you can express anything. (CW 5: 295–6)

**Graves, Robert.** *TheWhite Goddess* is not unimpressive, but if you’re going to try that sort of job you should be reasonably clear of dubious motivations. I think Graves has, obvious as it sounds, a real mother fixation—it probably comes out in the *Wife to Mr. Milton*, too. It’s “true” poetry when it makes your (Graves’) hair stand on end, & when your hair stands on end it’s about momma. A secret tradition of Druids and stuff interrupted by a lot of Classical and Jewish and Christian crap about nasty old daddy that spoiled everything. . . . I didn’t stir out of that house all day and spent my time reading, mostly *The White Goddess*. I find that type of book intensely interesting to read, and for all my remarks about a mother complex, it’s a very considerable intellectual feat to work out all those damned tree alphabets and stuff. Only I must keep clear the fact that an exhaustive comparative study of symbolism is not an immediate part of my job—in my master plan I’ve postponed it: a possible retirement, or just the edge of retirement job. So I must be careful not to get flustered by my fascination.(CW 8: 495–6)

**Gravity’s Rainbow.** Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* is Hegelian too: you start with the paranoia of believing that God made everything for man’s sake; then you find that living without some paranoia isn’t possible, so you’re forced into creative paranoia. The first kind is projected & the second kind created design. Projection leads to infantilism, the uniformity of law, and the destruction of everything that doesn’t “fit.” The transition, or one point of transition, is the identity of the creation myth with the dawn of consciousness. Pari passu with this is the conception of Jesus as a moral model modulating into confrontation & mutual condemnation of society & individual. Pari passu also is the regenerating of nature by internalizing the vision of nature. (CW 13: 328–9)

**Great Books at St. John’s College.**I’ve been thinking about the St. John’sCollege scheme. Parts of it appeal to me very much, but it seems more like a professor’s program of self-culture than something to teach to students—also, the requirement on the teacher to be able to teach everything including mathematics & science seems to me to confuse an amateur ideal of culture with a professional technique of instruction. I could do it—at least there was a time when I could have done it, & I imagine I still could—but it would be, not real teaching, but a deliberate *tour de force*. No one can be a great lecturer—I think I have the adjective coming to me—without sublimating a considerable amount of exhibitionism, but a teaching job that was a deliberate exhibition of versatility would focus on that, & turn me into a hopeless show-off. Of course every improvement in teaching methods, or in education generally, is primarily extra work for the teacher. (CW 8: 83–4)

**Grecian Urn.** Truth and beauty begin to coincide as soon as we’re teased out of thought by the thought of eternity: as soon as time becomes unreal and space is no longer just frozen time. (CW 6: 625)

**Great Canadians.** The question of great men is filler for a lot of magazines these days, & what impresses me is the amount one would have to know to make an interesting choice. I added a note to our report that we were entirely dependent on the publicity machine for our list. In literature, for instance, what Canadian has done the biggest job? Well, that’s foolish, as are all questions about the greatness of men. What painter has done the most to reeducate our visual associations? Picasso gets the publicity, but maybe Braque did the essential job. (CW 8: 241)

**Great Reader.** The important thing is not who is writing or even what is being written, but what the reader is doing. It is conceivable that you would have nothing in the contemporary scene except trash. And, yet, if you had sufficiently lively and imaginative readers they could make something out of that. Dante hadn’t read Homer but he could make something out of two bad lines in Lucan. And that is the way great writers operate, and it is the way we should start thinking in terms of the great reader. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Greater Trumps.** This may come to nothing, and it mustn’t attempt to take over, but there may be a link between the organization of this book & the Tarot sequence. The Greater Trumps seem to me polarized between the Juggler & the Fool. The Juggler seems to me to be God when seen by Man as the Creator of himself & Nature; the Fool, or what Waite calls the “ineffable in zero,” is whatever in man can be redeemed by God: his archetype is the nothing or abyss out of which he was created. Hence the two poles of being are the binary of one and nothing. (CW 13: 172)

**Greatest Critic.** My standards reverse those I was brought up on. Everybody said in the 40s that

Hakluyt was a wonderful editor and Purchas loaded up his stuff with rubbish. Spingarn speaks of Henry Reynolds, the greatest critic before Johnson, as though he were an idiot crackpot. The fact that there’s so much resistance means that the myth people are supremely important, of course: but I still don’t have the why of the resistance. (CW 5: 236)

**Greek vs. Hebrew Cultures.** Greek and Hebrew culture both had the sky-father; but Greek was tragic, being founded on Homer, and the Bible revolutionary: Greek was visual and the Bible aural: Greek was based on continuous verse and the Bible on discontinuous prose. Homer is past-focused as the Bible is future-focused: that’s the reason for the tragic tone. (CW 13: 277)

**Greek Gods.** The orthodox religion of Greece was Olympian, or, as Nietzsche called it in *Birth of Tragedy*, Apollonian. This religion was one which wavered between polydaemonism and polytheism. Its Bible is largely Homeric epic, and its myths were transmitted by poets. Originally, it seems to have combined a cult of heroes with a general animism which deified every phase of experience. The gods were magnified humans, which meant that they were mostly liars, cowards, bullies, and lechers. Zeus had committed every crime in the calendar; Hermes, the patron of thieves, was not far behind him; Aphrodite was an adulteress of incredible appetite; Poseidon a petulant bureaucrat of the high seas. Yet they were endowed with a strange power, and their worship became largely a matter of rites. Public religion was almost altogether apotropaic and prophylactic. Each sacrifice safeguarded the state against some thin-skinned and short-tempered deity: conversely, all disasters were the result of some divine anger or jealousy. (CW 3: 168)

**Greek Myth and Ritual.** I’m concerned with the Western tradition in its Greek & Hebrew origins: it’s only in Greece that there’s a clear development from myth to dialectic, and the literary affinities are clearest in Homer & early Greece. Also, the *literary* difference between myth & ritual is that ritual initiates dramatic forms; but it was only in Greece that it developed a full drama with new generic characteristics. Elsewhere it hardly got beyond mummer’s plays. (CW 5: 162–3)

**Green World.** Look into & away from a bright light & you see a red spot. Close your eyes & it turns green. Thus Jung is right: the world of closed eyes is complementary & compensatory. The green world in Shakespearean comedy is not strictly a dream-world, but it has dream links. (CW 8:

154)

**Group of Seven.** My first experience of painting was coming to Toronto and looking at the Group of Seven, along with Tom Thomson and, later, Emily Carr. What I noted especially was the long thrusting rhythms pushing deep into the horizon: an explorer’s painting, the imaginative follow-up of the original explorers.

**Guernica.** I went to London with Mike Joseph last Saturday to see the Picasso *Bombing of Guernica*. All the studies he’d made for it were there too, studies of bulls, murdered horses, and weeping men and women mostly. *The Weeping Woman* we saw at Toronto was there. I was glad to see those: I couldn’t have got much out of the picture itself without them, and they had a vivid impact and a unity I wasn’t sure about with the big one. If I’d had more time, though, I think the big pattern would have got hold of me. It’s the best contemporary work I’ve ever seen, I’m quite sure of that. (CW 2: 811)

H

**Hallucinated Clarity.** Words: a film version of *Romeo and Juliet* could give us a shot of the apothecary’s shop that Romeo remembers, showing us everything he mentions and a lot more much more simply.But what we’d miss would be the “woodspurge has a cup of three” [Dante Gabriel

Rossetti, *The Woodspurge*, l. 12] feeling about it: the sense of hallucinated clarity that’s so dramatically right just there. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Hamlet.** *Hamlet* is not about Hamlet at all, but about a situation into which Hamlet fits, and all attempts to treat the play as though it were primarily a character study of Hamlet destroy the symmetry of the play. For one thing, one needs all the rich counterpoint of the Polonius family, which plays the same role in *Hamlet* that the Gloucester family does in *Lear*. We have to see this subplot from its own perspective as well as from Hamlet’s. Ophelia corresponds to Gertrude, & her attraction toward Hamlet is, from Polonius’ point of view, a desertion to vice, just as Gertrude’s attraction toward Claudius is from Hamlet’s. The father-daughter hold here is as palpable as the bigger mother-son one. But more important, *Hamlet* is not a play about Hamlet’s indecision, but about the ritual element in revenge. In Hamlet the stimulus to revenge takes the creative form of the play: in Claudius it takes the form of a ritual sword-dance, a Druidical drama punctuated with choruses of toasts & cannon shots. But the question “why did Hamlet delay?” is no more important to the play than the question “why did Claudius delay?” for Claudius also has shallow excuses and self-analyzing soliloquies. There is something comic in the elephantine fumbling on both sides, especially in the fourth act. (CW 8: 54)

**Harpsicord.** I went over to hear Greta Kraus at Wymilwood. Lovely concert, including the Fifth Partita, a Teleman fantasia and a wonderful Scarlatti sonata I’d never heard before. I still can’t understand why, when they invented the piano, they left off the double keyboard & the couplers: if they’d had those, people like Liszt would have had to stop playing around and settle down to some serious composing. I wonder how much a harpsichord actually would cost, & whether it really is such a headache to keep it in tune. You can certainly get more out of it with its eight pedals than you can out of a piano. Because of the loveliness of the music and the resourcefulness of the instrument, she scored a great personal triumph—on a piano she’d have sounded pretty sloppy. I mean this to be in praise of harpsichords, not damaging to her—she gave me a wonderful evening. (CW 8: 528–9)

**Harvard English Department.**I’m gradually coming to realize that Harvard is a place where there is a great library and a great tradition. But in English it’s just one more English department, & I gather it’s much the same elsewhere. Now education is clearly a major New England industry, & if one of its chief centres is willing to rest on its laurels I don’t know how long the whole structure can last—except, of course, for expensive playgrounds like Wellesley & Dartmouth, where the professor’s social position can hardly be much more than a head waiter’s. I think it’s a good thing that there’s no “best” English department & no centre of English studies, but I also feel that the Department of English at the University of Toronto is not so damn bad a place to be. I must find out more about this: at times, in my delusions of grandeur, I wonder if the world of English scholars isn’t waiting for someone, maybe me, to give them a lead. Here at Harvard the best man is Bush, an excellent man in his own somewhat limited way, then there’s Sherburn, obviously a stuffed shirt, Ridley, an Oxford cast-off, and that poor lunatic Magoun to sustain the magnificent linguistic tradition of fifty years ago. Spencer & Matthiessen are dead, Ellmann leaving, & Levin’s in Comparative Literature. It doesn’t add up to anything very impressive. (CW 8: 417)

**Haydn, Joseph.** If I had such a thing as a favorite composer, it would be Haydn. I think it’s Haydn anyway. I’m going to write something on him someday. More and more I find myself turning to Bach & Haydn, which means more & more away from Mozart. Mozart’s a skeptic & Haydn’s a Christian. Haydn has everything. He has all of Schubert’s ease of melody but never sags or goes soupy the way Schubert does. He’s as witty as either Mozart or Scarlatti: I’ve just read through 37 minuets & 24 German dances, a grueling test for any composer & he says something pointed & epigrammatic practically every time. But he has more than wit: he has an amazing eloquence & range in his melodic line: he can be marvellously “singable”& yet swoop over everything from a soprano to a bass range: D major sonata in Book I with the lovely long Adagio. He may not be as profound a thinker generally as Mozart, but I think he’s a greater thinker *in musical form* than Mozart: he has a sense of organic unity about him & an originality of creative thought, still in musical form, Mozart hasn’t. Haydn develops a plot; Mozart works out a situation. But the plot really develops, that’s the point. He had much more influence over Beethoven than Mozart, I think, particularly in things like the Pathétique: only Beethoven is analytic & disruptive where Haydn is synthetic. (CW 25: 163–4)

**Hebel.** Ecclesiastes: deals squarely with the three A’s: anxiety, alienation, absurdity. *Not* pessimistic or weary but a shrewd tough-minded attack on the bromides of popular proverbs, which he collects, but tests with his touchstone of *hebel*, mist or vapors. “Vanity of vanities” really means something like “nuts” or “bullshit.” The basis, as with all wisdom literature, is the contrast of wisdom, the tried & tested way, & folly, the new idea which is the old fallacy. The fool is the “one-dimensional man” in a sense opposite to Marcuse’s: the man chasing the donkey’s carrot of a definable future ideal, not realizing what’s established by the cyclical vision at the beginning: that all future goals really come out of the past, a mixture of historical & childhood myth. (CW 90: 181–2)

**Hegel.** I’ve often said that Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* interests me deeply in itself, but not as a preface to Hegel’s system. This is linked on my part with my feeling that Moses was the only person who ever saw the Promised Land. The system is only a Prussian Canaan. (CW 5: 19)

Perhaps I haven’t yet really understood Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. But I don’t know: I have no interest or belief in absolute knowledge: I may be climbing the same spiral mountain, but by a different path. The *hypostasis* of the hoped-for, the *elenchos* of the unseen [Hebrews 11:1]. If I could articulate that in my own words, I could burn the straw and pass on (I’m thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas on his deathbed.) Hegel is a Gnostic, of course, and while I have a great respect for Gnostics, I don’t altogether trust them. At *their* point of death there’s a separation of physical body and spirit, but their spirit is patterned on the soul or mind, & isn’t a real spiritual body. (CW 5: 188–9)

Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* is founded on the type of spiral staircase that can exist only in thought: one that starts at an apex (wrong word, of course) and expands as it goes up. Wonder if I could find this in Shelley or elsewhere: of course there are descending narrowing movements like those in De Quincey. (CW 5:33–4)

Hegel’s *Phenomenology* turns on a gigantic metaphor of a mirror, which is where we get the words speculation and reflection. The mirror is the central image of an identity of subject and object which nevertheless preserve their difference. Once they’re identified, we break out of the prison of Narcissus, as I call it in *Words with Power*. (CW 6: 660)

My original hunch about Hegel was that if his absolute knowledge were thought of imaginatively, it would take in the existential. As it is, it still has the taint of abstraction about it, & causes Hegelians like Strauss to identify the mythical with an imaginary redaction. If the Crucifixion is only a historical event, it’s natural for Christians to hate the Romans & the Jews, the people who were historically there. As it’s a universal event, & as it was you & I who crucified Christ, that scapegoat dodge won’t work. The thing is that mythical & universal are the same thing. (CW 13: 337–8)

**Hegelian Fallacy.** The Matthew Arnold lecture dealt with the Hellenic-Hebraic business—regular stuff, but I committed myself at the end to saying it was baloney & next Tuesday I shall have to say why—the Hegelian fallacy of transforming truths into half-truths. I shouldn’t make statements like that: they sound adolescent, & I think rather bother the kids. Every once in a while my undifferentiated sensuous feeling quality, the opposite of the intuitive thinking I specialize in, gets loose, & gallops around the room on a hobby-horse squawking & cackling & generally carrying on. I did it at the Van Doren lecture & at the final lecture at the Institute. I must realize that that side of me is not under complete control, & I can’t trust it. (CW 89: 91)

**Hegel’s Homer.**Hegel on Homer: Homer’s description of, e.g., the forging of armour comes off because Homer is pre-industrial, and has a sense of immediate and personal contact between artisan and consumer—this is a famous argument of Hegel’s, picked up by Marx and Engels. It explains again why I keep coming back to William Morris—he divined this kind of thing. (CW 5: 296)

**Heidegger and Other Glumpy Germans.** I’m fascinated by Heidegger’s interest in Anaximander and his efforts to get behind the Socratic tradition to “think being” again; but what bothers me is his value distinction between authentic and inauthentic, which is different from, but enters into, his point about the “dissimulating” or “forgetting” of Being in the Platonic tradition. Anaximander gives the formula of tragedy: to be born is *hybris*, to die is n*emesis*. Contemplating nothing in anguish is exactly what King Lear does, and Heidegger is wonderful for illuminating Lear. But Plato belongs to the comic poets, and I wonder if comedy isn’t something more than a dissimulating or forgetting of being. In fact I know damn well it is. There are transformations of thinking being which aren’t just ways of avoiding it. Those glumpy damn Germans, Heidegger and Nietzsche, strike poses that forget a lot of things about Being too. Both of them are examples of the tyranny of Greece over Germany, the paranoid obsession that makes them oppose themselves to especially the British tradition, which adopted the Hebrew culture as its main parent—of course it’s revolt against the Lutheran German strain, but it’s strange that the Greek obsession has so few adherents in England: Shelley’s one of the few. (CW 13: 291–2)

**Heilsgeschichte and Weltgeschichte.** For *Heilsgeschichte*, practically all the events in *Weltgeschichte* are really non-events. That is, what should or could have happened merely fails to happen. That’s another way of saying that *Weltgeschichte* is a demonic parody of *Heilsgeschichte.* The great man in *Weltgeschichte* meets with his councillors and decides to go to war. That’s decision; that’s making history; that’s positive action. If he decided for peace, that would have been a non-event in *Weltgeschichte*, but a genuine event in *Heilsgeschichte*. (CW 5: 252)

**Helen.** The terrible power of words to inflame the emotions: words, like electricity, can illuminate and kill. A metaphor can kill a man, as Wallace Stevens says [*Poetry Is a Destructive Force*, l. 15]. At present I am deeply worried about Helen, for quite valid reasons. But because I have a certain facility with verbal formulas, I can talk myself into tears (perhaps ultimately into nervous collapse) at any time. Similarly in my prayers for her recovery. I see nothing wrong with such prayers—the first part of Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer is a precedent. But I don’t “wrestle all night” with God in prayer, because if I did it would just be a rhetorical embellishment of “Do this because I want it, or feel sure I want it, very much.” And God knows too much about rhetoric to be impressed by it. I suppose there’s a link here with the sentimental: the self-indulgent rhetorical amplification of nostalgia or the like. If Helen died and I had to pack up all her little trinkets, even a song I regard as cheap and silly, like “Among my Souvenirs,” would work on me like a psychedelic drug. What I should feel is rather “If I didn’t have to do this for her, she’d have to do it for me, and I’m in better shape to do it at present.” Note too that while it is very natural, if one has had a religious conditioning, to ask God for help or thank him for an upturn in fortune, he is not asked or helped in a human vacuum: the good will and skill of doctors and nurses is a highly relevant factor. And of course it’s all wrong to pray for miracles, in the sense of interruptions into the order of nature. Miracles are epiphanies, not primarily favors. (Mustard seed?) (CW 5: 136–7)

It’s conceivable that there are demonic things done unconsciously all the time, and that some day they will be brought to light. It’s possible that I drove Helen into an impasse where all she could do was die. It would be morbid to accuse myself of such an act when there’s no evidence for it, and when there is evidence that she was, most of the time, happy and loved me. But many Victorian husbands must have killed their wives believing sincerely that they loved them, and God knows what the psychologists of the future will know about such things. . . . One thing involved here is the “what’s really going on” fallacy. What’s really going on is a cluster of illusions. I don’t think it’s an illusion that I loved Helen, but it would certainly be an illusion to claim that I always did the best I could for her. Of course it’s always an advantage to become aware that an illusion is one. (CW 5: 139–40)

How tedious is death. Death and his brother sleep. Sleep for me is a series of dreams in which

Helen is alive and we’re talking and planning things together. Then I wake up hearing reason say “You will never see her again,” without bothering to add “in this life.” Reason makes the rest of me puke. Love is strong as death: now that makes sense. I take pills, of course, but a drugged stupor is not sleep. Nor is a spirit with a cremated body dead. Ay, madam, it is common. (CW 5: 144)

I’ve just finished rereading Bulwer-Lytton’s *Strange Story*, and followed it with *Ayesha* of Rider

Haggard. In spite of all the kitsch and turgid Victorian rhetoric, I found them, especially the first, quite rewarding. I’d forgotten, or thought I’d forgotten, that the end of Lytton’s story is set in Australia, just before the gold rush there. The hero, with his wife dying (in an undisplaced story she would die, whether she came to life again or not), discovers some gold, but throws it away impatiently. On August 4, 1986, Jane & I were taking a bus tour around Cairns. The hospital had encouraged us not to hang around. At 3.10 p.m. I knew it [Helen’s death] had happened: I was standing on a bridge over a gorge, and flung an Australian penny into it—a gesture I’ve never really understood: it certainly wasn’t “for luck.” (CW 5: 177–8)

“She died young” [Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* 4.2.254]. The only she in my life died at seventy-six, which in some terms would be a full life. And she wasn’t murdered: I refuse to believe that. But everyone who dies loved dies young (to the lover at least). (CW 5: 199)

In my old age I enter Yeats’s “dreaming back” phase. Once Helen was gone she became Ariadne: my love for her intensified and entered a new life, and that’s my road to the stars now. I only wish the “unforgetting” process would be more extensive. (CW 5: 345)

Helen was exhausted by her New Year’s Day social efforts, and when she crawled into bed her morale was very low. Too much family. I explained to her that she was the centre of a social activity that made the holiday pleasant, and in fact possible, for two families and six people, most of them old, apart from friends, and that her sense of responsibility was about all that made life worth living for people she was closest to in life. I suppose if God thinks of everybody as children, lovable in their own right & full of potentialities, Satan the accuser thinks of everybody as already set in the mold of age, their conversation a response of cliché or stock anecdote to a conditioned reflex, their thinking a mechanical imitation of having thoughts, their future a narrowing repetition of vapid and silly mannerisms. God has hope and a few successes; Satan most of the facts and the balance of probabilities. (CW 8: 463–4)

After a tour of Australian universities, we arrived in Cairns, opposite the Great Barrier Reef, on July 24, 1986, for a week’s holiday before going home. She collapsed walking off the plane, and the doctors diagnosed an embolism on the lungs. She died at 3.10 p.m. on August 4 (the medical attendants said 3.30, but I happen to know when she actually left me). She was a gentle and very pure spirit, however amused or embarrassed she might be to hear herself so described. The day before her death the intravenous machine ran out of fluid and started ticking: Helen opened an eye and said “Is that your pet cricket?” I am grateful that in practically the last thing I heard her say there was still a flash of the Helen I had known and loved for over fifty years. (CW 25: 41–2)

**Hell.** The teaching of hell fire is undoubtedly bad, yet it has some psychological point: it brings one face to face with one of the limits of the human mind, & instils a fear which often acts as a spur to an imagination that without it might get nowhere. Also it enables one to see other horrors such as Nazism in proportion, & with less bewildered astonishment. Perhaps if it isn’t stirred up it will remain, acting on us if we don’t act on it, conditioning our fears of security, of war, of the atom bomb, of death itself—the fear of death is less deep than the fear of hell. Yet there must be better ways of getting at it than by telling indignant lies about God. Orthodox hell though is a populous & even gregarious community: there is a still deeper fear, the fear of being unwanted, absolutely unacceptable to anybody. Jesus went through that when *all* the disciples forsook him & fled. (CW 8: 116–17)

Heaven & hell cannot be presented *as form*: they are like nature & history. Their existential aspect is not obvious: it can only be asserted, or inferred from the fact that it *is* content. The religious book does the asserting, & it’s descriptive. Dante’s *Inferno* is an ironic vision of life *as form*, & that’s how we read it. As an imaginary description of a place, it is a vulgar superstition, & describing it to scare people is an act of treachery to the human race lower than anything done by Judas, who might conceivably have acted from better motives. These are elementary objections, & the historical answer, that everyone believed such a thing in 1300, or had to say they did, is neither true nor in any case relevant. Because they are elementary, we may assume that criticism can easily answer them; but we may discover that we have not got the answer, only a conviction that the person asking it is naive & that we ourselves have a subtler understanding of the matter. But I imagine that our subtler understanding will turn out to be some variant of the fact that hell is content & not form, & content not as a place on the analogy of time & space, but the content of human pain & fear. Thus we have to see it *inside* man, or human life. It’s inside the order of nature, after all, & apocalyptically that’s inside man. (CW 23: 191–2)

**“Hence” and “And Then.”**There are two kinds of narrative movement, the “and then” kind and the “hence” kind.The former is the primitive one; it jumps from motif to motif, so suddenly that you’re sometimes even expected to forget the previous stage, as the end of Gonzalo’s commonwealth forgot the beginning [*The Tempest*, 2.1.161 ff.].*Pericles* is a kind of experiment in “and-then” narrative, seeing how far one can go with it on the stage.The Book of Job is an “andthen” folktale, the two halves separated by an enormous “hence” dialogue.The “hence” is in reverse, or what-the-hell; but even so there’s a logic holding it together.The return to the folktale at the end is an “and-then” jump that leaves us blinking, as though we’d wakened up from a dream.. . . Most students of folktales try to compare a bunch of “and then” versions to try to find a “hence” version, one that makes logical sense.My method is rather to reduce “hence” stories to their “and then” sequence of archetypes.(“Notes on Romance”)

**Hendiadys.** Delight and instruct” can only be an awkward hendiadys, based on the aggregate theory of literature: the ironic or aesthetic sense of the poem withdrawn from the verbal universe gives the idea of “pleasure,” and the consequence of the fallacy that everything constructive or emancipatory in the mind brought about by literature must come from outside literature. . . . “Hendiadys”—I doubt if anyone’s literary experience confirms the assumption that a work of art has regularly this kind of bifurcated impact, or that it does two different kinds of things to a reader. One feels rather that a poem or a play brings a single impact, however little of it we may get at first reading or however far it may expand and proliferate in the mind. (CW 23: 89–90, 91)

**Here and Now.** In our day a myth may still be a programme of action, and is, but we demand a different quality from its theoria. We don’t “believe in” myths any more: we don’t accept authority beyond evidence with any real conviction (i.e. genuine connection with practical belief). It doesn’t have to be “there” in time and space; the language of myth is now realized to be the language of presence, of the here and now. (CW 9: 67)

Here is drawing a circumference around the nearest theres; now is drawing a circumference around the nearest pasts and futures. Kernels for expansion into Rilke’s angel vision. (CW 13: 285) **Heretics.** Siger of Brabant, William of Ockham, Nicholas of Autrecourt, Peter Abelard, Meister Eckhart, Roger Bacon, Scotus Erigena: in all repressive societies most of the really first rate people are either accused or suspected of heresy. (CW 5: 252)

**Hero.** Culture individualizes, & the hero is not an individual: he is the incarnation of his group. Henry V is, anyway: the successful hero. In tragedy the hero becomes an individual by failing or falling into tragedy: this is, I think, the inner secret of hamartia, the flaw of being human in a position that requires something not quite human (cf. Hamlet). Hence the feeling that the true hero is the martyr who embodies an *invisible* community. The opposite of the hero is the traitor or coward who is the mere individual, the ego. When the hero is deep in the moult of hamartia the social unit he’s lost his grip on becomes invisible, & surrounds him with the glamour of a mystery not limited to it. (CW 20: 294–5)

**Hero-Worship.** I wonder when the hell all this business of confusing me with God began. . . . I don’t like it at all, especially the emotional stampede it makes on me. It tempts me to take myself far too seriously, not as a hero (that’s easy) but as a fender-off of hero-worship. Like Julius Caesar, I have to keep making ostentatious gestures of refusing the crown. (CW 8: 175)

**Hewers and Drawers.** In an age of primary concern the hewers of doctrine and the drawers of boundary lines seem deficient in charity. (CW 5: 230)

**Higher Criticism.** Lower criticism consists of editing, legitimate source-hunting & biography. (Re the legitimacy of source-hunting: looking up articles on Henry Vaughan one will find a vast number on occultism & few if any on the Bible. Yet all of Vaughan’s imagery—and I mean all of it—is Biblical, & he never uses an occult reference except where it supplements a Biblical allusion by relating it to what Vaughan imagined was contemporary thought. Occultism is so popular because it looks like a detachable fragment of *Wissenschaft* about Vaughan. But, first, it won’t be of any use until we develop an attitude to criticism which will get Vaughan in perspective to begin with, &, second, the critic himself can’t do it till he has such a perspective.) Higher criticism is a synthetic mimesis of art, clarifying its integrity by speaking its silence. (CW 23: 52–3)

My ideas about higher criticism in the Bible are beginning to mesh with my meaning paper. Secondlevel criticism is allegorical “lower” criticism, research into background and genesis; third-level is archetypal, & incorporates the traditional criticism both in the Bible & in secular literature. This is the real “higher criticism”: everything now called that is still lower. This idea is already in my writing: I don’t know why it’s taken me so long to see it. This means that the trouble with medieval criticism was that it was too purely archetypal: paradoxically enough, it lacked a real sense of allegory (maybe because on the second level it related everything to Christ as a real presence, & so slighted the centrifugal movement of Scripture into autonomous event and idea). Colet’s lectures on St. Paul are real second-level stuff, & the Protestant “plain sense” doctrine reversed the medieval error by cutting off the third level: it was therefore a simple antithesis (based perhaps on principle alone instead of on substance alone). (CW 8: 348–9)

**Higher Kerygma.** Naturally I want to show that the higher kerygma redeems the poetic, and that the Word has to go through the valley of shadows, the whispered or shouted lies of literature, to get to its real home. Even Barth can’t see that, much less the people who want kerygma to exclude myth. In Milton’s *Paradise Regained* Christ is tempted to go to school to Athenian culture: he refuses, & by refusing he redeems Athenian culture & makes it profitable for us to go to school to it. As Emily Dickinson says, he refunds us our confiscated gods. But this must go along with the transcending of what is usually meant by faith. (CW 5: 266)

**Historical Jesus.** *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* is an extraordinary piece of Romantic Esauism, a counter-myth of Jesus as the returning rightful heir. I’m not shocked by the suggestion that Jesus had a physical wife & children, but his “blood line” would have got mixed in average humanity pretty damn soon. It’s just one more guess about the historical Jesus, derived from Gospels that don’t care about the historical Jesus. (CW 5: 108)

One thing that *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* book did for me was start me thinking about the vividness and integrity of mythical history, e.g., the British history that revolves around Arthur. When I picked it up I thought oh God: not *another* book about Cathars and Templars and Grail romances and Freemasons and Rosicrucians. It was, but it was better than most such books because it was hitched onto an Antichrist figure. (CW 5: 110)

The historical Jesus is a concealed though essential element in the Gospels: if the Gospels writers had simply made up the Jesus story they would still be superb works of literature, but of course they would not be gospels. The myth is what they literally are, though: they don’t present Jesus historically. Historically, Jesus is a man until the Resurrection, when he becomes an element in everyone, implying that no one can be “saved” (meaning the indefinite persistence of something like an ego in something like a time and place) outside or before Jesus. Presented as a myth in the eternal present, this doctrine takes on a more charitable appearance. The Word and Spirit in man then coincide into something that has its being in God (as God has his being in it) to such an extent that the question of belief in “a” God doesn’t arise. (CW 6: 671)

**History and Literature.** I think most critics of literature would do well to remember that it is always the second rate man who sums up his age. The first rate man struggles with or transcends it. There is little advantage in treating Shakespeare as primarily an Elizabethan product, or a Renaissance figure. If Shakespeare were merely the inevitable result of the Armada, the Burbage Theatre, the Six Articles and the slave trade of Hawkins, there would be little more to him than to the minor dramatists who were. And nothing more would be left of him than of Lewis Carroll’s horseman. Three drops of blood, two teeth, and a stirrup. There is no causal connection running from history to literature. (“1932 Notebook,” 24 May)

**History of English Literature.**I have recurrently been seized with the ambition to make my life’s work a history of all or part of English literature. I certainly have ideas about such a project, but I wonder if the passion for ideas it would entail wouldn’t be part of an intellectual indolence I don’t possess. I have a feeling that certain essential values in all the writers I deeply care for become staled & cheapened under historical treatment. . . . In a history the controlling form is an abstract mental category—linear time—& though of course no good history of anything is a mere chronicle, that abstracting form remains: it isn’t feasible to write about any large part of English literature & pass beyond temporal sequence, though possibly such words as Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque, Romantic indicate something of what might be done. I’d like to start with *Finnegans Wake* or something & work backward concentrically: a history told backwards might have its points if it wouldn’t be just time sequence in reverse. (CW 15: 35)

**Hobbes.** Hobbes’ version of the social contract, in which individuals find life uncomfortable and surrender all their interests to a leader, will hardly do: such individuals could not have existed except as members of earlier societies. But the process of which Hobbes’ fantasy is a demonic parody does

exist: spiritual individuals do find that interpenetration within a spiritual kingdom or true commonwealth completes their spiritual reality. (CW 6: 658)

**Holism.** I’ve been more or less an unconscious advocate of holism, assuming that everything worked together for the wholeness of the whole, which is Platonic, or that wholeness was what made the work organic & not mechanical, which is Coleridgean. What I now feel is that wholeness is a mimesis of objectivity. It disintegrates when the subject starts merging with it. (CW 5: 191)

**Holy Spirit.** The mythical kernel of the Holy Spirit is not just the wind but the wind and the rain, as he’s a fertilizing spirit as well, the bringing of life being connected with the release of living water. (CW 13: 274)

Went down in an aimless sort of way to try to work on my sermon, but didn’t. The pattern that’s emerging is the same old goddamn pattern, & it’s too complicated for a sermon. I was reading the stuff about wisdom in Proverbs and realized to what an extent the conception of Holy Spirit, the Sophia or feminine figure personifying wisdom, & the mother of Jesus fit together. The Holy Spirit is surely that of which the Virgin is an analogy. (CW 8: 155)

**Homer.** Poetry is not merely what poets produce: it is the fusion of what poets produce with what

(critical) readers see in it. The latter is in a constant metamorphosis, and steadily gains in authority & power. “Homer” means (a) the Homeric poems (b) Homeric criticism, including Chapman’s preface (c) reconstructions of Homeric patterns by later poets from Virgil to Kazantzakis (d) the absorption of Homer into the Western cultural tradition. As for why the original structures are so powerfully haunting, that takes us deep into the mysteries of existence, like paintings deep in paleolithic caves. Criticism restricted to “historicity” cannot get beyond the entrance to such a cave; certain forms of depth psychology may come closer to it, but most of the question is far beyond us at present. (CW 6: 717–18)

**Homosexual Jesus.** Christianity is primarily an onward and upward movement. Its founder, apparently, was a homosexual with a beloved disciple and a mother fixation so intense that he even insisted that his mother was a virgin. Or somebody did. His point of introversion, the thing he kept dropping out of society to commune with, was his father, who of course couldn’t possibly have had an earthly or incarnate form. Most of the points of retreat for pagan prophets were maternal— Diotima & Egeria & the Athene & Venus of the epics. (CW 9: 77)

Bring in the point about Jesus as a refined homosexual celibate who had a beloved disciple, whose last words to a woman were “don’t touch me,” and who was so hung up on sexual intercourse & Oedipal trauma that he insisted that his mother was a virgin & his father not his real father. (CW 13: 174)

**The Honour Course.** The Honour course at Victoria College represents a unique contribution to undergraduate teaching on the continent, and at its best it affords as good an undergraduate training as can be got anywhere. (“Response to the Macpherson Report”)

**Hope.** The criticism of hope is the “demythologized” view of the Gospels which says: something no doubt happened; we don’t know what and perhaps never shall know, but we can only hope that it was something worth all the to-do that followed. (CW 6: 438)

Jan. 1 1980. I continue to try the patience of God, yet I still hope for some improvement. (CW 13: 359)

**Ho-Thou-Caitiff-Varlet Lingo.** Mimetic dialogue seems to be a feature of realism only, and exists in romance only to the extent that realism interpenetrates with it. In Scott we get this only in the Scottish stories; *Ivanhoe* and the rest are all written in that extraordinary ho-thou-caitiff-varlet lingo that he seems to have invented for them, and which bears no more resemblance to Middle English than the language of *ThePalmWineDrinkard.* Then there’s William Morris, who invented an even worse yea-verily-and-forsooth lingo. Yet there’s something about romance that demands this kind of thing: it’s part of the whole dream setup. (CW 15: 225)

**Humour.** Humour arises from the perception of incongruities and discrepancies in human nature.

The reformer is impatient of these discrepancies; he calls them the result of cynicism and skepticism. His outlook is too exclusive and narrow for them, because he wants to apply a few formulas to the world which, universally accepted, would cure all of that world’s evils. Now a man who has a panacea in any sphere is a quack. And a quack is always a nuisance, generally a menace. Whether he makes himself ridiculous or not depends on the amount of humour possessed by his portrayer or auditor, not on his own. (CW 1: 40)

**Hyper-Physical World.**In my early Yeats paper I talked about a hyper-physical world. This appears to be the world of unseen beings, angels, spirits, devils, demons, djinns, daemons, ghosts, elemental spirits, etc. It’s the world of the “inspiration” of poet or prophet, of premonitions of death, telepathy, extra-sensory perception, miracle, telekinesis, & of a good deal of “luck.” In the Bible it’s connected with Lilith & other demons of the desert, with the casting out of devils in the gospels, with visions of angels, with thaumaturgic feats like those of Elijah & Elisha, & so on.

Fundamentally, it’s the world of buzzing though not booming confusion that the transistor radio is a symbol of. The world of communication as total environment which inspires terror. Shakespeare’s *Tempest* as heard by the imprisoned crew. Chaucer’s Houses of Fame & Rumor (because *no* information that gets on that circuit is really reliable). The world of drugs, multiple personality, and hallucination. Before we come out on the other side of it, we recognize that ordinary life is a part of it, a Bardo perspective out of which apocalypse, or stage 2, finally comes. It’s the polytheistic world of contending & largely unseen forces; it’s the world of terror that McLuhan associates with the oral stage of culture: twitching ears, & a poor sense of direction. (CW 13: 90)

**Hypertrophy.** Irritability with me is both mental & physical. A very hypertrophied love of reading & study (much of which is less genuine than it seems) breeds indolence. A habit of incessant masturbation in adolescence has left me with a lazy, disorganized & ineffectual rhythm of behavior, & the same hypertrophy has made me very ignorant of practical things. I’m unhandy, & shrink from taking the time to learn to be handy, which would be defensible if so much of my study time weren’t wasted through centrifugal dissipation of energies & masturbation-substitutes of which solitaire is a current bondage. (CW 13: 33)

**Hypocrisy.** Jesus speaks of hypocrisy, which may be a vice in the gospel context but is the one absolutely essential cementing force that holds society together. Morally, it is the greatest of all virtues. I’m overstating, I know: I’m just trying to get clear the complete “otherness” of higher kerygma from the lower or social kind. As Milton says, in society we are contiguous, like bricks in a wall, not continuous as in the spiritual world. (CW 5: 270–1)

**Hypothetical and Descriptive Disciplines.** I wonder if sculpture is the hypothesis of biology, the free creation of organic or living forms. I wonder if all the hypothetical disciplines can be related to descriptive ones. My general feeling would be that literature is the hypothesis of the social sciences, mathematics of physics & astronomy, architecture of the mechanical sciences, painting perhaps of chemistry or geography—all this is too vague to be any use, but I like the sculpture-biology link. Sculpture does seem to be concerned with *natura naturans*, as painting with *natura naturata*, the spreadout world. (CW 23: 133–4)

I

**I Am that I Am.** I am, including Moses’ I am, confronts Moses as the burning bush. Projected, this becomes old thunderfart in the sky, the authoritarian establishment god. Recovered, he becomes the incarnate God-Man who is, inwardly, Los or human imaginative power, & outwardly Orc the sacrificial victim.Puzzle: why does this Orc-body have to be actualized and cast off? Blake makes it clear that it does have to be, but why? This is connected with the other question: what are the implications of the fact that Christianity has a myth of the fall & Buddhism doesn’t? Of the fact that Christ is a ritual scapegoat in a Passion Play and Gautama isn’t? In Buddhism *everything* is thrown on the recognition scene; Christianity appears to demand some participatory following of a sequence first. (CW 13: 180)

When a student objected to my teaching that the “I am” of Exodus was an existential definition of

God, I found myself saying that the word “I” was existential in itself. Nothing *really* exists except “I”; all other existences are inferred. Yet we’re so constituted that we work into this backwards. We start by accepting an inferred existence, whether God or nature, & work our way towards our own identity of “I” as the *telos* of that. (CW 13: 215)

**Iambic Tetrameter.**My talk to the Association of Teachers of English was on “What is Poetry?” A terrible assignment, but it turned out to be quite an interesting one from my point of view. . . . I’d been given the whole field from *Beowulf* to *The Waste Land,* & I roamed up & down seeking what I might devour. I said that in prose there were at least two rhythms, the rhythm of style, or the way one writes (*c’est l’homme*) and the rhythm of decorum. Note that there’s a positive place for the former. Then in poetry, I said, the metrical pattern was often more complicated than it looked. The metrical basis of English iambic pentameter has *at least* (nobody heard that) two metrical patterns. One is the iambic pentameter; the other is the old four-thump line that’s come down from AngloSaxon through Layamon, Lydgate, Skelton (where it has rests, as in Pope’s reading of Beowulf), nursery rhymes, ballads (where every other line has a rest) and finally *Christabel*. I then recited the opening lines of the *Canterbury Tales* & of *Paradise Lost*, as well as a few lines from Shakespeare, to show that one would naturally read them as four-stress lines. (The value of this is, I think, in establishing the idea of a metrical complex as distinct from *a* metre: a notion that would delight the heart of the new critics if they could think of it. If I were a career man I’d do that for them and a bibliography of Blake, to parallel the MLA book on the other romantics, for *PMLA*. Maybe I can do that anyway if I do get to Cambridge this summer: it wouldn’t take much work). (CW 8: 522–3)

**Identification.** What you identify with possesses you, and operates as an informing principle in your mind. (CW 23: 291)

**Identity.** The life of Christ is presented discontinuously in the Gospels, but it would take a fairly extreme Docetic to believe that it was actually discontinuous. This is connected with the fact that the only form of A-is-B identity that I can grasp is the child & the man—that is, identity can only be achieved in time by a single life. The identity itself demands discontinuous presentation, but achieving it is the one achievement of continuity. If Christ is also things like the true vine & the Rock of Ages, I may have to return to the evolutionary fantasies I got so bored with. (CW 13: 229– 30)

**Identification.** Three forms of identification with something else: eat it (omophagia or sacramental meal), wear it (disguise in all forms from beast-heads to transvestite Court of Love comedy) & act as it (mimetic dance). Note the survival of the beast-headed rout in *Volpone*, by a great master of masque. (CW 20: 125)

**Ideological Deadlocks.** We’ve reached several ideological deadlocks in history. Communism in my youth (the depression period) was widely assumed to be both more efficient and morally superior compared to capitalism. But capitalism didn’t evolve into communism: the two systems settled down into an adversary relation in which they could improve themselves only by borrowing features from each other. The Reformation produced a similar deadlock. (CW 5: 103)

**Ideologies.**A plurality of ideologies is a good thing if it prevents one from becoming tyrannical.

Perhaps the most effective element in democracy is its conception of the co-existence of ideologies. This is linked to the notion I got from Matthew Arnold, that the world at its best (urbanity) educates better than the church. The “pure gospel” is the aspect of Christianity that relates to primary concern. (CW 5: 81)

**Ideology-Bumbling of Liars.**I wish I could find a book on the Tiananmen Square business and get the phrases shouted by the students and the Party statement afterward. It would be a perfect illustration of the contrast between the authentic voice of human concern and the ideologybumbling of liars. (CW 6: 646)

**Ignorance.** Egyptian history knows nothing of an exodus: Roman history knows nothing of an incarnation: the two-billion-year process of evolution knows nothing of the creation of Adam, or the dawn of consciousness. (CW 13: 234)

**Iliad.** The *Iliad* is all about stupid gut-cutting thugs, with only Hector a half-decent person, and look what happens to him. Yet the *Iliad* is a superb poem, and the cornerstone of our literature. Some other principle is involved here: the principle of irony, of saying the opposite of what is meant, comes into both Homer and the Old Testament. (CW 6: 674)

I find immense difficulty in reading the *Iliad*, & have to get over it for personal as well as critical reasons. The age of childhood is the age of wrath, of aggressive rebelliousness that takes a conventional form. In my childhood I dreamed of the battles of red & blue toy soldiers, which I watched, directed, & determined victory for the red side. I also had dreams of a vast physical prowess I knew I didn’t possess. (CW 9: 56)

**Illusion.** Question: is it possible that what millions of people have believed for thousands of years could still be an illusion? Answer: What else could it be? (CW 6: 646)

**Imaginary Conversations.** I notice that in trying to control a reckless habit of uncreative fantasy I am continually telling myself to snap out of imaginary conversations. Yet these are merely attempts to put thoughts into words, & the censor here evidently thinks that in such cases a monologue would be directed thinking. Here is a Puritan principle at work in me, asserting the supremacy of egocentric reason & the treatise to dialogue, drama & the tantric forms. (CW 20: 164)

**Imagination.** Prophecy is epiphanic & disontinuous: then comes the natural religion flattening out of this into a conceptual system. When revelation is liberated by the creative imagination, the discontinuous re-enters. Each effect of the imagination is self-contained (cf. the flowers in Baudelaire’s *Invitation au Voyage*), & doesn’t worry about consistency: cf. Graves’ poem on the broken images. So one can see poetry negatively as “a heap of broken images,” an imaginative*sparagmos*, or positively as an infinite series of centres for an interpenetrating universe. (CW 13: 161)

The next step in criticism is to define imagination as a total response in which the attempt to parcel out intellectual & emotional components is given up. The notion that science or philosophy is “purely” intellectual is merely the transfer of religious superstitions about purity to another field. Quote James Mill to show how this fearsome mangling of ideas is caused by a desire to isolate an intellectual component through a superstitious fear of emotional contamination which he associates in this case with romantic reaction. Plato had no such compulsions, & his writing is far more genuinely intellectual precisely because it is not “purely” so. Literature, & therefore criticism to a lesser extent, demands imaginative effort, & is hence inaccessible to pedants with weak or lazy minds. Also criticism (which is energetic response to literature) must itself be imaginative, not afraid of humor or paradox, which latter are as essential to poetic truth as accuracy of observation is to botany. Criticism can never be a branch of philosophy or science. (CW 15: 53–4)

**Imagination as Beneficence.** Fantasy ranges from the formulaic to the creative. At the formulaic extreme are the “confessions” extorted from “witches” about kissing the devil’s anus and such. The uniformity of these confessions proves nothing except that people who torture women are not creative or original people: a thesis that hardly needed proving. The imagination is *beneficent*: objects of genuine hatred are usually projected, assumed to be “there,” though usually they are not. (CW 5: 384)

**Imitation.** I can hardly attach too much importance to the principle that all verbal patterns whatever, including the most logical ones, are an *imitation* of that psychological process ending in incommunicable comprehension which is known as thought. I wonder what the terms for thought, corresponding to *praxis*, would be. Not *dianoia*, & I think not *logos*. *Nous* or *ennoia* [conception], maybe. The Logos, as Faust did *not* see, is an inseparable unity of thought and act. History & poetry are both imitations of action, the latter more philosophical; philosophy & poetry are both imitations of thought, the latter more concrete. Hence what I call rhetoric is at once grammar, or the verbal imitation of action, and Aristotle’s rhetoric, or the verbal imitation of thought (the *antistrophos* of dialectic). Wonder if law, a major component of scripture, is an imitation of equity, as ceremonial law or ritual is an imitation of social action. (CW 23: 241)

**Immortality.** I don’t understand how Christianity can have immortality at one end of life & not at the other: if eternal existence follows death it must have preceded birth. This was what

“predestination” was all about: the feeling of absurdity in the notion of a new soul beginning in time & making its way up to eternity. If Jesus triumphs over death & thereby makes death something fundamentally unreal, he must also make birth unreal: if no consciousness really dies, all consciousness is really unborn. (CW 23: 30)

**Impressions of England.** Impressions of England: Shopkeepers give you wornout coins in change and then refuse to take them back, so you have to use them for tips. I foam slightly at the mouth whenever I pass a second-hand bookstall, and reflect that they might have given me fifteen thousand dollars just as well as fifteen hundred. They have a “Penguin Library” of paper-covered books for sixpence, some of the best things available in lighter fiction being included. (CW 2: 566)

Impressions of England: hot milk poured into rancid coffee achieves a result a League of Nations Commission ought to look into. English newspapers are a big relief after the Toronto Daily Star. I got my hair cut, and look as though I had been scalped with a remarkably inefficient tomahawk. Nor does it improve a barber shop to call it a Gentleman’s ‘Airdressing Salon. Englishmen dress the same way I do, which is a relief. (CW 2: 570)

Impressions of England: the women at Oxford have a terrific inferiority complex. There is a man called Herapath, who eats at the Senior Common Room in Burwash, who told me that when I got to Oxford he would write to his maiden aunt, who, he said, was a “dear old soul.”The dear old soul turns out to be the Principal of St. Hilda’s. She and Miss Thorneycroft both sent me invitations to tea on the same day; and each said that if I couldn’t stand the idea of entering a woman’s college I was to say so and they’d make other arrangements. I went out car-riding with Miss Thorneycroft into the Chiltern Hills Saturday afternoon—this is a magnificent country. The richness and variety of autumn coloring, particularly the beeches, is I think subtler and more satisfying in many ways than the Canadian fall, if less brilliant. I had a glorious time and fairly got drunk on color. We went back to St. Hugh’s for tea. She showed me over the college—dining hall, library and one of the rooms—and it was all so light and airy and cheerful I told her that she had most of the compensations for 13th century glass. The dear old soul doesn’t feed me till tomorrow. Miss Thorneycroft is a grand woman: I probably impressed her as a rather dim bulb. I know very little about canoeing in Canada. (CW 2: 611)

**Incarnate Gods.** A god who isn’t just a concept has to be an incarnate god. There are no gods except incarnate ones. If Attis is a god of the trees, he is the trees. The other kind, I suppose, are, when real, transcendent or Other-gods, teloi of human effort. (CW 15: 282)

**Incarnation.** Our conception of a dynamic world must surely arrive eventually at some idea of a tension of opposites as an underlying principle. On the one hand, there is the sphere of reality which we can in some measure understand but can never comprehend; the world of order, form, and permanence symbolized by mathematics, science, and in general the material worked on by the reason. On the other, there is the sphere of reality which we can in some measure experience but can never control; the world of development, process, and growth symbolized by political and economic movements and in general the material worked on by the will. But thought cannot stop with an antithesis; there must be tension, thrust, and counterthrust: and if there is tension there must be resolution, potential or actual. This resolution is symbolized by the arts, concerned with the incorporation of energy and inspiration in form, the deepest expression of the religious impulse. But symbols are not enough; the deepest powers of our nature drive us to find the resolution in history, and this the Christian sees in the Incarnation. In the Incarnation the redemption of the world and the infinite power of God become united in principle. (CW 3: 415)

If man could ever *become* God, there would be an absolute limit to his growth, which would pervert the whole operation. In what sense, then, is Christ God? By looking at him the other way, not as a man who became God, but as a God who became man. So what else is new? Only, I think, the question of what language is involved to “reveal” it. (CW 5: 62)

Epiphany is to pneuma what logos is to incarnation. Christ as flesh was the end of the physical creation: the world spread out for understanding as object. The incarnation is also the end of all “in” metaphors: the soul in the body, God in man, man in the world. Note how “in” begets hierarchy: the Ptolemaic onion begot the chain of being. But “in” also suggests the ascendancy of sound or hearing over the vision that’s “out there.” Epiphany is not really out-thereness, but helps to overcome the domination of in-ness. The demonic parody of incarnation is life in death, the ghost of Hamlet’s father who refuses to stay in Hamlet. Or find it’s Mother Nature in whom we live and move and have our being as embryos. The person in the substance is another aspect of the same thing. (CW 5: 346)

**Individuality and Social Context.** The individual grows out of society: the roots of his individuality are in his social context. His experience starts with himself, i.e., at the wrong end, and he has to work back. It’s the function of his parents to reveal his social context to him: they’re his anamnesis or *re*-cognition of his origin. Parental deficiency is permissiveness; parental excess is possessiveness. The latter sin (because it is a sin, however elaborately rationalized) identifies the social context with the parents, so the child has to struggle with their ghosts instead of with his real opposites, &, like Jacob’s angel, they cripple him if he wins. The former sin leaves him without a defined social context, so he has to go on inventing “establishments” & “authority figures” which don’t exist or, if they do, are reacted to in a paranoid fashion. All this has something to do with the fact that God is a Father. (CW 13: 253–4)

Individuality, where each is more important than all, is the ethical and political side of the principle of interpenetration. Primitive religion is inseparable from the social structure: Judaism was primitive in that sense. The individual alone can experience anything, including religion. (CW 13: 326)

**In Him.** Paul says “in him we live & move & have our being” because if he said “her” he’d be speaking of embryos. But the “in” of “in him” is a different kind of metaphor from “in her.” Or at least its context is different. (CW 5: 164)

**In Illo Tempore.** Eliade says that in primitive societies everything is a later imitation of an archetype existing before time, *in illo tempore*. There are two aspects to this. One is the Eliot waste land sense of the slipping away of time, knowledge as recollection. The other is the transforming of this imitation into repetition. This connects with one of my central themes: the articulating of the cycle as the mirror or analogy of the apocalyptic vision. The key to this is time, and the role of the cycle depends on the conception of time. (CW 15: 299)

**In Medias Res.** Begin in the middle, says Horace of epic. Actually every story begins in a middle of some kind. There’s this guy, see, and there’s this dame, okay? You can go in two directions from there, onward into what happens to them, back-ward into how they got there and who they are anyway. I think this is just a retake of my *Secular Scripture* passage, where realism is the causal backward movement, treating the surface data as effects, and romance the onward movement. (CW 6: 441)

**Inspired Tact.** The “fundamentalist” creed in which I was mainly brought up asserts that it sticks by the Gospel: actually it’s founded on the Gnostic heresies. One, there is only one Gospel, for the four existing ones are reconcilable at every point. Two, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, *wrote* the Gospel, the four evangelists being merely dictaphones. Three, it was written in such a way as to guarantee the complete purity of the text & infallibility of translations. These all being clearly nonsense we are brought back to the question, Why didn’t Jesus write, or dictate, or, better still, invent the printing press? The answer has something to do with the inspired tact which keeps my adherence: the Biblical counterpart of the tact that Catholics find in the history of the Church & the Papacy, & which I certainly don’t find there. Christianity never committed itself, as Mithraic & various pseudepigraphic & apocryphal texts did, to definite statements about the order of nature. It may imply, or even assume, that the earth is the centre of the universe, that there are waters under the earth, that heaven is in the sky: but it never definitely says so, in a way that destroys its authority when these things are shown to be false. It keeps an end open, & science can develop through that open end. The absence of a definitive text written by the Master himself is part of the same tact. Interpretation, criticism, dispute, are all part of the open end that suggests the *infinity* of revelation. (CW 13: 118–19)

**Institutional Religion.** The effect of organized and institutional religion on society, for the most part, is evil. It isn’t just reactionary or superstitious; it is evil, and stinks in the nose of God. One has to remember this when thinking of the easy conquests of secular revolution over it. They, of course, become evil in their turn. (CW 9: 216)

**Institutional Sin.**Original sin of institutions: priests may pray for guidance with utter sincerity, but what they are unconsciously praying for is the continuance of the social ascendancy of their Church. (CW 13: 330)

**Instruments of Production.** Today I went again to the Lamont Library & worked until shortly after lunch, & then began to organize my instruments of production. First of all I went and rented a typewriter—a very heavy old Royal, $8.25 for three months. Then I got paper & bought a new fountain pen that actually writes. These sound like small matters, as filling a cavity in a fast-rotting tooth might be a small matter, but they were important to me. (CW 8: 415)

**Integrity.** The *Gestalt* of a complex metaphor is the closest we can get to the sense of the integrity of a verbal structure. Integrity is not, or doesn’t commit one to, a cult of holism. I have an integrity, as long as I’m alive, that I won’t have after I’m dead. But it doesn’t follow that, with my deafness, fallen arches, burpy stomach and limp prick, I’m a “perfect whole.” The critic looks for the inner integrity which is also the vitality of the literary work. At the top level—Dante, Shakespearean romance—this includes a very high degree of wholeness in the imagery. But the wholeness isn’t an end in itself: it just leads more readily to higher levels. (CW 5: 109)

**Intellectual Arrogance.** I’ve got tremendous ideas, but they’re like the myths in primitive religions, huge but monstrous, not consolidated, disciplined or defined. Only the Blake—I know Blake as no man has ever known him—of that I’m quite sure. But I lack so woefully in the way of subtlety. I haven’t got a subtle mind—only a pounding, driving bourgeois intellect. I don’t insinuate myself between two factors of a distinction—I push them aside: if I meet a recalcitrant fact, I knock it down; which doesn’t get rid of it, but puts it in a different position. Consequently I’m damnably lonesome, intellectually. I resent criticism, because I don’t know, in most cases, what the hell I mean myself, so how should anyone else pretend to do so? Besides, in conversations I take up most of my positions through intellectual arrogance rather than reasoned conviction, and consequently won’t back out of them. (CW 1: 434–5)

**Intellectual Handicap.** All religions constitute an intellectual handicap: the *worth* of a religion depends on the intellectual honesty it permits. It’s silly to respect all religions: Anglo-Israelitism, for example, is pure shit, and cannot be accepted without destroying one’s whole sense of reality. The Mormons, the Christian Scientists, the fundamentalists, increase the handicap to the point of crippling the brain. Some handicap, probably, one must have: to accept a crippling one in any field (e.g. the Shakespeare didn’t write Shakespeare boys) is neurotic. (CW 23: 295)

**Intention.** Now, even if we had the privilege of Gulliver in Luggnagg, and could call up the spirit of, say, Shakespeare, no matter what kind of a “What did you mean by that?” question we put to him, we could only get the same damnable iteration of “I meant it to form part of my play.” A discursive writer has an intention of showing or meaning something apart from his writing, & can discuss this additional intention as much as he likes. A poet has no intention except to write the poem (unless he is a bad didactic poet), and anyone who ascribes such additional intentions to him cannot distinguish literary from other verbal structures—the first test of anyone calling himself a literary critic must pass. The poet’s intention has been fully taken care of once we assume that whatever we are dealing with in his poem really belongs there and *has* meaning: there’s a secondary centrifugal intention to be intelligible. Of course a *living* writer may discuss a poem as though it were discursive writing, and ascribe to himself, at the time of writing it, subtleties of which he was actually probably quite unconscious. (CW 23: 225–6)

**Internal Commedia dell’arte.** A great deal of contemporary psychology has to do with trying to isolate and clarify certain elements of behavior as though everybody carried around a whole sort of *commedia dell’arte* inside him, and put on various masks and acted various roles. And that is, of course, a completely different area from watching these various masks and roles passing in front of you in a romance. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Interpenetration.**I use the word interpenetration because, for one thing, I’ve grown to distrust the word reconcile. I think that if you reconcile A with B, you water down both A and B so much that you haven’t really got anything at all. And so I don’t want to reconcile literary criticism with psychology. But I would like to interpenetrate with psychology and anthropology. And that is a word [interpenetrate] that I got actually from Zen Buddhism, from Suzuki’s writings on the *Lankavatara Sutra*, and the way in which in the height of vision for the Buddhist, everything is everywhere at once, and everything interpenetrates with everything at once. And that to me was a much clearer explanation of what the apocalyptic vision was than I ever found in the West. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

Interpenetration of belief is unity with variety, like metaphor: reconciliation, conversion, agreement, are all forms of (imperialistic) compulsion. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

Faith being a secondary concern, faith and doubt interpenetrate. “There is a God” already contains the statement “there is no God.” Dogma, accepting one and forbidding the other, creates hysteria, as it disturbs an imaginary social consensus to admit the opposite. (CW 5: 103)

“Dialogue”: an overworked buzzword referring to the interpenetrating of opposites in ideology. (CW 5: 121)

Reincarnation is not a doctrine, whether true or: it’s experience, a kind of self-guided fantasy. The conception of interpenetration makes it easy to see how one can enter various personalities. (CW 5: 284)

The end of the journey is interpenetration, or perhaps the hologram model. It’s the recognition scene of proclaiming word & responding spirit. (CW 5:394)

Borges has several stories, notably “The Aleph,” which illustrate the principle of interpenetration, everything everywhere at once. (CW 6: 448)

Harmony, reconciliation (whether of God and man or of two arguments) and agreement are all terms relating to propositional language. The poetic counterpart is what I’ve been calling interpenetration, the concrete order in which everything is everywhere at once. Whitehead’s *Science and the Modern World*says this in so many words: I must have got it from there originally, though I thought I got it from Suzuki’s remarks about the Avatamsaka Sutra. (I can’t make any sense out of these infernal Sutras: they seem designed for people who really can’t read). The general line is, I think, anti-Hegelian: Hegel showed how the thesis involved its own antithesis, although I think the “synthesis” has been foisted on him by his followers. Anyway, the expansion to absolute knowledge is too close to what Blake calls the smile of a fool. My goal would be something like absolute experience rather than absolute knowledge: in experience the units are unique, and things don’t agree with each other; they mirror each other. (CW 6: 616)

The conception of interpenetration is that of natural inclusion. We are in God; God is in us. Therefore there are two worlds, as at the end of *Paradiso*, one the other turned inside out. My consciousness of things puts those things inside me, but whatever is conscious has me inside them. I fell over this years ago in dealing with art & nature: in art nature is turned inside out. But I didn’t see it as interpenetration, or an aspect of it. Perhaps this mutuality of awareness *is* identity. My memory holds my past selves in me; my growth, or body of fate, or what the hell, holds my future selves. (CW 9: 253)

Everything is everywhere at once, God damn it. (CW 23: 125)

**Intolerant Ideologies.** Ideology most workable when most tolerant and aware of the opposite side of itself. Religious journals often find atheists more useful, but then there isn’t a real “crunch” in this field. No literary critic can doubt the intolerance of secular ideologies to myth, in view of the number of writers driven to silence, exile, imprisonment, suicide or judicial murder by ideologyobsessed governments. (CW 6: 600)

**Intoxicating Drinks.** No one is more ready than I to recognize the immense and potent influence for good that intoxicating drink has had upon Europe, yet I do not regard myself as inconsistent because I am an ardent Prohibitionist over here. Every nation makes what use it can of alcohol, and drinks the drink inevitable to it. Without English ale, French wine, German beer, European culture would have been hopelessly emasculated and impotent; therefore they drank those biguns in stupendous quantities. But drinking in America is a swinish and sodden business because the whole psychological attitude is different. Living as we do in a sex age, the idea of drinking is inseparably bound up with the idea of sex, and the swilling of whisky and gin over here is fundamentally an aphrodisiac pursuit. Youngsters in this country and in the U.S.A. talk about drinking with exactly the same air of lascivious grinning secrecy that they talk about the sex act itself. The whole idea of drinking is focussed directly on intoxication rather than relaxation. Drinking is done not for stimulation but as pure suicide. The common sense of America saw that in its soberest and sanest moment––after the war––and their shuddering recoil was expressed in Prohibition. There are those who continue the old European tradition, of course, but they are in a hopeless minority and are in any case mainly European exotics. The revolt against the Puritans was, as usual, a romantic one, based on a belief that a sympathy with liquor might re incarnate the creator of Falstaff. American culture, however, has nothing of the natural and essential association with alcohol. Their great names––Whitman, Emerson, Dickinson––are essentially water figures, and the exception––Poe––is more striking than an instance of the rule. I have no doubt that a collateral movement is going on in Europe, of course. The dead tissues of our civilization are held together far too shakily and parlously to permit of disruption by a powerful organic force like alcohol. China expressed the death of its culture in opium, which is suicidal. Whisky is homicidal, and a fomenter of endless unmeaning annihilating destruction. (“1932 Notebook,” 10 April)

**Introversion.** We live in a very introverted society: a superhighway where the main danger is falling asleep is obviously a much more introverted place than an unfrequented country road would be. And it is that kind of introversion that we can’t escape from: the introversion of high rise apartments and all these streets with the cars going down the middle, and the sense of community obliterated constantly, which makes it very hard for children not to adopt that kind of pacing, because it is a very rigorous pacing that is demanded. And to listen to a story, you’ve got to just clip that right off, you’ve got to relax and lose all that sense of panic, all that sense of timing and marching. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

I’m still, of course, intensely introverted, but in some ways my dramatic imagination is consolidating. It’s curious how introverted I am at my age [36]. Solitude is still a delicious luxury to me, especially solitude in a crowd, drifting around cities. In such a case I prefer tried & worn paths: I dislike exploring & using any effort meeting new situations. Naturally I don’t want to talk to people (at least people with nothing in common with me, such as one would meet) & in that state regard all official surliness, like the librarian yesterday, as a kind of violation. Like my father, I’m gregarious enough: it’s quite possible to be a social introvert. (CW 8: 95)

**Introversion and Extraversion.** The technique of quieting the body by the mind is introversion; the technique of quieting the mind by the spirit (for the present I use soul & spirit together) is deep introversion or contemplation. The use of the body by the mind is extraversion; the use of the mind by the spirit is deep extraversion or charity. I suppose the same active–contemplative dichotomy persists, but I don’t like it: surely creation is neither one nor the other, & I wonder if the real agape isn’t a kind of super-creative power. (CW 15: 149)

**Invention.** In playing through an edition of Dussek’s sonatas, I had a curious sense of the ambiguity of the word “invention.” The greatest composers, we think, are those who make up the best music out of their own heads. This is part of the subjectifying of creation that we’ve come to take for granted. It’s the ghost of the old idea that God is the only objective creator. Gurdjiev has a remark about “objective” art that impressed me, although in his context it was probably all balls. But I wonder about “invention”—I get a strong feeling that Mozart and Beethoven *found* things that were really there, in the ground Dussek surveyed. (Of course Dussek found things too, especially in the fine F minor sonata). Maybe the “greatest” artists are also the greatest realists: they discover, like the scientists, patterns & constructs actually latent in nature. This would explain the sense in, e.g., Eliot, that the poet is a fisher king trying to hook and land one thing, his poem, which is his only because he happened to catch it. (CW 9: 245)

**Irish Protestant Genius.** Why is the genius of modern Ireland a primarily Protestant genius? Every great Irish writer is of Protestant origin except Joyce, who had to fight desperately with a *nonserviam* all his life. I think it’s a Protestantism that has gone back to the original recreators of the Word, to the Eckhart–Boehme tradition; hence the theosophical occultism in AE & Yeats, the *animamundi* in Shaw, the Essentienism (Yeats & Shaw were both frustrated Royalists) transformed to patriotism, the sardonic austerity of Synge, & the common desire to escape from all natural & reasonable substitutes for the Word. Note the Giordano Bruno influence on Joyce, representative I think of a medieval–Renaissance Platonic mysticism opposed to Thomism. (CW 15: 104–5)

**Irrationality of Convention.** The point about the irrationality of convention is of great importance. Literature contains life by turning its back on it ironically; but to use it as a guide to life is the wildest pedantry. Tragedy is irrational in its catastrophe; comedy in its manipulated happy ending; romance in its unreal setting & characterization; irony in its regimentation of behavior. How many plots, from *Hamlet*&*Othello* to Grade Z movies, are motivated by stupidity & lack of ordinary sense? (CW 23: 277)

**Is and Is Not.** The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God [Psalm 53:1]. But every human being is a fool, and every human being has denied God in his heart. One may say other things later, but that is what one says first, & that is what one continues to hold to, as the central principle of existence, through life. One reason is that the first positive feeling in life is “I am,” which carries with it the sense “there is no other.” An embryonic consciousness of God may begin with the sense of the reality of other people; next comes the sense of the inevitability of death, where the feeling “I shall be not” suggests “something other is & will be.” For most people this other could only be nature; then comes the specifically vulnerable loss (often a parent, only Helen for me) suggesting “if she is not, what is?” Or, more related to myself: “if I am to be not, maybe I’ve got hold of the wrong I.” Anyway, “God is dead” is a silly bloody remark; “God never was” would at least be intelligible. (CW 5: 379–80)

**Is There a God?** It’s curious how writers do the opposite of what they’re trying to do, often along with what they’re trying to do. The question “Is there, or is there not, a God?” is the ultimate in verbal unreality: hell itself cannot contain its utter futility and emptiness. Kant wrote his first two critiques to try to make it less unreal by showing that such a question could never have an answer. Along with doing this, he raised the same question again in the form “Is there, or is there not, a noumenal world?” (Because God, according to practical reason, is to be found only there.) Note that I repudiate the phrase “trying to do” when applied to Shakespeare: it applies only to proposition-writing, conceptual or rhetorical, at least when it concerns great writers. (CW 5:201)

**Isolating the Permanent Reality.**Iwound up by getting into an argument over teaching methods. I said the teacher wasn’t concerned with saying what he liked & disliked, but with isolating the permanent reality of what he was talking about, even if he hated it as much as I hate Carlyle’s *Past & Present*. (CW 8: 422)

**Italian Decadent Painting.** Fortunately, Italian decadent painting is so bad that it’s really extremely funny—we particularly liked the martyrdom of St. Agatha, where a huge blond sow was stripped to the waist and having her breasts worked on with pincers—“Fancy,” said Mike [Joseph], “a female saint’s having breasts big enough to get hold of with pincers”—and there was something in the careful way the pincers were being fitted to the nipples that made us howl. Then there was one of a cupid reaching up into the genitals of Hercules. We call them the Teat-Twister and the Testicle-Teaser, and are extremely fond of them. (CW 2: 727)

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**Jackson Knight.** Friday I went to Cheltenham to see Wilson Knight’s brother. The train trip was fascinating—it was like being dragged through one Constable painting after another, and I like these funny little trains that sidle off so apologetically—everything is built so close to the ground in England. Knight is different from his brother—much less reserved and introspective. It’s hard to carry on small talk, generalizations or personalities with Wilson: we talk exclusively about literary subjects. His brother is equally friendly and equally intense and enthusiastic about symbolism, but is much more interested in me as a person and is more flexible in his general outlook. The Knights are the only people I have met who really speak my language, and I sat there drinking gallons of cider (I have been pissing pure apple-juice ever since) and talking and listening as I had never talked nor listened before. Knight’s politics I don’t like—more sympathetic to Fascism than Communism, full of a mystical devotion to the army, which he regards as the embodiment of ideal character training, and inclined to regard the Oxford Group very seriously—but somehow that doesn’t seem to matter when we talk the same language. Cheltenham itself is a perfect background to such a set-up—a health resort, beautiful, sleepy and cultured, full of private hotels of a most devastating respectability, inhabited by retired army and government people. Knight lives in one of those sepulchral hotels: I can’t imagine how he stands it. He’s a professor of classics in Exeter University and is bringing out a book on the labyrinth in religion and art. In the middle of our political discussion, he said: “The essential point about you is that you’re not an escapist,” which is the highest compliment it is possible to pay me, I think—or anybody else for that matter, but particularly me. (CW 2:588)

**Jacob’s Dream.** Creation and fall are positive and negative aspects of the same vision. One is of the brave new world, ordered (spiral mountain) and beautiful (Eros ladder). The other is of “thrownness,” of alienation from this world, where all creation is recreation, the recovery of something lost. These two visions recur in Jacob’s dream of the ladder & his fight with the rivergod that crippled him. (CW 5: 299)

**James, Henry.** If I were following my nose, I’d be reading Henry James, and wishing to God I’d not only read more of him, but remembered more of what I did read. I’ve always had the greatest difficulty figuring out what the hell was going on, at the most superficial level. So *The Awkward Age* and *The Sacred Fount*& a lot of others just went up the spout. (CW 5: 114)

Henry James’ *Jolly Corner* is about an American expatriate who comes to the house of his birth in New York to haunt it & find there the apparition of what he would have become if he had grown up there. An introverted aesthete (more or less) trying to create his own extroverted self. A Hawthorne sense of ghostly life sprouting from a rooted spot, but the larger implications of the return to the place of birth are there too. He hates what he evokes, but his girl friend, who has dreamed of the extroverted self, says she would love him in any form, though naturally she prefers the one he’s in. Thus the situation is a Jungian version of the triangle of lover, woman & rival: the rival is the shadow & the hero comes to terms with it through the interposition of the anima. The story closely resembles *The Sense of the Past*, with the hero again in a house which is haunted because *he* is doing the haunting. Curious how in Henry James the Ishmael & Isaac roles are reversed: the American returning home is Jacob in Edom. (CW 8: 176)

Just finished a wonderful story of Henry James’s called the *Altar of the Dead*, an elaborate spectre, emanation, animus-anima pattern that combines ordinary religious symbolism with the lighted pathway of the Halloween feast of all souls. (CW 8: 183)

No idea could violate Henry James’s mind, Eliot says; but many of his characters, mostly women, are victims of a positive gang-rape of ideology. Euphemia adolescent romantic pipe-dreams in *Madame de Mauves*; the two-way street theoreticians in *Lady Barberina*, etc., etc. (CW 15: 360)

**Jaynes, Julian.**I’ve learned from Jonas & elsewhere that the Gnostics really had a point, but I’ve never read anything Gnostic (Christian, anyway) that wasn’t a billion miles from the New Testament. I’ve been through what’s available of the Nag Hammadi stuff, and it’s just a gabble chorus like the mystical frogs in Aristophanes. I think, on a proportionately reduced scale, that the bulk of critical theory is a chorus of koax after the *Anatomy*, and I want to get back to that level. One book is excepted: Julian Jaynes on the emergence of what he calls consciousness. That’s a book I think I’ll be drawing on a good deal, though with some very different emphases. I wish Jaynes hadn’t used negative words like “hallucination” and “breakdown” so much: like Theseus, he sees only the lunatic at the beginning of the progression, and the bicameral people of today are schizophrenics. Surely the authority of the poet depends on a reconstruction of the “bicameral” situation. Jesus’ mind, for example, seems to have had a “breakdown” in the opposite direction: all his consciousness was taken over by the will of the Father. And there’s a much closer link between dialectical prose and his “consciousness” than he admits. He says it’s the “song & story” of the poets that developed consciousness, & regards the whole soul-body dualism as a pseudo-question from the beginning. I don’t think the poets developed consciousness, though they reflected its development: they’re the people who, along with the prophets, keep pulling us back to the “bicameral” stage. (CW 5: 147)

Jaynes’ book: the purely negative terms “hallucination” and “schizophrenia” overlook the constant tradition in poets to get *past* the tyranny of consciousness and reinforce it with a driving power that may not pull us back to the “bicameral” state but certainly isn’t satisfied with the linear-discursive processes of the conscious mind. Plato, as he says, adopted Theseus’ lunatic-lover-poet triad; there were the “Muses” in Greece & the Court of Love mistresses; there was the Romantic conception of “imagination”; there were the *symboliste* efforts to abandon the ego; there was surrealism & kindred movements in this century. Christ in the gospels, notably John, is portrayed as someone in whom the “right lobe” of the brain has completely taken over: he can do nothing except what he sees the Father do. John in particular seems to be trying to force us to say: if this man wasn’t what he said he was he was certainly the most deranged lunatic on record, unless his evangelist was, & the general ambience of the story seems to rule out paranoia on so titanic a scale. (CW 5: 161–2)

**Jazz.**Is there any possibility of a new development in music through jazz? Those who think not have been regarding it too exclusively, I think, as a cheap urban commercial product. There is that element at its base, certainly (insofar as it has a bass [sic]), but there are other and more promising ones. There seems to be in jazz a sick, nostalgic longing of an uprooted soul; the back to nature romanticism crushed by the reckless forced gaiety of the town. Who does not hear in jazz the intense yearning to exchange the life of a clerk for that of a peasant? Is it a coincidence that the two most popular jazz instruments––saxophone and tuba––reproduce the sounds of the horse and the pig respectively? Who’s so deaf not to hear the ineffable pathos of the poor lost calf or the sick little lamb in the crooner? Nay, even the humble ass is worthily represented by the contralto colorations of the chorus girls. Surely there is room here for a folk song revival more basic and far reaching than any yet attempted. We talk too of “classical economy,” but what form of art is more economical than jazz? With one sweeping gesture it discards melody, harmony, counterpoint, syncopation, form, and the relevancy of the libretto, retaining only the two fundamental beats on which the rhythmic basis of our music lies with the sixteen measure period which forms its testa. Here is none of the rococo decorativeness of the gavotte or minuet beat, but a quiet steady insistence on the vital principle of music––and this just when modern composers are drifting into a nebulous and languorous haze. In the same way the rigorously rhymed lyrics may revitalize poetry by their return to the pristine concordances of the language. “Poetry is played out,” sigh our ultra sophisticated ears––artists, I mean of course. “Yes, but ‘you’ still rhymes with ‘blue,’” say the jazz lyricists doggedly. On that simple fact rests their whole case. This is not atavism but a control of evolution.(“1932 Notebook,” 2 May)

**Jesters.** I must think about the role of jesters generally in drama: they’re even central to Sanskrit drama, and I’ve noticed that Shakespeare deliberately puts them in where his sources have no mention of them (there’s no trace of Touchstone in Lodge’s *Rosalind* or of Autolycus in Greene’s *Pandosto*). I think they have something to do with the preservation of an oral tradition in drama—wit and jokes depend on an oral tradition, which is why they’re so damn dismal even in Shakespeare. Shakespeare’s melancholy clowns may be connected with Harlequin’s self-detaching quality. It’s not that they’re more realistic than their romantic surroundings, necessarily, but that they create a Brechtian sense of “alienation,” a realization that this is a show. Hence, Jaques, who’s really a jester and wants to wear motley, and whose apotheosis is a long set speech comparing life to a stage. Touchstone’s seven stages of the duel create alienation from the upper-class rituals to which duelling belongs [*As You Like It*, 5.4.94–108]. (‘Notes on Romance”)

**Jesus.** Just as God-building in science & philosophy is a waste of time, so Jesus-building is a waste of time in ethics. The conception of Jesus as a perfect moral model, whose life was entirely free of, for instance, the sado-masochist cycle or the Oedipus complex (Christianity demonstrably had both very badly), is a sterile notion. It’s his confrontation with society that’s important. I suppose what he did was to define the individual, & that leads to redefining society. (CW 13: 257)

Jesus epitomizes the whole story, being the body of a spiritual Israel with a twelvefold organization. His birth is a descent to Egypt: he crosses the Jordan& is baptized; he wanders in the wilderness, passes from law to gospel, & begins his ministry. He preaches on a mountain a commentary on the commandments of Sinai; he demonstrates his power over the sea & causes nets full of fishes to be hauled out of the sea. He is the Joshua who conquers the Promised Land & is lifted up like the brazen serpent in the wilderness. The Harrowing of Hell corresponds to the dispute over Moses. (CW 23: 18)

**Jesus’ Father.** Who was Jesus’ father? Apart from poor old Joseph, there are two answers: (a) God the Father (b) the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ own references to his Father seem to be to (a); but if the Comforter who was to succeed him and keep his historical function going was also his father, we’re in a bind that no formula about three persons in one substance really solves. Maybe this was what was worrying the Eastern Church when they rejected the “Filioque” clause. The notion of a new Father fathering Jesus is the starting point of Blake’s Thunderfart god, I suppose: Los is both Time and the Holy Spirit, and the coming of Jesus consolidated the “horizon” law-god into Antichrist or Satan. Jung, of course, wants Mary in as a fourth person (the Holy Spirit is really female in attributes). (CW 5: 152)

**Jewel Case.** An aunt of Helen’s[Helen Frye’s] whose life is streamlined upper-middle class female in a small town—I.O.D.E. work, golf & bridge teas,—referred to her girdle as a “jewel-case.” I was amused but nearly nauseated by the overpowering female *smell* of the joke: there’s a coy obscenity about it that the male resents in the same way that the women resent his type of obscenity. (CW 25: 10)

**Joachim’s Three Ages.** I have not spoken of the providence of God, because it seems to me that the providence of God operates only in its own sphere, not in the sphere of the folly & frivolity of man. I think the world could be redeemed by a Christianity that was no longer aghast with the chains of history clanking behind it, that was no longer crippled by notions of heresy, infallibility, exclusiveness of the “I’m right & you’re wrong” type, & all the fixations on a foul historical record . . . . Such a Christianity might represent the age of the spirit that the 13th c. Friar Joachim of Flores saw as superseding the Old Testament age of the Father& the New Testament age of the Logos. Such a Christianity would be neither an inglorious rear-guard action nor a revolutionary movement creating suffering & death instead of life more abundantly, but a Christianity of a Father who is not a metaphor of male supremacy but the intelligible source of our being; of a Son who is not a teacher of platitudes but a Word who has overcome the World; & of a Spirit who speaks with all the tongues of man & angels and still speaks with charity. The Spirit of creation who brought life out of chaos brought death out of it too, for death is all that makes sense of life in time. The Spirit that broods on the chaos of our psyches brings to birth a body that is in time & history but not enclosed by them, & is in death only because it is in the mind of life as well. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

The Joachim dialectic of *three* ages seems to me now inescapable, & I feel, as Joachimites always do, that it’s starting about next Tuesday. The age of the law was not only Hebraic but Classical, the age of society which afforded primarily the social differentiation of the slave state. The age of the gospel was primarily an age of subjective individuality: it set up a differentiation within the individual, & so produced the Papacy at one end & the dictator at the other. Democracy & its effort to transcend rule marks the beginning of a movement toward an apocalyptic or second coming way of looking at things, a Bergsonian recreation of a non-differentiated organism above individuality. In this age Christ is no longer a peculiar society nor a historical individual, but the body of man. The law is a polarity between a past contract & a future Messiah; the gospel is a polarity between a past Messiah & a future contract (in Newman, the total actualizing of dogma). (CW 8: 250–1)

**Job.** I shouldn’t be oversubtle about Job: the *primary* meaning is what it’s always been taken to be: that God is not the source of evil. The fact that this *leads to* de-emphasizing the creation & the myth of fall comes next. (CW 13: 187)

**Journals in Russia.** One thing that I did not know about Russia was the size and prestige of what we should call learned journals.It’s almost as if the editor of the *University of Toronto Quarterly* were given a full time job with a salary and an office and a private car at his disposal, and were running a magazine of a circulation of about 100,000. They tell me that that is a long standing tradition in Russia––it goes back to prerevolutionary times––when to learn what was going on in the world they had to learn it through the languages of Western Europe. (“Soviet Union and Russia”)

**Journey.** The way or journey is a series of cycles (journey of course is from *journée*) where we get “up” in the morning and “fall” asleep at night. At a certain point the cycle stops for us–there’s finally a winter-night-old age-sea point with no spring-dawn-birth-rain following. We all take that road; the question is whether (or when) an upward spiral moves against it. It does, of course, but there must be a point at which rebirth must give place to resurrection. The journey below hell is the “descend lower” of the Quartets, where we pass beyond demonic parody. The point of death is also, in cosmology, the descent of energy into the chaos-inertia heat death of entropy (all four of those words I just used are traditional attributes of hell). Virgil, of course, doesn’t go below hell: he slides over the top of it. (CW 5: 289)

**Journey of Romance.** Romance in its totality is the record of the journey of the human imagination around its own cosmos. The cosmos is circular or spherical in shape, with a top and a bottom: the journey starts at the top, descends to the bottom, and comes back to its starting point. The descent is a progressive loss of parts of one’s identity, until one reaches a pole of alienation. All such descents have about them the quest of King Lear on the heath, or of Job in his misery, where the question is how much one can lose of one’s “property,” that is, of one’s self, without losing one’s identity as well. (CW 15: 257)

**Judgment.** Traditional Christianity says there’s to be a final judgment of man by God, which will of course be just. Theodicy is a dishonest judgment of God by man that says he’s innocent though the evidence is definitive that he’s guilty. Guilty of what? Of not arranging the world in accordance with human desires. Such a judgment is about as relevant as a dog’s judgment on a picture: “inedible.” (CW 5: 249)

**Jung, Carl.** Spent the afternoon in the Reference Room reading Jung’s *Secret of the Golden Flower*. I think I’ve pretty well got the hang of Jung now, & should start serious work on Freud. I’m very dissatisfied with the way Jung jumped over the libido Orc-hero to his archetypes without incorporating him—neither Jacobinor Wickes seem interested in the old libido-symbolism. In quest of what I’m in quest of I have to unite Jung as well as add Freud to him. The only idea I got from the Golden Flower book was the conception of individuality as a *temenos*, a cut-off sacred place of universal holiness (in the innocent sense). He also says that Chinese science is based not on causality but on synchronization & that the truth of astrology is in divination, the real “constellations” being the pattern formed at each instant of time. (CW 8: 184–5)

**Junk.**Reading a “Leavisite” attack on me: Canada is full of critics who are like those bright blue recycling boxes: they diversify the scene even though there is never anything in them but junk. (CW 5: 235)

**Justice and Power.** Plato’s *Republic* begins with Socrates destroying the thesis of Thrasymachus that justice is what is to the advantage of the stronger. The regular Socratic eiron-alazon role is clearly central, but there are bigger ironies involved, two in particular. Plato is aware of one, but I think not the other. Socrates demonstrates nothing about justice: he demonstrates only that the word justice is a “good” word, and belongs in a context of “good” things. Thrasymachus speaks for the wordless world of power: he’s the prototype of Machiavelli and Hobbes and Marx and late Nietzsche and all the power followers: Mao with his “power comes out of the barrel of a gun,” Stalin’s “how many divisions has the Pope?” But he is telling us about the real world, whether he’s defining justice or not, & Socrates isn’t. (CW 5: 264)

K

**Kafka.** I’ve been reading Kafka today for my broadcast—a silly biography by Max Brod & his own published stories. Some of them very fine—the audacity of his imagination is very bracing, & his sardonic humor is usually in charge, except when he feels he isn’t being honest unless he includes the irony of the situation. I think I’ll do a good broadcast on him: my main points are the Chaplinesque figure at the centre & the Book of Job as the sun he revolves around. (CW 8: 148)

**Karma.** I’ve been amused by the way people taking up Eastern religions say that all the scientific laws discovered in the West are “mere” this or that, but the law of Karma is for real because it’s Eastern. It seems clearly the Christian view that resurrection *abolishes* Karma, just as communication overcomes entropy in Norbert Wiener, which may be a secular intuition of the same thing. Karma is the real ouroboros, the last enemy to be destroyed. (CW 13: 190)

**Katabasis.** The literature of the pre-Christian period is basically a literature of purgation and katabasis. The dark night of the soul, as the mystics call it; the entry into a lower state of existence in order to free the higher nature and leave the baser behind: the passage through some sort of physical ordeal: this is the keynote of the imaginative work of the time. Jonah’s descent into the fish’s belly; Daniel’s descent into the lion’s den; the three men in the fiery furnace; the lycanthropy of Nebuchadrezzar; all these are well-known initiation symbols. It does not require any especial pro-Christian hypostatizing to see how all this feeling converges upon the logical necessity for the death and resurrection of a Christ. For the fact of death in the world, even if it lead directly to a rebirth, shows that this purgatorial progression of spirit is as true of the spirit of God as of man. That is the basis of Zoroastrianism; the necessity for God to struggle with and overcome a principle of death and suffering. The theme of ethical dualism, of an adversary of God, runs through much apocryphal thought: Asmodeus in Tobit, Abaddon and Apollyon in Revelation, Lucifer and Satan in the Gospels, are instances: historically it works through to the Gnostic and Manichean heresies. Christianity being steeped in such conceptions, it took to Europe a somewhat adventitious personal devil, who was much exploited by folklore but never really absorbed into Christian thought. The far subtler conception really at the heart of Christianity, which we can trace in Enoch and the Servant Songs of Isaiah, starts by drawing a clear distinction between the human and the divine natures; the former being subject to death but the latter not, a distinction resolved by the Incarnation. (CW 3: 149–50)

The Old Testament, no doubt as a result of Hellenistic as well as Mesopotamian influence, has one genuine katabasis, the King of Babylon in Hell [Isaiah 14:4–9], and there are a number of other symbols of initiation and the descent of the soul. The three children go through the purgatory of Nebuchadrezzar’s furnace, and emerge unscathed. Daniel descends into the lion’s den, but comes out miraculously preserved. In Jonah’s descent into the fish’s belly the moral and purgatorial nature of the experience is more clearly marked. Yet all three experiences are genuine initiations. (CW 3: 181)

One fundamental problem is the distinguishing of the katabasis from the anabasis, & I haven’t got all the details straight. It seems to me there’s a primary katabasis on the order of grace, the Sartor Resartus descent into noumenal mystery where the libido joins the will, & produces what is at once a realized or freed will and a renounced one. This is Jung’s katabasis into the creative unconscious, and Samuel Butler’s practice memory, also William James’ subliminal consciousness, the revolution of which produces conversion. In Butler one searches for “la mente che non erra,” the deep unconscious perfection of activity. Blake, a highly integrated person before he began, doesn’t seem to give a clear picture of a primary katabasis: that’s why it’s held me up. But surely the word “vision” implies both waking & dream consciousness, & the integration of them both. (CW 15: 157)

The oracular is the descent to the womb–tomb; it’s an invaginating process. At a certain point it turns into wit or laughter, an expression of detachment, even often of hostility. Normally the earlier process is female-dominated and the later one an emerging male god. In *Back to Methuselah* Adam laughs and Eve dislikes and fears the sound, but that’s simplistic. Some sexual differences may be involved. I think I’ve never met a woman who could see anything in Rabelais: the relevant reasons have nothing to do with prudery or inhibition, or perhaps with any other form of cultural conditioning. It’s just that the imaginative reality which is there for me in Rabelais is not there for them. (CW 15: 308)

**Kataplous.** Dante at the centre of hell finds his head where his heels were; the kataplous [the downward journey], Lucian to Rabelais, deals with the upsetting of society in another world; Shelley’s Prometheus reverses the vision of the world at the same point; Joyce’s Stephen recovers his sanity at the depth of hell, just as one recovers the power of laughter three days after being in the cave of Trophonius: these are part of the oracle-wit breakthrough, which is connected but isn’t Biblical. (CW 13: 226)

**Keeping the Ball of Yarn Stationary.** I have always wanted to write a book that would sit there while I worked on it. My ideal for this book is a general overall scheme clear enough for me to fill in, in an unhurried fashion, whatever details my current reading suggests. Every other book I’ve done has been done on the kitten-in-the-ball-of-yarn principle, every new piece of reading suggesting a new idea, every new idea revolutionizing the whole structure, the whole making an obsession that had to be given every priority possible until it was off my hands. I can never read library books, partly because I work with marginalia in books I own, perhaps because every book out of sight is also out of mind. If I could only get a firm enough doodle for my controlling scheme, so that the book could gradually evolve! Not just a mechanical filling in of a design, like a hooked rug, but with something of that principle. (CW 9: 209)

**Kerygma.** Kerygma can never, except in the sacred book, become form, and even there its form is provisional. That’s because its habitat is the decentered, or rather omni-centered, universe. When myth starts to take form (I have some hesitation in working this out on a form-content basis, but it’ll do for the moment) the first thing that crystallizes is gods. Here (too) are gods, says Heraclitus lighting a fire. The movement completes itself when gods become God, and spirits Spirit. This corresponds to the individuality on the human plane that marks the emerging of literature. The total individual, who permits us equally to be absorbed in him and to separate from him, is the universe, the one-turning reality. That isn’t pantheism, except that when we’re talking about an unfallen world we’re all pantheists. What proclamation proclaims is presence, and the presence of presence busts the universe. (CW 5: 269–70)

Mallarmé is very heroic in the way he tries to sink himself in myth & metaphor so completely that the kerygmatic will speak through. “The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, yielding his initiative to words.” That’s the regular rhetoric-poetic distinction: don’t let the ego quack: let the words come. But it also echoes Jesus’ advice to the 70 not to rehearse what they’re going to say [Luke 10:4], which means that kerygma is on the other side of the poetic from rhetoric. (CW 5: 303)

The newspaper story, with its headline breaking through in large type, is a parody of the kerygmatic breaking through the mythical. I suppose there is no such thing as a continuous kerygmatic; even if there were, our reading of it would be discontinuous. Watch a student underlining what strikes him in his reading. One hopes that he owns the book. (CW 5: 304)

Kerygma is *spiritual* rhetoric, rhetoric delivered from ideology by being on the other side of myth. The gospels contain the teachings and parables of Jesus: they’re “logocentric,” but they come to us in continuous (to some extent) written form. The kerygma is–and I use the term advisedly–the *resurrection* of the living speaker from the written myth. Or rather, the living word. The Sermon on the Mount isn’t a harangue. To choose a text for a sermon makes a myth into kerygma. Kerygma is the completion of the personal possession of the written word: it’s linked with mantra, but without the “vain repetition” [Matthew 6:7] that often goes with that. It’s the actualized form of the “myth to live by,” assuming that the real life is a spiritual one, delivered once for all from all ideologies or rationalizations of power. (CW 5: 306)

What’s on the other side of kerygma? I think that in a way it’s a return to the descriptive, but not the “literal” descriptive that postulates the non-verbal. It’s rather Stevens’ “description without place,” which Stevens says is “revelation,” referring to the Biblical book. Revelation itself is kerygma: beyond it is the world of words as seen by the Word. Most mystics say that this stage is beyond words: Paul still hears language, though a language that can’t be repeated “here” except in incarnational form. The descriptive-literal is the old creation, man looking at what God hath wrought; the post-kerygmatic descriptive is the new creation that follows the apocalyptic or windingup of kerygma. (CW 5: 343)

Despite the Sermon on the Mount, kerygma is not an identifiable style, and does not belong to criticism as a structure of knowledge. It’s rather an aspect of the shaping experience of reading. Modern metaliterary writers do not claim any “thus saith the Lord” authority; but what they imitate has shifted from nature to Buber’s “Thou.” That is, kerygma is the model for the metaliterary, never more so than when it’s repudiated on an “anything but that” basis, as with Nietzsche & Mallarmé. (CW 5: 369)

Kerygma, in short, is metapoetics, not rhetoric or dialectic. Its basis is hope, or hypothesis; it moves through the substance of hope and through creativity (elenchos, the realizing of the unrealized) to its goal in love. (CW 5: 402)

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**Kierkegaard.** Ithink Kierkegaard understood the conception of imaginative literalism very well, but his “either-or” dialectic contrasts the aesthetic and the ethical. Well, in many contexts they are a contrast. But he never got through to the final insight: the ethical *is* the aesthetic transformed. Ethical is kerygmatic in my context. (CW 5: 251)

*Fear & Trembling*, we’re told, is all about Regina, who seems to be, in the terms of *Burnt Norton*, the Muse of vacancy as Beatrice was of plenitude. No one can “condemn” S.K. for his behavior about her: if you do you start lying to yourself on some “I’d have done better” basis. But it is permissible to say that *Stages on Life’s Way* is a tedious book—not that there isn’t such a thing as creative tedium, as Beckett so well shows. Repetition is all about her too, but an important conception gets smuggled in in a very furtive way. (CW 5: 363)

**Kingdom of God.**Christianity went officially on the rampage yesterday on the campus: this year it’s in charge of Canon Milford, who looks like a harmless & rather dim-witted person. I hope they’ll all remember the ancient text: “The Kingdom of God cometh not with yackity-yackity-yack.” (CW 8: 484)

**Kings Richard I and John.** Richard I was a king who probably spoke no English, lived all his reign outside the country, was interested only in Continental affairs, and was a dreamy self-conscious incarnation of chivalry with a turn for music & Court of Love poetry. John was an insular nationalist who cut the roots of England off from the continent, was a brute & a barbarian, quarrelled with the Pope & anticipated the rise of Protestantism, as Shakespeare well brings out. Yet in *Ivanhoe*, & in most of the public school histories for which Scott seems to be the chief authority, there is the most amazing reversal of all this: there it is Richard who is the incarnation of *le brutalité anglaise*, and John who is the rodent-faced back-stabbing wop. (CW 15: 8)

**Know Thyself.** The Delphic oracle urged man to know himself, meaning not an increase of introspective knowledge, but the struggling of consciousness which at the same time apprehends the world more accurately. Dreams are subjective, but maybe a dream fully interpreted would become a vision. There must be a point at which it ceases to be true that it’s a subjective experience. Dreams aren’t Ulro nightmares: in general, man lives in Generation during the day &Beulahat night, as, perhaps he lives in Generation from life to death & in Beulah from death to life.(CW 13: 55)

**Knowing Everything.** Re Shakespeare’s reading: the point is not that so-&-so read Ovid in Latin or in translation or both, but that *Shakespeare* read Ovid. He also read Montaigne, & when one of the world’s greatest minds reads another of the world’s greatest minds, kinds of meaning are communicated that ordinary people have little conception of. Any educated Elizabethan knew that to know Homer or Virgil properly was to know everything. That’s a theoretical ideal, but a mind like Shakespeare’s can come far closer to realizing it than another mind, & out of less reading. (CW 20: 130–1)

**Knowledge.** The people with collective minds, above, have only *idées reçues* for its (their) content. They’re the people I referred to who understand but don’t know. Knowledge is based on recognition, a sense of fitting together: the mere understanding I speak of is this in the purely objective, or rather objectified world; real knowledge is based on conviction, the subjective complement of the same thing. (CW 5: 354)

Western philosophy for some reason got bogged down in a contract of knowledge: “subject & object & the nature of reality.” Here we are, & there it is: how did we get in contact with it? What right have we to know anything? What *guarantee* is there that we know? (CW 13: 124)

Authentic knowledge is ut pictura poesis knowledge. (CW 13: 269)

**Koran.**On an impulse I bought two Everymans, the Koran & George Macdonald’s *Phantastes*, & a rather dubious Jungian book. The Koran still baffles me: I can’t figure out why the hell anybody went for that book. It probably makes a lot more sense in Arabic as a prose-poetry synthesis of the Word in which rhetorical & dialectic aspects are indistinguishable. (CW 8: 207)

L

**Lacan’s stade du miroir.** The subject cannot be a subject, or live in the subject-object world of ordinary experience, until he becomes an object to himself—until there is a split within the subject. That’s Lacan’s *stade du miroir*, essentially: the ego also has a *moi* that’s its own fighting & aggressive self.(CW 5: 92)

**The Language of Myth and Religion.** Different races and different peoples have had their mythologies and yet there is such an extraordinary family likeness among all these mythologies. And I’ve noticed with religion, that it is the doctrinal and conceptual elements of religion that make one religion different from another. But mythologically a lot of these distinctions disappear. So you begin to suspect that in the study of mythology you are learning a language, and a language which is intelligible, roughly, all over the world. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

Everyone knows with half his brain that the language of religion is myth and metaphor; with the other half we continue to use rhetorical adaptations of conceptual and dialectical language. (CW 5: 379)

One major problem is that the language of understanding religion is always a human language. That language is mythical, as we know after the failure of efforts to conceive it as historical or rational. But mythical language is just as human as the other kind. So if myth is a human language, then revelation must be something other than myth. Or it’s accommodated language coming the other way. (CW 13: 140)

**The Last Laugh.** One of the most solemn moments in the *St. Matthew Passion* occurs during the tenor recitativo which tells of Peter’s denial and of his conviction by the crowing of the cock. And when the tenor comes to this, if he is any good, he does suddenly crow like a real rooster. A similar touch of supreme genius is in the conclusion of *Troilus and Criseyde*. Through the memorial of the sacrifice, the elevation of the host, and the hymn to the Christ triumphant in the Trinity, there sounds the laughter of Troilus, which, to a modern reader, carries a faint suggestion of the raucous cackle of Thersites. Chaucer is the master of comedy, and could perhaps never have written the tragedy of Troilus had he not been able to balance everything on this laugh. (CW 3: 467)

**Laughing at Themselves.** Went to show, an English mystery, “Ghost Train.” Swell. One of the things that interested me about it was the way the English can put the most typically English frozenfaced sourpussed jerks into a picture and preserve intact all their stupid social stereotypes, & then when you’re just about to curse them for being such god-damned English jerks you suddenly realize the English have put them there. It’s known, well-known in fact, as the “English Ability to Laugh at Themselves.” I only hope it doesn’t breed a self-conscious paralysis the way the discovery of their ability to muddle through did. (CW 8: 17)

**Lawrence, D.H.** When D.H. Lawrence started writing, everybody thought he’d be the Messiah of a new, fresh, vigorous kind of loving. Well, he did, until the war got him, or Oedipus, or something: anyway he betrayed his trust and slipped back into all the nineteenth-century drivel with *Lady Chatterley*. (CW 1: 460)

The subconscious is a badly-kept jail from which criminals are continually escaping. Psychology tries to clean up the jail by asphyxiating the criminals. In other words, psychology represents the remorseless, inexorable march of the intelligent consciousness into the inmost recesses of the subconscious, freeing the soul from the unbearable tyranny of the brutal, stampeding instincts. But all the Women’s Clubs in the country think it represents the freeing of the criminals and the abandoning of the brain to the government of the belly. Lawrence never fully grasped the fact that Freudian psychology was a complete triumph of an intellectual, deracinated civilization—neither, for that matter, did Freud. I admire the best Lawrence, but at his worst he wallows and slavers and bellows like a hippopotamus in the mud. Compare that sulphurous *Fantasia* of his, the facile chatter of a sentimentalist, with, say, the big brothel scene in *Ulysses*, where the subconscious is organized into clear-cut rhythms by a competent artist, and you will see the difference between the genius who expresses his age and the genius who is merely a symptom of it. (CW 1: 479)

**“Lead kindly light.”** Newman’s “Lead kindly light” is a hymn I have a peculiar dislike for. Not because it’s doggerel in shaky grammar–it could be that and still be a memorable or even great hymn. But choosing and seeing one’s path is not pride: it’s what God wants us to do. Otherwise we get the dangers of spiritual gravitation. The whole point of Newman’s journey over crag and torrent was that the Roman Catholic Church was at the bottom, ready to end the journey. I suspect that Newman never *really* wanted to become an Roman Catholic, but once he got into this “lead Thou me on” routine he couldn’t avoid falling into it. (CW 5: 412)

**Lear’s Limericks.** I read in a book on the limerick the other day by some supercilious ass who talked about Edward Lear as a pioneer but a childish and inane primitive because his first and last lines ended with the same word, venturing to “improve” some by rewriting their final lines. This latter method is all right for silly cleverness or obscenity,––or anything which makes the limerick do slave labor for some non-literary purpose,––but the gentle echolalic of Lear, the last line as a reflective comment, establishes the limerick as art, modern smartness ruining its delicacy by rushing the meter and clinching and compressing the theme. Lear is the unchallenged and supreme master of the limerick, and almost the only one who brought it definitely within the pale of literature. This person is an ass, as I said before.(“1932 Notebook,” 23 July)

**Leaving Canada?**It would be terribly easy to dawdle & dither one’s whole life away, and still be under the impression that one was constantly busy. I don’t know what the hell I did today. . . . The trouble is—after all, nobody is going to read this diary except me and I don’t mind boring myself— that my restlessness is due to a loss of faith in Victoria’s future, but I sure as hell don’t want to leave Canada or stop being a Canadian, yet technically I’ve reached the end of the line in Canada for my kind of job. Theoretically, there ought to be many advantages in being in the University of Toronto and not under its jurisdiction. But Victoria’s position in federation is indefensible now, and can’t be rectified without financial loss which we can’t very well stand. (CW 8: 366)

**Leavis, F.R.** Leavis seems to me to be a kind of lay preacher, using texts from literature rather than religion. One admires his moral energy, his abhorrence of heresy, his sense of the extreme urgency of maintaining standards, and yet it seems to me that, like other volumes of sermons, his work stands outside the really serious and constructive work that other critics are doing. He does seem to represent the confusion in Arnold between literary and religious standards. I think Arnold’s notion of poetry replacing religion is an extremely bad metaphor: the existential cannot be replaced by the hypothetical; the two things have quite different jobs to do, and two contexts that would debase literature and religion alike. (Letter to Kirpal Singh, 1 October 1976)

**Lecturing.** My nine o’clock class finished up the Butler irony business, but I’m not in the groove on Butler the way I was last year: my lectures are a series of echoes from what were once brilliant & inspired lectures. It’s very disappointing. Part of the trouble is that I lose what I call my Gertrude Stein technique of repeating a point a dozen different ways, so that they not only get the idea, but get it in all its contexts. I do that when I’m discovering things. Then next year I just make them as single points, & what I gain in concentration I lose in every other way. Curious process, & apparently inevitable, up to a point. (CW 8: 302)

The nine o’clock class was the worst I’ve ever struggled through. When I finished I told them they could go back to bed. But sooner or later I’m going to break down and tell them that a lecture, like other public performances, can’t be indefinitely better than its audience, and that when they complain about dull lectures, they should realize that a professor doesn’t produce dullness nearly so often as he reflects it. I know the light’s bad & so on, but the real reason is just self-indulgence. (CW 8: 484)

**Left-Wing Liberal.** After a second year in Oxford, I came back to Victoria in September of 1939; the colleague who taught Restoration and eighteenth-century to second-year Honourstudents joined up the first day of the war, so I had those courses too.At the same time I was working on a book on Blake’s Prophecies: at that time, with the Eliot-Pound machine going full blast, nobody could have held my full attention unless he was the opposite of what Eliot thought he was—i.e.,

Nonconformist, Romantic, and at least left-wing liberal. Again, these preferences were the elements of a WASP upbringing in Canada. Most of the then critics of Blake told me that the prophecies were related primarily to a mystical or the occult tradition. I had to contend with the fact that Blake’s poetry interested me profoundly and that most of the occultism I had read did not interest me at all. (CW 25: 35)

**Leisure.** I say that the gospel Sabbath is not a day of rest at the end of the week, but a day of leisure at the beginning of the week. I wonder if sleeping should be conceived, not as rest at the end of the day, but as leisure at the beginning of it. Hence our “small hours” conception of the day as beginning at midnight. I’ve often wondered *why* we sleep: it surely isn’t to “rest” the brain, which doesn’t rest & doesn’t need it (except perhaps for the initial “beauty sleep”) but to sink it into the domain of creative archetypal imagery & free association, whence it emerges to give direction & basis to the wakened mind. (CW 8: 258)

**Lengthy Prefatory Matter.** Curious how systematic philosophers back away from their work: they envisage a total system & then produce a two-thousand-page outline of a preface to the introduction to the beginning of the prolegomenon to the exordium. Starting out with a structure like the labyrinth pattern I’m thinking of now does have some advantages. (CW 9: 88)

**Lenin.** If Lenin succeeded in Russia, it was not because he was a Communist, but because he was a genius; and if the Communists folded up in Germany it was not because their Marxism was not orthodox, but because they were fools. Lenin was not essentially a revolutionist any more than Julius Caesar, whom he resembles in many respects. He was an exceptionally penetrating and realistic political genius who could handle society in larger units than most leaders. The leader who, like Hitler, is a product of social activity, is passive: he deals with conditions, and has to simplify his nation into a pattern. The leader like Lenin who is a source of social activity, is dynamic: he deals with movements, and has to organize his nation into a rhythmic unit.“1932 Notebook,” 8 August)

Lenin’s error was in thinking that cultural entities (Lithuania, Georgia, etc) weren’t important: they were part of the old history people would readily throw away as they jumped into their new role as workers of the world. A small tactical error, but enough to destroy the whole Leninist dream, which so nearly conquered the world. (CW 5: 417)

**Levels of Nature.** In traditional Christian philosophy there are two levels of nature: the “fallen” physical nature & the lost but original home of man. In recovered terms, this means that there are two levels of human life: the merely human and the genuinely human. The difference between the merely human & the genuinely human is crucial: it lets the daylight of the infinite & eternal into the closed human situation. It transcends Marx and Nietzsche alike. How to articulate this is probably the major problem. (CW 13: 148)

**Levels of Reading.** I have two levels in reading: the level where I’m looking for what to look for before I start writing, and the level where I do know what to look for because I’ve already started writing about it. Which level I’m at now when I’m reading Rabelais I don’t quite know. (CW 9: 261)

**Lewis, Sinclair.** Read *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith* as well as *Main Street*. Lewis is a diabolically clever writer and does the cleverest things so easily that he is too often underrated. His execrable style, which clanks along like a surveyor’s chain, is annoying but necessary to the kind of thing he is doing. However, he is a pure technician and was consequently spoiled by recognition.*Elmer Gantry* and *Dodsworth*, his later works, are far too self-conscious. (CW 1: 25)

**Liberalism and Laissez Faire.**About 60 people turned up to hear me talk to the C.C.F. club about “Liberalism & laissez faire.” I said the Tories had the advantage of realizing that “democracy” didn’t mean anything unless you attached it to some economic context. I then tried to draw a contrast between the oligarchic tendencies of laissez faire & the revolutionary democratic action against it that finds its champion in representative government & works toward, not complete control of industry, but toward establishing a central authority to which all industry must defer. Thus it saps the autonomous secret power of oligarchy which is withdrawn from popular control, from publicity, & from in short the community as a whole. Somewhat to my surprise, an obviously non-Socialist audience turned up. They grilled me pretty hard, & of course I know very little about economics, but I got through by some artful dodging. (CW 8: 246)

**Life Imitates Literature.** Myth is still the hypothetical *theoria* of all social action, the *liberalizing*& emancipating principle of society, as ritual is the conservative one & dream the anarchic (revolutionary) one. I knew I’d get to a bourgeois or middle-class myth myself sooner or later. Myth is the essential form of Mill’s deductive withdrawal. Oscar Wilde’s remark that life imitates literature is so far only an amusing paradox. Someday it will be the cornerstone of the humanities & social sciences alike. Nobody would think it strange if a mathematician, watching the curve of a bird’s flight or the design of frost on a window pane, remarked that life imitates mathematics. And nobody watching men building cities & planting gardens can deny that life imitates myth. (CW 23: 229)

**Light Reading.** What constitutes the lightness of light reading? It’s a big question, as the whole business of creation & response is involved in it. The detective story is a sacrificial ritual in a moral context: no detective story about a robbery would sell as well as one with a corpse. But the corpse is a half-death, and must be completed later by the corpse of the murderer. The detective story is the modern substitute for public executions. Here the lightness is connected not with the puzzle, but with the inevitability of the revelation of the murderer: it’s the movement toward discovery that keeps one turning the pages. A sacrificial ritual requires one murderer; a moral ritual requires two, the Mosaic life for life. I wonder if detective stories are much read in Scandinavia, where the penalty has been abolished? I wonder if they’ll retain their popularity after the execution of Nazi criminals? I said in a passage cut out of the Blake book that the moral mind is concerned, like the detective story, with how the energy of moral evil can be outwitted by the logic of moral virtue. (CW 15: 30)

**Lismer, Arthur.**The Lismer show at the Gallery was good: nothing unexpected: very little in fact unfamiliar, but still it’s pleasant to see it all at once. He’s certainly a painter of tangle: the enthusiasm with which he tackles an insanely complicated mass of planes & twisting rhythms is infectious, &, as in his lecturing, one is ready to believe he’s solved the problems involved because he talks so gracefully about solving them. I think his recent Maritime studies of fishing wharves, stones, fish, hawsers, killicks, & anchors are among the best things he’s ever done. (CW 8: 249–50)

**Literary Structure.** Realism is approached through history, sociology, economics, and documentation of all kinds. Romance is approached through a study of literary structure. There are literary units of form, corresponding to sonata, rondo and fugue in music. Mozart is (a) a lot better than a large number of other composers who write in sonata and rondo forms and (b) very different from Beethoven, who also writes in these forms. One might draw the inference that the study of sonata and rondo forms ought not to be undertaken, because it would destroy the superiority of Mozart to a lot of other people, and minimize the difference between him and Beethoven. So far I have not encountered a music critic who urges this: it seems a depth of imbecility that only literary critics can reach. To study the structure of literary works does not mean that Mucedorus and *The Winter’s Tale* are being put on the same level because they use the same structural principles. It does mean that we should be profoundly grateful to the author of Th*e Winter’s Tale* because he could see things in Mucedorus that no value-blinkered critic would ever be able to see. (CW 15: 191–2)

**Literary Theory.** Every member of a humanities department in every university is supposed to be a productive scholar, & no reasonable person will deny that a tremendous amount of overproduction, repetition and straw-thrashing results. Hence one of the causes of the proliferating of critical theories is to provide inexhaustible fields of critical enterprise. The struggle for a unified perspective on the whole subject seems to pose the threat of exhaustion. But there is little danger of that: whenever a subject approaches such a point it goes into a metamorphosis, as physics did after 1900 with the work of Planck & Einstein. Perhaps critical theory has done this since the *Anatomy* was published, but I am not convinced of this. I address myself to the public, to undergraduates, & to graduates for whom the shades of the prison-house of language have not yet closed in. I am not opposed to any development in theory as such, only to the obfuscating of perspective. CW 5: 390–1)

**Literature as Spiritual Language.** Literature is the art of inscribing verbal patterns within a mythological cosmos. It starts as rhetoric, or the figuring of speech: as rhetoric passes into ideology it becomes kerygmatic or spiritual language. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

**Lithuania.** Lenin allowed Lithuania to become independent, partly perhaps because he thought it should be, but mainly (Lenin was first and always a thug) because he thought nationalism had had it and next Tuesday everybody would want to be Communist. Then Lithuania was stolen by Stalin through a remarkably shitty deal with Hitler. Now Gorbachev says: look, we just gotta have it. If history makes any sense, it runs through a total denial of Lenin’s notion and towards selfdetermination of (mostly linguistic) units: an interpenetrative solution rather than a reconciling one. (CW 6: 627)

**Living and Dead Words.**  I think it’s Norbert Wiener, the cybernetics man, who says that communication overcomes entropy. Not always: as with water & fire in the Bible, there’s a dead word and a living Word. Some books are “dead things,” in Milton’s phrase, forgotten or surviving arbitrarily in the memory: others take us in the opposite direction from death. What Derrida is attacking is the fallacy that to have a living word you have to have a living person speaking it. The living speaker is only a symbol of a creative word that keeps throwing up supplement after supplement, yet always in a specified direction. (CW 5: 156)

**Living One’s Own Life.** The difference between slavery & freedom is the difference between living other people’s lives & living one’s own. The former is alienation in the strict Marxist sense as well as automatism. Similarly when we pass from works of law (doing what we’re told to do & never mind why) to works of faith (the power of realizing our own creativity, or work in the RuskinMorris sense of work as what destroys the antithesis of dandyism & drudgery). (CW 13: 239)

**Living Up to One’s Caricature.** So many people show a curious tendency to live up to their own caricatures: one would swear of many middle-class Canadian families that they had taken pains to make every remark typical of the Canadian middle-class. Not only caricatures either, but simply types: a man sells a story & buys a pipe & a dog; a man gets to be a professor & lets his hair grow & his pants go out of press, like me. When one meets such a person, one is forced to see with overwhelming clarity what he is; one therefore both likes him & feels superior to him. (CW 15: 32)

**Localism and Beyond.** Previously the great movements of art have combined an extreme localism

(which means the imaginative recreation of the immediate environment) with an idealized catholicity. The Greeks had the fact of tiny Attica and the idea of Hellenism; medievals had the fact of Provence and the idea of a Christian empire; Elizabethan England had London and their curiously effective idea of the catholicity of the Church of England. Now, the British, American, and Soviet federations seem to be working out a possible solution. (CW 15: 5)

**Locomotive as Dragon.** The Canadian National Railways is at last, I hope, definitely heading for bankruptcy.It is criminal to tie up so much capital in such a hopelessly antiquated affair as a steam railway. The Age of Steam is dead and gone––it flourished when Dickens wrote *Hard Times* and passed with the nineteenth century. Nobody wants to go back to the life depicted in that novel and it is a shameful humiliation to be compelled to ride on a vehicle which symbolizes, or rather incarnates, the whole Gradgrind–Bounderby spirit. The Middle Ages hated machines, except those of torture, and they invented the dragon to represent their hatred. The locomotive is the actualization of that dragon. Everything shows it––its ungainly form lurching and banging along, noisy and jangling, on a remorseless and unyielding steel track, its venomous outpouring of choking smoke and steam the residue of which fills its shabby upholstery with dust and spreads layer on layer of greasy filth over its passengers, its stuffy unendurable breath of incredibly stale tobacco and oranges, its exorbitant tributes levied on its victims, its habit of laying waste all the surrounding landscape in country or city. Everywhere it goes, if not actually on the spot, it invariably leaves a grim reminder of its existence in the long rotting rows of hideous and rickety red skeletons, which ?- are even more of an eyesore, because more constant, than its puffing and clanking actuality. I can never believe in a hell that one gets by paying two pence for a ferry. If the luckless soul were instead to give a hundred dollars to a snippy station agent and go by train, the thing might be more vv c. convincing.(“1932 Notebook,” 23 May)

**Logos.** The authors of John’s Gospel weren’t impressed by the previous history of the word *logos*: the reason why it’s translated *verbum*, word, is that it’s a totally new context for what had been a rational principle; in short, kerygma. The word *logos* doesn’t and never did mean word in Greek. (CW 6: 647)

**Logos and Mythos.**There’s just enough reference to the history of *logos* in John 1 to make it mean: up to now we have thought in terms of wisdom (*sophia*): now we have to add the literary or *mythos* category to *logos*. *Logos*&*sophia* are son and daughter, complementary but not (sexually) united. I think when *logos* grows to include *mythos*, *sophia* becomes defined as something by itself, or herself. (CW 5: 281)

**Lord’s Prayer.** The Lord’s Prayer is in two parts, the first part about God & the second about man. The climax of Part One is the descent of God’s will into man’s world; the climax of Part Two is the ascent of the creature out of the evil he has been delivered from. An oddly different world-picture from the one formed around the God-Man-Christ. (CW 13: 249)

**Lorna Doone.** I must soon reread *Lorna Doone* if I am to do anything on the romance, as I imagine it lies deep in my mind, just above the very lowest, or Sherbrooke, layer of archetypes. To write in the first person is excellent for a romance, & the identification of author & narrator by means of a persona would approximate a single or definitive effort. Blackmore is, I think, one of the many romancers who wrote only one great book. The romance is the clearest example obtainable of the predominance of grammatical or narrative rhythm: its only pauses are suspensions, hence its serial technique, & the romancer gravitates toward prose, as the poetry of the romance tends to a breathless prosaic doggerel. The archetypes are very clear: the gigantic libido-hero, the fragile anima who is kidnapped by the armed men & discovered to be of different blood from them, the villainous shadow who sinks into the bog at the moment that the anima dies & recovers—which is really what happens—the oppression of the waste land (hence the great snow) by the robbers and the slaughter-of-suitors rise of yeomen against the insolent parasitic aristocrats, the opening of the centre symbol when he crushes the gold nugget in the mine, the Mary-Martha opposition of Lorna & Ruth Huckaback (note that symbolically John should have married Ruth, the wife principle who has to be distinguished from the anima. The romancer always pretends that we can eat the anima & have her too), the “sundering flood” symbolism involved in the meeting of hero & heroine, the evil forces imprisoned within the mysterious mountains, the roaming knight errant Faggus with his wonder horse. Everything is there—even the hero dies & revives in the “Kide’s lambs” scene. (CW 89: 115–16)

**Loss of Continuity.** A century ago, the sense of continuity was reinforced by teleological art, virtues like thrift & independence, the authority of seniority, & so on. Craftsmanship was a continuity element also. Now we have an anti-teleological art, the assertiveness of youth, inflation (which is the transvaluation of the one real value, stable money), and technological obsolescence, even planned obsolescence, & an economy of waste—a kind of revived potlatch mentality. One hopes that it will be James’ moral equivalent of war, with its phony sacrificial symbolism. Meanwhile, the compulsory continuity of the social order keeps going, with all these forces discouraging it. (CW 13: 87)

**Lost Souls.** I can see that some lives, lives given up to destruction & cruelty & massacres, could be conceived as lost, that is, not as tormented in hell forever, but as forming no part of the risen body of Christ. But *victims*, the slaves & the downtrodden & oppressed, can hardly be lost souls: they form part of the resurrection because their lives have been part of the divine agony & endurance. Job, of course: but doesn’t this give them a *future*? (CW 13: 92)

Jesus cast devils out of *this* life, making sure that the lost soul got lost. The devils showed great terror at being sent out into the deep, a terror going the same way as the natural fear of death. (CW 13: 185)

**Love.**  The work of the literary critic is to try and integrate the centrality and the relevance of what the creative imagination has to say to the world, because the creative imagination is always at peace. As Shelley said in his *Defence of Poetry,* the language of the imagination is always the language of love, and we have Paul’s authority for it that that language is going to last longer than most of our human communication. That is why in such a country as Canada, for example, the curious chaos that one sees in both its political and its economic structure doesn’t really matter so much. What you look for is culture, because that is what the people in the year2300 are going to be concerned with: that is the only thing that they will care about. And culture, as I think of it, is the total production of the creative imagination. It has nothing to do with a social elitism—that is an ideological fantasy. It has to do with the attempt to see the life and culture around one with an eye that is not out to prove this, to rationalize that, and to make out a case for the other. In short, what I am concerned with, iný connection with the creative imagination, is a model of the forms of charitable activity. If I didn’t think of it as charitable, of course, I would have no interest in it whatever. (“Seeing, Hearing, Praying, Loving”)

Love is the consciousness of consciousness, the total awakening of which “self-consciousness” is the demonic parody. (CW 5:386)

Samuel Butler is superb, not on the cosmos of existence, but on the cosmos of persistence, the continuity and the persistence of memory and identity in time. He doesn’t consider reincarnation except in its hereditary form. One of the books I thought had some clues was Itzhak Bentov’s *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*. He says meditation can discover reincarnation as a fact (I’ve always doubted this) and that we survive death as a “body” of information. I find that word irrelevant: most of it’s misinformation, and does misinformation go to hell? Better to say we survive as the Word-body we have made, & then integrate with the Word. I hope all my twitches mean I’m cutting off pieces of my Word that offend me so I can enter the kingdom without them. I don’t really want to *know*: all knowledge is a limitation of hope, and my hope is both irrational and infinite. If the ultimate reality in the world is love, there can be no love without recognition. I suppose “love” is the conscious tip of an iceberg that goes down to automatic (if it is that) “attraction,” or cohesion, as in (I think) Empedocles. The flight of the alone to the alone is a lot of crap: there’s no such thing as an individual: that’s one of the hierarchic illusions. Every individual turns out to be a functioning community. And if everything is community, and love is reality, love must include recognition, which is also discovery, *anagnorisis*. Recognition is the “moment of truth” in a real and not a slang sense; also it’s what holds a work of art together (at least in moving arts, like literature and music). (CW 5: 356)

Final metaphorical vision not hypothetical like literary metaphors, but involves ecstatic or participating identification: “thou art that.” When that happens, the third great virtue of *agape* moves into place as the only virtue there is. Also the sense of initiative moves from the subject into the objective world, however conceived (i.e. an “other” who both enters us and eludes us). When belief and vision merge we have the first step on Jacob’s ladder, the sense of a *mysterium tremendum*, a mystery only mysterious because it’s inexhaustible. (CW 6: 600)

I suppose the real point about *agape* is that it is non-possessive love, the love the model of which is the parents’ love for a child—when that love is of a kind that does leave the child free. (CW 13: 174) **Love as a Divine Comedy.** We shall live a divine comedy together, our inferno a boiling torrent of sexual love, our purgatory the perfect peace of repose through the satisfaction of desire. We shall descend hell as lover and mistress, you as my monopolized hetaera, into the chambers of the virtuous heathen and the glib liars, talking, chattering and laughing endlessly of our ambitions, interests and studies. We shall be submerged in devouring flames of passion, swept into a delirium of touch. We shall sink to the depths of the universe and beyond, to the utter quiescent coma of union and surrender. Everything hot and troublesome and individual will fall away and leave us together. Then we shall gradually separate, and, immeasurably strengthened and purified, pass through love to the final paradise of friendship, when each will be in possession of an inward privacy of soul, to be respected because of the other. (CW 1: 397)

**Ludens Shift.** In reading Rabelais I’ve rediscovered the principle of the *ludens* shift, the change in perspective from experience to innocence. The bird’s song is sexually aggressive, but we interpret “tweet, tweet” as the voice of innocence. The sound of children playing is a cliché of innocence, though the more closely we attend to it the more aggressiveness & hysteria we find in it. Similarly the appalling practical jokes of Panurge, like the gigantic mowing down of enemies by the giants, are childish aggressive fantasies transmuted into “horseplay.” (CW 9: 250)

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**Mad Science.**This tendency on the part of scientific development to become, as it were, autonomous, to run away from the human will and start developing by itself, has produced in popular fiction the stereotype of a mad scientist. Of course, it is true that the human use of a science is a matter of very considerable importance. Science has to be studied in detachment, but there is a point at which the detachment becomes indifference, as when the sense of human value disappears from it. Psychology, for example, is a science, and it has to be studied with detachment. But it is surely not a matter of indifference whether psychology is used as a healing art or for motivational research designed to force people to buy what their neither want nor need, or for propaganda in a police state. Perhaps, after all, there is such a thing as mad science. We went through the nightmare of the late forties and fifties in which we suspected that nuclear physics might exterminate the human race. Then we went through the DNA molecule and the development of genetics in which we are faced with an even worse prospect that science might try to improve it. The general feeling, on the whole, is that this is a fate worse than death. It’s better to be dead than lead is something that enters into the mood of our time very strongly. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**Mahayana Sutras.**If I could get a translation of the Avatamsaka, or enough of it, & one of another Sutra, perhaps the one on the void, I might do a series of three essays called “certain wise men.” The Preface would explain that I know nothing first-hand about oriental culture, & that experts who do don’t need to read me. I’m just trying an experiment in the translation of ideas. That today we find both a lot of false antitheses about Eastern vs. Western thought & a general vague hunch that these antitheses *are* false. And so on. (CW 13: 65)

**Making the Gods Behave.** The Jehovah of the Old Testament is a humanized being, as violent & unpredictable as King Lear. We read in Plato & Plutarch about the “hyponoia” & other efforts to make the gods behave themselves & be proper role-models. The central image of man trying to make this creature into a decent God is Jacob wrestling with the angel. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

**Male/Female.** . It seems to be established (Erik Erikson) that when children are left to play by themselves, the boys build tower-structures and the girls enclosure-structures. That leads to the female as environment, what surrounds the male, the Enitharmon-space. (I think the male-above, female-below relation where the garden is the female body and the rain or wind coming from above male is a perverted and chauvinistic relationship, as Milton indicates in his guilty-nature image in the Nativity Ode. (CW 6: 473).

**Man of the Hour.** The question whether Augustine was essentially the last thinker of ancient history or the first of medieval answers itself by being asked. He had absorbed the essence, for his purpose, of Plato, he had outgrown the Manicheans, he knew of the Gnostics, and he understood why they had failed. He lived through the fall of the Roman Empire and a very early period of official Christianity. Philosophically and politically he was “on the spot,” or, in a more dignified phrase, the man of the hour. (CW 3: 199)

**Mantra-Gleaner.** All religions are, Blake says, different forms of the Poetic Genius, so that there’s objective religion as well as objective art. My job in this world appears to be that of a mantragleaner, a picker up (inventor) of possibly useful verbal formulas. One set has to do with the role of art as a potential liberator of whatever gets liberated. Again, I suspect (and I hope, rather than at present believe) that Xy has at least as much to be said for it as any other religion, & I’d like to keep this comparative aspect of my Bible book open. If I could suggest this I’d be very grateful. (CW 9: 323)

**Marys.** The Virgin Mary is mother: Mary Magdalene is the forgiven harlot, often linked maritally to Jesus by apocryphal writers (D. H. Lawrence and that holy blood squad). Typologically this is correct. Mary of Bethany is the Sophia-daughter, the kernel of the church. It is she who persuades a sorrowful head-shaking Jesus to dig up the corpse of Lazarus and set it going again [John 11:1–46]. (CW 5: 248)

**Martyrdom.** Regarding the theme of martyrdom, the souls under the altar yelling how long: the martyr practically proves resurrection, as the word itself (“witness”) shows. Like other apocalyptic symbols, the martyr has a demonic parody, the terrorist, who kills or tries to kill first. His mendacity is identical with that of the inquisitor who kills the martyr. But all genuine martyrs, I think, die in an equally good cause, and will probably be promoted from the witness-box to the jury, if God really bothers with a trial. (CW 5: 301)

**Marxists.** The Marxists don’t like me, and I can see why, but of course Marxism has never understood that the humanities are subjects, like the sciences. You can’t have just any criticism you like that squares with your prejudices: you must accept the criticism that explains the facts of literature. (CW 9: 173)

**Masques.** I have a hunch that if I concentrate mainly on the masques I can establish Jonson as the connecting link in the broad mythopoeic highway between Spenser & Milton. Shakespeare is too big to be such a link, and the Fletcher brothers are not big enough. (CW 20: 286)

**Mass Media Slogans.** Ultimately there is a moral conflict between the art that shocks & outrages us & the mass media that try to accustom us & desensitize us. I’ve often spoken of Gertrude Stein as a practitioner of an associative style, but there’s every difference between that & the Dick & Jane readers with their phony pumped-up excitement (“Run, Jim, run!”) which educate primarily for the reading of advertising, with its exclamatory exhortations. The slogan is the demonic opposite of the koan or text, or formulaic pattern. (CW 9: 120)

**Mathematical Analogy.** What literature is may best be understood by analogies. Mathematics, in its most elementary stages of simple arithmetical & geometrical patterns, is essentially the counting & measuring of physical objects. At this stage it is therefore a commentary on or illustration of the physical world. But sooner or later the mathematician comes to feel that he is not dealing with the physical world as such at all, but with a universe of mathematical reality. To the mathematician qua mathematician, reality becomes a series of interlocking mathematical formulae: the final chapter of Jeans’ *Mysterious Universe* is a good example of this. Thus the common field of experience which we ordinarily call reality disappears or rather, as its entire nature is mathematical to the mathematician, the difference between the mathematical form & objective content disappears. That is, the mathematician comes to a point where there is no intelligible reality except mathematics, & hence the early conception of a commentary on a (by hypothesis larger) physical world has to go. Here however we distinguish between pure & applied mathematics. What we have said is true only of the former. The function or application of mathematics is its continuing relationship to the common field of experience which still exists for other people. (CW 23: 43–4)

**Matriarchy and the Shibboleth of Respect.** It’s natural to assume that when the Mother is worshipped society is matriarchal (which may or may not be true) and that women are highly respected, which doesn’t seem to me to follow at all. Faceless creatures like the Venus of Willendorf, all bum belly-teats & gaping vulva, are just sexual machines, not human beings. In such a society women might be shut up in the dark during menstruation, & harassed & bedevilled & tormented in every way that superstitious ingenuity could devise, but not necessarily respected. Nor could such a society ever evolve to the point of producing a Joan of Arc or a Queen Elizabeth or an Emily Dickinson. All it has is a Queen Bee. (Notebook 13)

**McLuhan, Marshall.**  If McLuhan’s principle holds up, that the content of a new medium is the form of an earlier medium, then the content of written literature is the form of oral literature.(CW 5: 17)

The McLuhan “hot & cool” classification of media relates them exclusively to emotional impact: there’s also a cognition element involved. Wonder if McLuhan is still buggered up by the warm emotion & cold intellect cliché. (CW 13: 213)

**Meaning, Literary.**A*mythos* is an individual existence; *dianoia* an essence. The meaning of *King Lear* is not the meaning of the printed text, though this, being stationary, comes close to it: it’s a meaning made up of an infinite & constantly growing number of readings, editions & performances; this is one reason why commentary is inexhaustible. (CW 13: 89)

**Meaning, Then and Now.**  Criticism is always polarized between what a work was in its own day and what it is to us now. That is, a play of Shakespeare meant a certain orbit of things to its original audience and within the culture for which it was written. It communicates to us over the centuries for reasons which neither that audience nor Shakespeare could possibly have understood. So you have always these two poles. If you are going to be a purely historical critic, and try to study Shakespeare only as his original audience understood him, then literature becomes a kind of astronomy: that is, you make no kind of contact whatever with these works. If, on the other hand, you disregard the historical setting and simply say what Shakespeare says is Shakespeare our contemporary, then you are putting Shakespeare within your own network of values completely, and judging him by twentieth-century standards. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Medieval Portuguese and Solid State Physics.** Some time ago we had a famous lecture by Sir Charles Snow on the two cultures in which he said that the humanities and the sciences were growing unintelligible to each other and that they really ought to get together, they ought to make gestures of mutual amity. That is, the scientist ought to be compelled to memorize a speech from *Macbeth* and the humanist ought to be compelled to memorize the second law of thermodynamics.Now, of course, the situation to which this points is an utterly inescapable one. There are not two cultures in scholarship: there are at least a hundred and two. Every scholar is completely unintelligible, even to his next door neighbor. I myself would hardly find a solid-state physicist less intelligible than a specialist in medieval Portuguese. There is no way out of that. Scholarship is going to become more specialized in the future, and not less so. The thing that unites all scholars, as well as everybody else in the community, is a common sense of social concern. (“Communication and the Arts”)

M**egalomaniac Egoism.**I think one’s view of the world ought to be periodically corrected by an insane & megalomaniac egoism. Suppose I pretend for a moment that the whole world I live in was created especially for me, & every event that happened to me was done for my benefit. It follows that the events of one’s life would show a unified providential design. Looking at one’s life from this point of view, everything about one’s life with which one is dissatisfied is the result of a missed opportunity of grasping the real significance of past events, the real significance being, on this theory, its meaning to me. This would be the only way of making sense of the notion of the sinlessness of Jesus’ life—a notion I’m not very interested in anyway. (CW 8: 202)

**Memory.** My “recluse” existence is not wholly laziness & inertia. My work depends on a good memory, & the way to keep a good memory is not to make too many waves of experience in between. The hours I spent in Mob Quad at Merton College reading about Old English literature are as vivid to me still as the hours I spent last week at a CRTC [Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission] hearing, & of course I remember the content of those hours far better. (CW 9: 330)

Blake was very sloppy about memory: straight reversion to the spectres of the past is one thing, but the practice memory he himself insists on is quite another. Granted that memory has to be transformed by the imagination, still the developing of a pattern out of the chaos of memory is essential, & a poet makes a systematic structure out of the sequence of his memories, whether personal (lyric), national & social (epic) or indigenous to the human species (dramatic). In the personal memories the typical ones, father & mother for instance, have typical value. Notice the predominance of child & youth images in conventional lyrics: the Court of Love is a vast sublimation of a childlike Oedipus motif. (CW 23: 39–40)

**Mendelssohn, Felix.** I have a great theoretical respect for Mendelssohn. He was the only romantic who did anything serious with Bach’s great forms of oratorio and fugue, and the only one who contributed much to Bach’s instrument, the organ. But while I have a great theoretical respect for Mendelssohn I can’t stand any of his damned music, which is rather hard on my tendency to transcendentalize art-forms. He may be from that point of view the only connecting link between Bach and César Franck, but that doesn’t give him what they’ve got. (CW 25: 159)

**Messiah Birth Accounts.** There are three accounts of the birth of the Messiah in the New Testament, one in Matthew, one in Luke, one in Revelation 12. The last has never been regarded as anything but a myth: does it therefore stand on a lower plane of reality? (CW 13: 75)

**Metaphor.** Metaphor is the statement “A is B” which carries with it the realization that A is not in the least B. It is logical & a statement of difference in what it suppresses: it is anti-logical in what it asserts. So it’s counter-logical, creating an identity, opening a current of energy between personal (subjective) and impersonal (objective) worlds. (CW 5: 4–5)

Well: the metaphor is the structural or positive or creative lie: it asserts something in the teeth of experience. It’s not only counter-logical; it’s counter-ironic, facing the irony of absurdity and “thrownness” in nature.(CW 5: 14)

Metaphor arises as part of the effort to create the third knowledge of a “Thou” world out of the deadlock of “I” and “It.” As the first “Thou” is a sexual object, it’s founded on Eros. (CW 5:16)

I suppose the principle of deconstruction is that all “literal” meaning, in the ordinary sense, is a *projection*of a metaphorical verbal body. Examples are the “always” and “anyway” of pilgrimage or journey metaphors. What we take “literally,” in this sense, is the direction of the metaphors suggested by the author, without examining further. Poetry is language where this procedure is obviously inadequate. Every narrative is thus a selected or chosen arrangement of metaphors. (CW 5: 158–9)

One has to resist the temptation to see in metaphor nothing but an easy out for any kind of logical argument. There are “logical” or fitting metaphors, there are mixed metaphors, & there are what Stevens calls metaphors that murder metaphor. (CW 5: 221)

Poetry speaks total language, subconscious and conscious, emotional and intelligent. Every verbal construct, like a metaphysical system, is founded on metaphorical bases, usually a diagram. Metaphor cannot be described except by another metaphor. (CW 6: 602)

Metaphor: note that it doesn’t link two “things” even if they do remain the same things. It creates a compound, as hydrogen and oxygen, two gases that will burn, combine to form water, a liquid that won’t. (CW 15: 271)

A philosopher would say that if two things are both identical & different, they would have to be identical in one principle & different in another, as in theology the persons of the Trinity are identical in substance but distinct in personality. But such categories do not apply in literature, where the metaphor simply asserts hypothetical identity. (CW 23: 228)

The metaphor is the basis of all literary or centripetal writing; the simile is the basis of discursive analogical writing. Hence the simile predominates in prose, and the epic simile shows that we’re within the order of nature. (CW 23: 231)

**Metaphorical Analogies.** A mythology is a structure of human concern, not a proto-science. Science examines the environment; it’s a different kind of structure. So when in modern times we get philosophers or poets or critics talking about evolution or quantum jumps or relativity or principles of uncertainty or genetic codes, they’re not applying these scientific principles to different fields. They’re making metaphorical analogies to these principles. Whether they are good or bad analogies is not my concern: I don’t know what the standards of good and bad are in such matters. (CW 6: 429)

**Metaphorical Identity and Continuity.** When we move from the conventional metaphor, the Aristotelian statement of a relation of identity between nouns, to Pound’s sense of discourse as metaphorical by continuity, we’ve moved from a figure of speech into a new contextualism. (CW 13: 294)

Onians’ monumental study of the Homeric vocabulary goes along with such things as Levi-Strauss’ building up from concepts like raw and cooked an elaborate verbal universe made out of concrete nouns and metaphors. At one pole we have the explicit metaphor, the Aristotelian statement of identity between the two nouns; at the other the metaphorical discourse, or contextualism where everything is in a potentially metaphorical relation to everything else. At the heart, once again, is the royal metaphor where identity as, the identity of experience, joins on with identity with, the identity of knowledge. (CW 13: 295)

**Metaphorical Kernels.** The sky, the sun and the air are the metaphorical kernels for Father, Son and Spirit respectively. Perhaps for Spirit we should say the wind and the rain, because of Jesus’ “water and the spirit” remark. So the demonic parodies are storm and thunder, night or eclipse, and drought, which is first broken in Genesis 2:4. (CW 13: 283)

**Metaphors for God.** The metaphors applied to God: king, ruler, sovereign, lord, master, are inevitable, and yet they are metaphors, and drawn from the wrong kind of human social organization. Even though they include liberty (“whose service is perfect freedom”) and equality (all are equal before God). There’s an illusory quality about both liberty and equality until they are solidly linked to fraternity: the interpenetrating of the Christ-nature within all of us. (CW 5: 418)

**Metonymy.** I apologize for adding another ingredient to the already over-spiced stew of metaphor and metonymy, and my debt to the essays of Roman Jakobson is as obvious as my departure from them. There seem to me to be three possible contexts for “metonymic”: (a) as a figure of speech where one image is put for another, & which is hardly worth distinguishing from metaphor (b) as an analogical mode of writing & thinking where the word is put for something beyond it (more or less my use here) (c) as a form of writing where the word is put for the object (more or less Jakobson’s, & corresponding to my “descriptive”). I think there are advantages in my arrangement, or I should not have proposed it, but it is of course not a right or wrong question. (CW 13: 346)

**Militancy.** I’m clarifying my view of a militant organization as pyramidal. In Machiavelli all peacetime activities are geared to a war economy, of course: it’s a state militant as the Roman Catholic Church is a Church militant. (I suppose that’s why, if, say, a daughter of mine turned Catholic, I’d feel more bitter than if she turned anything else: I have to be the enemy of a militant church I’m not in, & it’s the only really militant church.) The more militant an organization becomes, the more important a single leader is, & the more everything is subordinated to a shearing dialectic, committing the entire life to one side of a dilemma. Plato’s Republic integrates dialectic & the Pope, the philosopher-ruler chosen to rule because he was born golden. (CW 8: 91)

**Millennial and Apocalyptic Visions.**I’m trying to distinguish a millennial vision, which is social & geared to the future (this is what humanity could do if it really tried) from an apocalyptic one, the individual confronted with a present reality he has only to step into. The social vision is

approximate freedom, & ends in releasing the individual. The individual who is released, however (a) has to go back to society like a Bodhisattva (b) face his own future of death. (CW 5: 89)

**Milton’s Intention.** I don’t know how much beating up of the intentional fallacy I need to do, but in *College English* a peanut review of Arnold Stein’s book said he’s discovered many beauties in Milton, many of which Milton was quite unconscious (meaning of course a sneer) & that got me sore again. It may be only the defense mechanism of a dunce, but it’s still common enough to pass as though it had meaning. . . . The dunce assumes, first, that he knows, or can guess, what was going on in Milton’s mind in the 17th c., & second, that Milton was deliberately stuffing a limited number of beauties into his poem which he expected his reader to extract again one by one, like Little Jack Horner. (CW 123: 225–6)

**Miracles.** Does it matter whether Jesus’ feeding multitudes with practically no food happened or not? Answer: the story is profoundly and suggestively true if it did not happen, and quite unbearably cheap and vulgar and silly if it did happen. (CW 5: 230)

People may bring pieces of carpentered wood from Mt. Ararat & Velikovsky may show that two of the most unlikely events recorded in the Bible happened in that way, but is this the response the Bible itself demands? Joshua’s sun & Hezekiah’s dial [Joshua 10:13; 2 Kings 20:10–11], after all, are presented as miraculous divine acts, not as credible natural ones. (CW 13: 209)

**Mirror.** The mirror, with its overtonesof reflection and speculation, is the central; image of preserving identity while preserving the distinction of subject & object. I suppose a thoroughgoing narcist would be put off by the fact that his right arm was his mirror-image’s left arm. (CW 6: 707)

**Missing Books.** I was in the English Reading-Room of the Bodleian some time ago, looking for Tillyard’s book on Wyatt—much the best thing on the subject. I couldn’t find it and told the old griffin at the desk. He complained that I was probably just too lazy to get down early enough to get hold of the book in the morning, and I said that was possible, but that it had more likely been lost. So, with much sighing and groaning, he looked it up in the list of lost books, and sure enough it had been stolen for about a year. “Yes,” he said, “some dishonest person has taken it,” glaring at me as though I were the thief. I suggested it might be replaced. Well, he didn’t feel like replacing books: somebody else might take them again (giving me another glare), and he thought it was better for the gaps to remain as warnings to other students not to steal the remainder. I said maybe, but it was the business of the Bodleian to see that all books published in England were in it. “Well—how important is Wyatt, anyway? You’re the first person who has ever asked for the book, you know. And who is this man Tillyard?” I said important enough for a paper, that I was not surprised if Oxford students knew very little about Wyatt if there were no books on him, and that Tillyard was a Cambridge don who had written a very important book on Milton.“Oh, well, if he’s a Cambridge don we wouldn’t have heard of him: we haven’t got the book on Milton.” I said “I know you haven’t, and it’s a wonder you’ve ever heard of Milton.” (Milton, and incidentally Wyatt, being Cambridge). By that time our exchange of insults was getting fairly good-humored, and after I had told him that the book was published by Oxford University Press in spite of its Cambridge lineage and would only cost about seven and six anyhow, he said he’d do something about it, and after several months I might see the book on the shelves. However, he brought the book around to my desk the next day, so he must have been impressed. (CW 2: 648)

**Modal Harmony.** When I start learning to compose I shall investigate modal harmony: I find myself quite baffled by the stupidity of musicians in ever dropping it. Arranged in order of sharpness, they are Lydian, Ionian or major, Mixolydian, Dorian, Aeolian or minor, Phrygian, Locrian. Lydian is a shade brighter than major, Dorian a shade more majestic than minor, Phrygian & Mixolydian, Phrygian especially, gloomy and plaintive. I dare say a lot of Bach’s minor music is really Dorian, a lot of Chopin’s Phrygian, a lot of Beethoven’s major Lydian, a lot of Mendelssohn’s Mixolydian. You see, it’s an interlocking scheme. A piece of B Lydian would have a key signature of 6*#*; in B major, of 5*#*; B Mixolydian, 4; B Dorian, 3; B minor, 2; B Phrygian, 1; B Locrian, none. I ran across a piece in G*#*# by Sibelius (a set of tree-pieces op. I think about 85) with 4*#*—G*#* Phrygian, in other words. Debussy’s *Hommage à Rameau* ends in G*#* Dorian. Wonder if a spectrum association would ever be made by some future Scriabine: Lydian red, etc. (CW 8: 21)

**Modern Poetry and the Tradition.** About the year 1912 the United States, for no ascertainable reason, had suddenly started to write poetry. Where formerly a genuine American poet was a rare and sporadic phenomenon, in the five years preceding the publication of Eliot’s book *Prufrock and Other Observations* E.A. Robinson, Frost, Millay, Sandburg, Lindsay, Masters, Amy Lowell, H.D., Ezra Pound, and a dozen minor writers had appeared and had put America on a level with France and far ahead of England as a home of accomplished poets. The main trouble with this poetry was that there was not enough of a tradition behind it. These writers could look back to no American predecessor except Whitman, who was far too intense an individualist to constitute a tradition, and nineteenth-century English poetry was not much help. As a result much of their work was garrulous and overassertive, and much more failed to escape from a self-conscious complexity and a kind of niggling cleverness. (CW 3: 420–1)

There seem to be three strands of tradition in modern poetry. The Mallarmé-Valéry one is hermetically sealed poetic diction; the Laforge-Corbière-Eliot one is a deliberately violent juxtaposing of the hermetic & the naturalistic. The disintegrative tradition that goes through Rimbaud & Jarry seems to me the one that develops in Pound & Wyndham Lewis, &*that* seems to me art for an invisible bureaucracy, an art without dignity. Only I haven’t the connections clear. (CW 23: 272)

**Money.** Everybody has his own reason for wanting to make some extra money. I have two. One, that this country is going to plunge into laissez faire again & after a few years of hectic prosperity it will get snarled up in the most god-awful mess—probably a depression that will make the last one look like Vanity Fair. I’d like to tide myself over that. The other is that there is a public feeling that a person with brains who doesn’t make money is a sissy, & I think there may be something to that theory. The only immediate way I see to make money is to write, & I sure as hell wish I knew what the American public wanted to read. (CW 25: 21)

**Moore, Sir Thomas.** My next assignment is a lecture in a series associated with the name of Thomas More. I see two frames of reference. One is the vague term “science fiction,” which means (a) technological fantasy or hardware fiction (b) software or philosophical fiction. The former descends from Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, the latter from More’s Utopia (which produces either the Eutopia or the Dystopia). The other referential area is that of the four early 16th c. books that define the nature of Renaissance secular society: the prince (Machiavelli’s The Prince), the courtier (Castiglione’s The Courtier), the statesman (More’s Utopia) and the fool (Erasmus’ Praise of Folly). Note how the paradox of the courtier who uses his accomplishments to advise the prince & thereby reduces him to a justice of the peace, reappears in the contrast of Hythloday and More himself. More provides the answer that baffled Castiglione—the state modelled on the secular virtues, although Castiglione does provide the Eros theme the others lack. Erasmus’ conception of “folly” expands into the reality-as-illusion theme. In the science fiction area, there’s a very significant link with More in R.A. Lafferty’s *Past Master*. (CW 5: 178–9)

**Moncton Streets.** I was wandering the streets of Moncton, thinking how, in the course of time, memory tends to distribute itself between waking life & dream life. Some of my most vivid dream settings have been on Moncton streets. Streets are, of course, a labyrinth symbol, full of Eros: they recapture not past reality but *my* reality, reality for me. (CW 9: 166)

**Monotheism.** Study the two kinds of monotheism. One graduates from polytheism by a difference of degree. There are gods, or, by economy of hypothesis, there’s God. That’s the worldstate kind. The other is a difference of kind, an enormous leap, whereby God becomes the power of making gods. Christianity didn’t make this leap: it adapted the consolidation of gods into God, substituted the Idol for idols, & so prohibited idolatry without giving the creative arts their real role. (CW 13: 249)

**Monumental Literary Object.** What is the literary importance of the monumental literary object:

the leather-bound sets of the great classics, the plastic counterparts of these contributed by the book-of-the-month clubs, the monumental systematic theology or philosophy in a clergyman’s study? Plainly it is in part an object of reassurance: contemporary philosophy, on the other hand, distrusts the book as a literary genre. The *latter* feeling goes with specialization & with the existential: Austin’s bits & pieces, or Wittgenstein’s, remind one of *Sartor Resartus*. Similarly with the distrust of the epic & narrative in poetry. (CW 9: 14–15)

**The Moral of the Story.** We think of a fable as having a moral attached at the end, but the tradition is more that of beginning with a general moral reflection, which makes the story itself an exemplum.My statement that the first half of *The Winter’s Tale* follows Pandosto closely and the second half doesn’t follow it at all may have to be modified a little, but is essentially true, I think. (“Notes on Romance”)

**Moral Perfection.**Sunday reflection: for a long time I have realized that the moral perfection of Jesus’ life was an imaginatively sterile idea: if you try to imagine Jesus doing the morally right thing in all situations you vulgarize him into whatever happens at the moment to be your moral ideal. The fewer situations one can imagine him in, the more powerful a figure he becomes. Hence the *essential* life of Jesus must be discontinuous, a series of epiphanic appearances called up, like the presence in the mass, in response to a significant situation. (CW 8: 322)

**Morals of Fools.** The morals of fools, like the fashions of women, are very transient affairs, and, again like them, are dictated by unseen, mysterious forces their supporters (this is not a pun) know nothing of. (“1932 Notebook,”18 November)

**Morris, William.** Morris produced a tremendous amount of poetry and fiction and was obviously one of the greatest men of his time, yet no one would call him a really major poet or story-teller. It’s partly the Parnassian element, but it’s also of course an assimilation of poetry to the minor arts: he wanted the whole hierarchical metaphor of major and minor arts overthrown with the society it reflected. (CW 15: 323)

**Mother.** Mater is materia, the Eastern Maya which neither is nor is not because it is not a form or an idea or an image. It’s the mother, & we break our navel-strings in order to possess her: contain her in consciousness, that is, as a thing that neither is nor is not. The mother is the great sea (mare), the mere of Grendel’s mother & the moor of Grendel himself (the latter being the blasted heath of Lear & the Macbeth witches & similar “heathens”), the bitter (marah) salt sea into which all rivers of life flow. The mother is the animal that bears, the mare. (CW 15: 140)

The Romantic period revived a mother-mythology, and with it the theme of descent to an oracular underworld. This theme is one form of the Romantic myth of a sublime (maternal) and unspoiled (virginal) nature complementing human society. In Shelley Prometheus, having projected the evil sky-god Jupiter, is now bound to Mother Earth, through whom the oracles of imagination come. When man abolishes Jupiter and becomes his own artificer-god, Mother Earth disappears & becomes an earth-spirit. Meanwhile the cave of myths is in Mother Earth’s keeping. Well. (CW 15: 168)

**Mother and Father.** I arrive at the last page of this notebook on August 30, 1970. My mother & father, who were exactly the same age to a day, were born on August 30, 1870. My mother died in November of 1940, when Western culture entered the point of demonic epiphany. (CW 9: 269)

**Mother-Goddess and the Unity with Nature.** I don’t know either why the revolution in selfconsciousness was also a revolution from the Mother Goddess to the Father God. But, again, that seems the inevitable symbol of the revolution itself: the mind emerging from nature & turning around to look at what it had emerged from. In the Mother Goddess period man had a unity with nature he’s since lost, but it was a unity providing insufficient consciousness for the next step he had to take. (Notebook 13)

**Mumbling Ego.** The breaking of the current of habit-energy in the *individual* produces the epiphanic moment or *illumination*. It also splits off the continuously babbling, grousing, mumbling ego. The voice of this ego was first isolated in literature, I think, by Dostoevsky in *Notes from Underground*, & it’s the staple of Beckett. It enters English poetry in Prufrock. To isolate it means it knows itself, hence the tone of querulous & cynical honesty about itself. (CW 23: 285)

**Music and Christianity**. Jim Lawson did his B.D. thesis on Christian art & its relation to dogma, and I spoke of doing one on music. He was very urgent that I should do it, and laid big plans for graduate work, etc. I wanted to do Spengler & St. Augustine. But there are two things which are absolutely unique about the Christian religion and which guarantee its truth—one is music, the other a philosophy of history, and, though I’ll do them both eventually, I don’t care which I start on. They’re intimately connected, of course, and it may be better to get a solid musical background first. We’ll see how things turn out. The Catholic Church has four great “doctors of the Church”—St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, St. Augustine and St. Jerome. The first two were musicians, the second two philosophers of history. We’ll see, as I said. I was glad to get that push from Lawson—more glad than I can say. He told me that there might not be another student in generations with my combination of background that could do the job. (CW 1: 199)

**Music in Poetry.** I wish that when critics speak of “musical verse” they would define their terms. There are two literary and totally wrong theories about music in verse. The cruder states that a vowel is musical and a consonant is not. Thus Italian is “musical” because it is full of vowels, German harsh because it is full of consonants, though the Germans have produced greater word artists than the Italians, and more of them. A more intelligent consideration recognizes the value of the consonants, and the musical poet then becomes the one who arranges a superb pattern of sound, like Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge or Keats. But that is not music––that is more like painting. The feeling given is that of a static art, to be viewed as a whole––the question of speed does not enter. Burns and Browning are our poets who think as musicians. It is significant that Shakespeare has been called the “Swan of Avon.” The swan is a beautiful and exquisite bird, but sing it cannot, and Shakespeare, sympathetic musical amateur as he was, did not conceive his plays musically, except in one instance––Macbeth––though Coriolanus, in diction perhaps the harshest of all, is a close approach––and as Macbeth was unfortunately not his last play, the swan analogy does not altogether hold good. The interlocking plots are not musical, or contrapuntal, they are dramatic, or repetitive blocks of contrast. This is, it is true, a very shadowy region of metaphors, but it is well to avoid the facile but irrelevant coincidence that poetry and music are addressed to the same sense. (“1932 Notebook,” 23 August)

**Musical and Pictorial.** In my music & poetry article I discovered that the ordinary term “musical,” meaning pleasant-sounding, was not, & in fact tended to be the opposite of, the kind of poetry that showed the influence of the art of music. I am now convinced that exactly the same thing is true of the word “pictorial.” Tennyson tries to produce elaborate harmonies of sound, & does, but that doesn’t convince me that he knows or cares about music. He also builds up very elaborate pictures, like the nude Venus in *Oenone*, but that doesn’t convince me that he knows or cares about painting, & it’s a matter of record that he didn’t. But when Browning says “to get on faster” in *The Flight of the Duchess* I know he knows music, & when his tulip blows out its bell like a bubble of blood I know he knows painting. It isn’t pictorialism that’s the mark of an unpainterly poet: it’s the transfer to poetry of the sense of vivid quick sketching (Herrick’s *Upon Julia’s Clothes*), of pictorial masses & composition & recession of planes & color-tones. *Not* shades of color. (CW 8: 159)

**Myth(s).** Perhaps our conclusion will be that the Bible is the only work of literature that ever succeeded in getting beyond literature. I am not at this point discussing the Bible’s truth or reality, only the language in which that truth or reality is being presented to us. That that language is mythical seems to me unanswerable. And if myth is a human language, then either the uniqueness of the Judaeo-Christian tradition falls to the ground or the myth is not the content of revelation. I wonder if Barth really does have anything to say on this point. (CW 13: 83)

I think I can distinguish three kinds of myths, narrative, imagistic & conceptual. Narrative myths approximate the death & resurrection theme by way of the quest, the hero killing the dragon in which life conquerors death. Imagistic myths consolidate the city-garden form of heaven over against the stone & pole form of hell. Conceptual myths are based on the struggle (though that’s a narrative word) between the word & nature for the control of reason. That, of course, means the incorporation of law into gospel. The general parallelism of hero = kingdom of heaven = intelligible word and dragon = kingdom of hell = reasonable nature needs working out in detail. The idea of manifestation & disappearance seems to belong to hell; the idea of concealment and realization seems to belong to heaven: one is creation, the other apocalypse. (CW 8: 271)

Before long I may give birth to some sort of “Essays on Myth & Ritual.” Everything I’ve been thinking about lately seems to be going in that direction. The world of myth is the world of final causes, the visions of the ends of all acts. All teleological acts (rituals) are informed by this world of myth. Deductive & a priori thinking takes the world of myth as data, and, in itself, refuses to regard it as subject to reformation. That’s the attitude of Catholicism and its Shadow, Communism. Inductive thinking concentrates on law, the act as data, & that refuses to examine the myth: the attitude of Judaism & its Shadow of Nazism. Protestantism ought to be the proper form of J.S. Mill: an inductive attitude which eventually takes a “leap” & creates a new vision. The world of myth is the idea of the university. (CW 8: 369)

It’s literature itself, not criticism, that informs the social sciences. The Oedipus archetype informs Freud’s psychology, not the other way round. The myth is hypothetical in art & is applied to existential situations in life, religious, political & so on. Ideally, I suppose, all myths in anyone’s mind ought to have the same form, as the psychological & political myths are identical in the *Republic*. But the myth is effective only as a teleological *theoria* which contains and makes conscious the axioms of action. For instance, someone like a logical positivist who keeps saying that perfectly intelligible statements are “meaningless” has built his intellectual security on the myth of the *temenos* or marked-off holy ground. In religion the value-judgement “mere myth” or “only a myth” ought to give place to the value-judgement “only a historical fact.” All reality & all effectiveness is in the myth, as the example of Adam shows. (CW 23: 227)

**Myth and History.** People interested in myth, including me, are often described as anti-historical, statically-minded, or Platonic idealists. That transfers to the writer a quality inherent in his subject. When myth absorbs history it treats historical events as a kind of chaconne or passacaglia, a sequence of episodes representing essentially the same underlying theme. The myth, in short, dehistoricizes; that is a barbarous word, but no more so than other words beginning with “de.” It’s curious that Marxist critics should talk so much about historicizing, because the myth of Marxism also turns history into a sequence of illustrations of an underlying “class struggle” ground bass. (CW 5: 165–6)

**Myth and Metaphor.** The metaphor is a microcosm of language, the myth is a microcosm of narrative. A lot here to think about. In fact, I’ve never thought much about anything else. (CW 5: 58)

I want, of course, to write one more major book, concerned with the relation of religion to literature. So far the articulating of this book eludes me, though the fragments that have come clear seem to have the requisite originality. The opening is all right: there are two parts to it, myth & metaphor. The first part speaks of myth as having an ideological function, in contrast to folktale & legend, but being superseded as language by dialectical prose. The poet to this day owes his authority to the preserving of mythological language. This makes him more primitive, but prevents him (and society) from pure ideological obsession. The units of poetry are metaphors, which in literature are hypothetical only, but are attached to what I call existential metaphor, the “lunatic and lover” of Theseus’ speech. (CW 5: 146)

I got from Milton, that society can’t distinguish the prophet above the law from the “heretic” or whatever below it. . . . The first question any audience would ask is, “How do we tell the difference?” And I don’t know. As long as truth is linked to correspondence, all myth, including “gospel truth,” will lie. I’ve caught myself lying to sustain the Frye myth—nothing serious except perhaps to my own moral fibre, but I have. And I’m damned if I see any methodological difference from what the Gospel does. (CW 5: 66)

**Myth of Identity.** At present Christianity wanders between two worlds, a resurrection in the past and another in the future. The everlasting Gospel of the Spirit would anchor it in the present. Our private myth of identity, which makes an honest man honest, a martyr stubborn, an artist creative, & so on, is the gift of the Spirit, the use of which is the faith that justifies us, & the non-use of which is the essential sin of self-denial, in a literal sense, which forgiveness cannot reach. The myth of identity is really the integrating of individual consciousness, the first stage toward freedom and away from mere acceptance of contract & environment. (CW 9: 275)

**Myth of the Enemy.** The myth of the devil. Groups of people in an insurgent or revolutionary situation *must* create a myth of the enemy. This is the primary sense in which Sorel uses the word myth. Communists must have some variant of a silk-hatted capitalist; Nazis a Jew; Protestant 17thcentury England a skulking Jesuit; Elizabethan drama a Machiavellian. I notice how my students must have a “power structure” to buck, how faculty representation must have cigar-chewing businessmen on the board. This dialectical creation of a caricature is a tremendously important social force, and assertions that it doesn’t exist have no effect on it. (CW 9: 68)

**Myth to Live By.** Did the Virgin Birth happen or didn’t it? Answer, yes or no. In the spiritual world, which we enter through myth, there are no yeses or noes and all either-or questions are wrongly put. The past historical event is not important to me, so it didn’t happen for me; it’s important for you, so it did happen for you. This is insane, of course: therefore it’s what we must live by. (CW 5: 411)

**Mythical Habits of Thought.** In the last generation, we were all in the grip of a writing culture.

There could be no truth except truth of correspondence conveyed by simple & accurate description. Student questions were loaded with value-assumptions: is it all just a myth, only a myth, nothing but a myth? They had been educated the wrong way in literature, by educators who disliked & feared literature& trained them first in “communication arts,” then circled cautiously over to prose, & ended by surveying poetry as Moses did the Promised Land, dividing it into allegorical themes or topics. What poetry had been taught them had been metered gabble of the Longfellow-Whittier kind, on the theory that this would be the kind of poetry that would connect with their ordinary experience. The result was that when they collided with genuine poetry in the university, with Yeats or Rimbaud, they did not think of such poetry as a direct, forceful, natural, even primitive form of utterance, but as something wilfully & perversely obscure & difficult. Educators today seem to be as silly & ignorant as ever, but they can no longer cripple their victims to such an extent. Young people educate themselves today, partly through films & television, media that are capable of great symbolic concentration, partly through listening to folk singers & rock & roll music which introduces them to what is, for all its obvious limitations, a more normal poetic idiom. As a result mythical habits of thought seem natural to them. (CW 13: 73)

N

**Naked Christian.** In this University the Christian lies naked, basking in the sun. Along come little elves and gnomes, tickling him with feathers labelled “Social Problems,” “Communism,”

“Unemployment,” “Russia,” and so on. He scratches his titillations placidly, murmuring, “We must do something,” and smiling, basks in the sun. (“1932 Notebook,” 25 July)

**Narrative and Thematic Stasis.** Narrative is a horizontal journey; it can’t express, for example, love: it can only keep pursuing an object of desire that retreats to the last page. That’s why there has to be a thematic stasis: love would involve the reader’s participation. Those who can think only in either-or categories, & can’t see that an antithesis is part of a thesis, naturally assume that if something isn’t diachronic it must be synchronic, & therefore static, unchangeable, immutable, & all the other unfashionable things (“my name is Ozymandias”). But it’s objective & static only as long as it’s not understood: it has to enter into an identity with the reader. We think of the “sub”ject as being under the objective, including an objective text, but the subject is metaphorically on top. (CW 5: 217)

**Natura Naturans.** With the Romantics there came a sense of man’s essential partnership with nature, the fact that he was a child of nature and involved with its processes and its highly ambivalent morality. This in itself was not new, but there came a strong new emphasis on the sense of *natura naturans*, the feeling of nature as a force or energy of which man was part, a new sense of the Dionysian. It was essentially the greatly increased emphasis on this (Milton had written In *Adventus Veris*, and the older poets knew all about it: I’m speaking of a question of degree of emphasis and influence) that transformed the old third world of experience, in which man was physically akin to but morally alienated from his natural environment, into a new state of identity in which something other than man was yet something that he was. (CW 6: 477)

**Natural Cycle.** Why isn’t the wheel of fortune more closely geared to the natural cycle in Greek, as it is in *Lear*? I suppose because winter is less dramatic in Greece: there’s a lot about sunset & darkness, death as the close of life, & the historical wheel, but not much context of summer & winter. (CW 20: 293)

**Natural Religion.** Rousseau started the revolutionary drive toward incorporating nature (*naturata* in the identification with reason; *naturans* in the educational argument of Emile into the spirit of man. But the Biblical tradition had always warned against the evils inherent in nature, and the bottoms-up 19th c. thinkers repeated the ambivalence. Hence Wordsworth & the Marquis de Sade both appealed to “nature”; Schopenhauer recognized its dangers; Nietzsche recognized them and glorified them; Huxley warned against them. The strictly revolutionary position in Marx & Freud was “godless” because it saw only the incorporating of nature, & with that “revolution” acquired its other meaning of a change toward the same thing. (CW 5: 388)

**Nature and Culture.** The two kinds of truth and of reality––the kinds which are created by human civilization and the kinds which are studied from an objective nature––are, in their turn, derived from still larger and more fundamental fact that man lives in two worlds, the world which is around him, his environment, or what we call nature, and the world that he wants to live in, the world which his culture and civilization tries to produce. One affords us a truth and a reality of evidence and experience. The other is concerned with the fundamental questions about man’s nature and his destiny, his whence and his whither, why he is in the world, what he is trying to do in it, what he is trying to make out of it. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**New Fiction Formula.** I have been struggling for some time to think of a new fiction formula, and all my ideas tend to revolve around Rilke’s idea of the poet’s perceiving simultaneously the visible & the invisible world. In practice that means a new type of ghost or supernatural story, possibly approached by way of some science-fiction development. The idea is a vision of another life or another world so powerfully plausible as to make conventionally religious & anti-religious people shake in their shoes. I’ve begun notes on this many times, but threw away my best notebook, written in Seattle, in a London (Ont.) hotel. By shake in their shoes I don’t mean threats, but the ecstatic frisson or giggle aroused by plausibility. (CW 25: 140)

**New Word.** In an essay called “General Aims and Theories,” Hart Crane speaks of a logic of metaphor “which antedates our so-called pure logic, and which is the genetic basis of all speech, hence consciousness and thought-extension.” That I’ve more or less figured out on my own. But when he says: “It is as though a poem gave the reader as he left it a single, new *word*, never before spoken and impossible to actually enunciate, but self-evident as an active principle in the reader’s consciousness henceforward,” he’s saying the kind of thing I’m now looking for. The poem itself as new word—that’s a bull’seye. It’s of course what I mean by a metaphor-cluster. As word, I suppose it could also be a letter, or rather a hieroglyph, like Crane’s own broken tower poem, which is one of the Tarot trumps, whether he knew or cared about that or not. Perhaps this is really the thing I’m getting at in my “archetype” theory, which I admit is a pretty heterogeneous mixture of things at present. One could even call this hieroglyph a mandala, except that that again is a Jungian term, and the only mandalas Jung recognizes are geometrical doodlings expressing the rather static symmetry his individuation process seems to go in for. (CW 6: 564)

**New Words.** The new words [introduced by fifteenth-century writers] must have been accompanied by a feeling of increased mental power. Take an analogy from our own time. Until the rise of psychology there were no words for the mental phenomena that subject deals with, or, if there were, there were only timid words like “hunch” or “quirk.” But when “psychopathic complex,” “traumatic neurosis,” and the like came rumbling in, everyone rushed to play with the new toys, so that psychologists now will have nothing to do with “soul,” “will,” or “instinct,” even when it is impossible to see what else they can mean by the polysyllabic cacophonies they do use. Similarly, when Mr. T.S. Eliot writes, “The young are red and pustular / Clutching piaculative pence,” we nod sagely and think how suitable the precise use of the technical terminology of medicine and theology is to this age of advancing science. The imagery, we feel, is concrete, the emotion carefully controlled. We should be wrong, of course: Mr. Eliot’s language here is as “aureate” as anything in Hawes. But it’s grand fun. (“Intoxicated with Words”)

**Newfoundland Pederasty.** I’m very pleased about the publicity given to the pederasty of Newfoundland priests: however horrible it is to be accused of such practices when one is innocent of them, there seems no question of that here. Another corner of hell, that is, of abuse and arbitrary power, has been opened up to public scrutiny and, more important, superior authority. Priests have been buggering their choir-boys since the days of St. Paul, but they were always able to hush it up and refuse any jurisdiction but their own. They could only reform it themselves if they wanted to, and it was seldom they wanted to. (CW 5: 407)

**Next Big Job.** I’m haunted by the feeling that even *Words with Power* needs a few extra paragraphs about the imaginative universe, the warning that the axis mundi is an exceedingly arbitrary choice from a whole complex—perhaps even a hint that this may be my next big job, with these Emmanuel lectures the transition between them. How long do I have, angel? (CW 6: 628)

**Nietzsche’s Contempt of Women.**The only thing that gives Nietzsche away–and I haven’t got the clue to that yet–is the unvarying contempt of women in his writing. Blake is disturbing enough on this, but at least his poetry is concerned with nameless shadowy females that are not women. The spirit *and the bride* say come [Revelation 22:17], and Nietzsche’s self-transcending man is a male. Sublimating love through violence (will to *power*) won’t work. (CW 5: 389)

**Nostalgia.** The nostalgic feeling, with me, is not arrived at so much through a repeated experience, as with Proust, but rather through the sense of the *temenos*, the sacred enclosure, the place *where* (e.g. the murder of Becket very-spot-where business in Canterbury). An occasional smell will recreate this sense for me, but in general my only command of experiential repetition is through tunes— often very silly tunes, evangelical hymns, e.g., an aspect of my childhood that I think might have been better omitted. (CW 13: 1345)

**Not Not.** The physical world exists; the psychic world may or may not exist; the pneumatic or verbal or logical world neither exists nor does not exist. The point at which we begin to realize that mathematics is not a criticism of reality but an autonomous language is the point at which a teacher draws a chalk line on the blackboard & tells us, first, that that is a line, & secondly, that it is not a line. Or, even earlier, the point at which we understand that “three” is not three matches, & yet not *not* three matches. (CW 23: 46)

**Nothing.** According to Western traditions, God made the world from nothing; according to Eastern ones, nothingness is still its content. (CW 5: 130)

In Valéry the principle of nothing becoming something is associated with the serpent of selfconscious knowledge. So it’s in the direct line of Sartre’s *Being & Nothingness*, which in turn takes up Shakespeare’s “nothing” as the total alienation of the ego deprived of its identity (symbolized in Lear or Richard II, by the loss of one’s social function). (CW 5: 183)

The last chapter has been held up for months because I don’t know nothing. The grammar is correct. Boehme apparently thinks of God as Sieyes thought of the bourgeoisie: he’s everything; he was originally nothing; his purpose is to be something. The implication, which I’ve always accepted, is that God’s aim is to be a bourgeois, the middle class of the middle world, which remains after upper & lower unrealities have vanished. (CW 5: 374)

I’m still fascinated by the pun, the simple negative nothing (not anything) & the positive negative Nothing, or Nothingness. God made the world from nothing, so nothing is co-eternal with God. That’s a pacifier for the devout to suck. God made the world from Nothing, so Nothing is coeternal with God. Yeats wanted to call his play “Where There is Nothing, There is God.” But if so, “Where there is God, there is Nothing.” (CW 5: 380)

God’s creation is involved in nothingness: when the conception of creation shifted from a divine product to a human process nothingness became the dark half, so to speak, of human creation. I don’t need to make a point more difficult than that. In Mallarmé the white paper the poem is written on symbolizes this. (CW 5: 392)

There seem to be an extraordinary number of words in the Bible translated “nothing” in the AV. I wonder if I could find my distinction in them between nothing as not anything and nothing as something called nothing, which is its exact opposite. The following dialogue, for example, makes sense:

1. There is nothing to be afraid of.
2. Wrong. There is nothing to be afraid of. (CW 6: 563)

**Novel Writing.** I told you [Helen], I think, that I was giving birth to a novel. It’s developing, very slowly: I start the wrong end too, and think of the episodes and scenes and conversations first, and try to figure out their context afterward. I am writing the thing, partly because I can’t help myself, partly because there’s a strong impulse to creative work inside me which I’ve never satisfied, partly because I want a bit of money to pay up the college and marry you on, and partly because all my confused impressions about where I stand in life generally are clearing a bit. I rather think it will be either so bad I shan’t do anything with it, such as showing it to my friends or re-reading it, or good enough to be accepted. Somehow I don’t think I’ll write an unreadable novel. I’ve got a fair idea of prose rhythm, a fairly decent literary education (for a novelist), a fairly good eye for caricature, and a fairly good idea of what comedy is about. Anyway, we’ll see. Just another experiment. (CW 1: 463–4)

**Nude Virgin.** I didn’t realize the Renaissance painters sketched their figures in the nude before completing the finished painting. Hence some very powerful drawings of Michelangelo that actually show a nude Virgin. (CW 8: 151)

**Nudity.** The joke about the old maid in the sacked city who wanted to know when the raping was to begin is in Byron’s *Don Juan*, and the joke about the schoolmaster who recognized his boys only by their buttocks is in Trollope’s *Autobiography*. Speaking of buttocks (I remember that I once described a well-upholstered young woman as asymmetrical), I wonder why nudists are considered cranks when every point they have has long ago has been socially accepted. The difference between a modern bathing suit and no bathing suit is a mere technicality; and the modesty that prevents the exposure of the backside or genitals is a purely vestigial modesty, based on no moral feeling whatever. It is preserved by the inertia of custom and, on public bathing beaches, by the still greater inertia of law. It’s amusing to notice how frankly conservative people admit that there’s nothing more to their conservatism: they will say, for instance, that no matter how far some other place may have gone we “haven’t yet come to that” here. Clothes are worn for what Veblen calls conspicuous consumption; they are worn for erotic reasons, nudity being of course not erotic; they are worn for the sake of their pockets, the human body not being marsupial; and they are worn for warmth: but I doubt if the emotion of shame or the sense of decency, on any level below the conventional, generally exists. (CW 25: 5–6)

O

**Obscenity.** Obscenity in language is an ornament except when it becomes routine, & in the latter event it approaches mere idiocy. The most horrid example of passivity & inertia of mind I know is Woodside’s story of the soldier who gazed into a shell hole at the bottom of which a dead mule was lying, and said: “Well, that fuckin’ fucker’s fucked.” (What sort of person is it, incidentally, whose feelings would be spared by printing the above as “that \_\_\_\_in’ \_\_\_\_\_er’s \_\_\_\_ed,” or “that obscene obscenity’s obscenitied”?) Probably much the same as the temperance crank reported in the *Star* (which is run by one & gives publicity to such vaporings) who said in effect “if they must have a beer pub (beverage rooms, they’re called here) they should see that there’s a good solid partition between the men’s & the women’s side,” as though it were a urinal—as a matter of fact that’s how Ontario thinks of it, as a slightly salacious necessity for the vulgar people who don’t stay home. (CW 8: 10)

**Odyssean Critic.** Coleridge said all philosophers (meaning conceptual critics, like himself) were either Platonists or Aristotelians: similarly all fictional critics are either Iliadic or Odyssean. With my strong bias toward comedy & romance, I’ve always been an Odyssean, and have never known what to do with the *Iliad*. (CW 23: 105)

**Oedipus Complex.** I don’t have the Oedipus complex clear yet because it’s a two-way street. The son dethrones his father & reigns in his stead, pretending to be a father, but as father he keeps murdering his sons to prolong his own life. Thus Cronus is both a Golden Age legend & a hideous ogre devouring his children, too stupid even to distinguish them from stones. Also the Old Testament Jehovah isn’t the son of anybody, in contrast to Zeus, who got born, and Jupiter despite the “piter” side of his name. But (first born) sons belong to him, & they get redeemed. (CW 5: 123– 4)

**Ogdoad.** When I was about fourteen, I developed the ambition to write eight great novels. The ambition was founded on something still earlier, connected with music, and is probably based ultimately on some ogdoadic diagram in my unconscious which enabled me to respond to Blake, among other things. I can still remember having this ambition as late as my freshman year at college. In a fourteen-year-old’s typically pretentious way, I had given them all impressive titles, one word each: Liberal, Tragicomedy, Anticlimax, Rencontre, Mirage, Paradox, Twilight. Why those names have stuck with me all these years I don’t know, but they have. They also had certain characteristics, and in fact have kept them to some degree ever since, through all their modulations. (CW 9: 337)

From the beginning I was ferociously ambitious, with a Napoleonic complex in me that went through all the regular childish phases. I was a future great military commander simultaneously with knowing that I was the least military of males, & always would be. Around twelve or thirteen I suddenly realized that I didn’t believe in the dogmas of Biblical religion, and started breathing mental oxygen. I had a long fixation of wanting to be a great musical composer—I call it a fixation because I did no work at it. I remember my Opus 2 was to be a series of eight concerti—a sequence of eight masterpieces in the same genre has been a constant dream ever since. To the composer dream (which didn’t fade out until the age of twenty or so) a novelist dream, likewise an unworked fixation, succeeded. At first I read Scott, & planned a sequence of historical novels—that dream began at nine, with the composing one. When Dickens and Thackeray succeeded, the dream became a sequence of eight definitive novels. With the owlish solemnity of fourteen, they acquired each a descriptive name of one word. The first was to be called Liberal: it was to be a satire, a witty comedy of manners. The second I called Tragicomedy, and thought of it as a panoramic novel: I had always been fascinated by complicated plot & a great number of characters. The third, Anticlimax, I thought of as austere & forbidding; the fourth, Mirage, had no particular characteristics; the sixth, Paradox, was to be the most dizzily complicated of them all; the seventh, Ignoramus, the profoundest (because I was an agnostic by then and had started to read Hardy), and Twilight, subtitled a Valedictory, as to be my *Tempest*, the work of my old age. I came to college, barely seventeen, convinced of the superiority of creative to scholarly work, never dreaming I was cut out to be a scholar, critic & professor, though other schoolboys called me professor as a nickname at the age of twelve at the latest. (CW 25: 27–8)

**Olivier’s Hamlet.** Went to see the Laurence Olivier *Hamlet* this afternoon—its eleventh filming, according to the program. As Olivier directed the film & played Hamlet too, it was still the subjective fallacy, the conception of the play which derives from the accident that Hamlet is a fat actor’s role, not in the least scant of breath. In any production the actor who takes Hamlet’s part has a lot to say about the production, and in fact he is usually in charge of the production, & his first care is usually to ensure that if any part is cut it won’t be his. Olivier wasn’t crude about it: he slashed the soliloquies to ribbons & turned it into a play of action. The subjective fallacy showed up chiefly in his treatment of Ophelia—he manipulated her part to make her just the “anima” of Hamlet, & deliberately cut out her mature intensity of feeling & her sharp sly humor. Consistently with this he made her death pure accident, thus making all the references to her “doubtful” death in the fifth act entirely pointless. The foils to Hamlet were also weakened—Laertes of course has a very badly written part, but the stability of Horatio was hardly in evidence & Fortinbras was abolished altogether, along with those dismal robot clowns Rosencrantz & Guildenstern. On the other hand, the king & queen were fully & excellently treated. (CW 8: 53–4)

**On the Fence.** I’m on the fence between the Liberal and C.C.F. [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] battalions, exactly where a follower of Spengler and Mantalini ought to be. I think, with the C.C.F., that capitalism is crashing around our ears, and that any attempt to build it up again will bring it down with a bigger crash. I think with the Liberals that Socialism, as it is bound to develop historically, is an impracticable remedy, not because it is impracticable—it is inevitable—but because it is not a remedy. I think with the C.C.F. that a co-operative state is necessary to preserve us from chaos. I think with the Liberals that it is impossible to administer that state at present. I think with the C.C.F. that man is unable, in a laissez faire system, to avoid running after false gods and destroying himself. I think with the Liberals that it is only by individual freedom and democratic development that any progress can be made. In short, any “way out” must of necessity be miraculous. We can save ourselves only through wan established co-operative church, and if the church ever wakes up to that fact, that will constitute enough of a miracle to get us the rest of the way. CW 1: 155–6)

**The One and the Many.** I started *Anatomy of Criticism* with a hunch about centripetal & centrifugal directions of verbal meaning. This has expanded into a tendency toward individual & a tendency toward “oceanic” consciousness. Now, an individual is a community in a state of cooperation. I’ve spoken of the different linguistically structured aspects of our personalities: they’re members of the individual Parliament representing the cells & bacteria which are the population at large. (If they really did represent them, our health would be superb.) Well, I suppose God also is (a) one and (b) maker of all things. As one he’s nothing, as there’s *no* individual; as all things he’s epiphany or manifestation or Word that proceeds out of nothing. (CW 5: 355)

**“Only Connect.”** E.M. Forster’s “only connect” is often quoted out of context as though it were saying that continuity is the supreme virtue in itself. Actually, the statement comes into the middle of *Howards End,* and is a statement about Eros: what should be connected are the spiritual and the physical aspects of Eros. This connection, Forster says, is the essence of the personal: what he calls the monk and the beast are impersonal. The ascetic who denies physical reality and the “practical” man who sees everything in “people like that are .. .” stereotypes are equally devoid of any sense of the personal. Henry Wilcox in the novel is a practical man of this kind; Margaret Schlegel tries to convert him to a more personal attitude, and, though spinsterish and screechy herself, she’s far less prudish than he is, as a sneaking shame of the body, the other impersonal half, is a part of his trouble. (CW 15: 307)

**Onomatopoeia.** Onomatopoeia is only a small part, though a very significant part, of stage 3 rhetoric—of trying to establish a “natural” connection between words & objective reality. Like poetic etymology, its “true” enough *as rhetoric*, & absurd only when objectified as philosophical speculation. (CW 23: 224)

**Opposites and Contraries.**Faith: as I’ve said so often, it’s the negation of faith, or indifference, that’s the real opposite. The contrary, doubt, is a fertilizing influence on faith. Out of their interaction a new antithesis forms: the negation of faith-doubt becomes faith as uncritical acceptance, a retreat from reason & evidence—what’s ordinarily meant by faith. Similarly, I suppose, hatred, in the sense of what I call abhorrence, is the contrary of love which produces the new negation of gregariousness. The contrary of hope, not exactly despair but Hardy’s full look at the worst, forms the new negation of the donkey’s carrot of progress & the like. (CW 13: 231)

**Oracular World.** Anybody who’s ever read a book on spiritualism or kindred subjects realizes that the oracular world is a damn confusing place. No definite individuality; nothing but bits and pieces of personality floating about, some of them apparently separate from the medium, others part of him. It’s in this world that all the guesses about a life after death, which I suppose is the essential West problem of the oracular, keep trying to fix on definite things. (CW 15: 311)

**Order of Nature.** I suppose any conservative social order has to include maintaining the order of nature. Changing the order of nature is what’s implied in the Red Sea crossing, especially in the Book of Wisdom commentary on it. So the primacy of the revolutionary theme in society goes along with an apocalyptic approach to nature: anything can happen in nature if we only clear our minds up. (CW 13: 282)

**Order of Words.** So Nietzsche’s remark that it’s hard to get rid of God as long as we believe in grammar does contain a genuine intuition, silly as it sounds. There’s no reason I can see to want to “get rid of” God, and grammar isn’t a thing one believes in; but I have always made an order of words part of my thinking, and have always suspected that my “verbal universe” was the creation. The metaphors surrounding music: harmony, correspondence (i.e. counterpoint), scale, concord (cf.

the Russian *mir*) belong here too. (CW 5: 227)

My lectures are brightening up a bit, I think. I made something fairly lively out of the Elizabethan sonnet, one of English literature’s duller subjects, at least as portrayed by *Representative Poetry*. I said in connection with a Shakespearean sonnet that one feels that that order of words had existed since the beginning of time & were just waiting for the right person to set them free. Hyperboles like that increase the snob value of one’s lectures, as the brighter kid’s feel they’ve got something the others have missed. They have, too. Also, they aren’t pure hyperboles—I believe of course in an order of words. (CW 8: 267–8)

**Ordination.** After my graduation from Emmanuel, I was very hesitant about ordination because I knew by that time that I was unlikely to be engaged in conventional pastoral work and my belief in the priesthood of believers seemed to make it unnecessary. I consulted various friends: the general consensus was that I should take ordination, and having taken it, I regard it as permanent and wish to retain it. (Letter to Robert K. Leland, 30 October 1984)

**Organic Thinking Being.** The complementary centripetal-centrifugal movement I discovered in literature exists in life. The real individual I, not the ego, is expressible as an organic thinking being, struggling to unify its impressions & combine them to get new ones. Outside is the world of duties & events that one tries to affect with this thinking being. My “rights” as an individual are my powers of self-unification, which are primarily intellectual, as I’m one of Jung’s thinking types. First comes the unification of the book; all others derive from that. The ego, which always wants to “rest” or be truckled to or coddled, doesn’t get into this except sporadically, in a certain rhythm I can’t define. (CW 13: 68)

**Original as Traditional.**When *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* appeared in 1922, a lot of people said these are monsters; these are simply spawned from the mouth of the Nile; they have no shape and no tradition. They are the works of literary Bolsheviks, and so forth. But we know now that they were very deeply traditional works. And this is what is always happening in literature: that what seems new and original and unexpected is actually recreating tradition on a deeper level. The new detective story recreates its convention on a relatively shallow level; that is, it’s very much like other detective stories. But occasionally you come across, say, in the history of painting, with the impressionists: something cataclysmic has happened here––a complete break with tradition. But what has happened is that a deeper layer of tradition than the layer of where Goya and Velasquez are––that’s what begins to emerge. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Original Pettiness.** It isn’t original sin that makes one feel sardonic so much as original pettiness.

Take Plato, with his idealism soaring up to the moon like the Tower of Babel. Yet the climax of the *Symposium* is the great news that when he’s in bed with another man Socrates will cuddle but not bugger. (CW 13: 373)

**Ornament and Imitation.** Ruskin’s distinction of ornament & imitation is fundamental to painting. Imitation is extroverted & phenomenal: ornament is abstract, introverted, & concerned with what is transcendental in the Kantian sense: the *categories* of form & design. In our day we go from extreme abstract expression around behind to an anti-painting based on the principle of the fetishistic (ornamental) aspect of the *objet trouvé*: this began in photography, & develops through types of futurism, surrealism, dadaism, like the pop art currently fashionable. (CW 9: 13)

**Otto, Rudolf.** Otto’s book on mysticism says there are two different ways, a way of introspection & a way of unifying vision. That sounds like a Kantian or even Lockian assumption of duality.

Surely the discovery of the self and the unifying of vision are and always must be the same thing.

(CW 13: 11)

P

**Pablum and Poison.** A lot of people have the bad analogy between reading and eating without knowing it. In eating, a large amount of the involuntary & automatic goes on: a baby’s Pablum builds up the baby’s nervous & muscular energy without consciousness being involved. Taking the analogy seriously gives us the theory of educational magic: the notion that one cannot help improving one’s mind by being exposed to Shakespeare or Dante. The negative side of this is the impulse behind censorship: the analogy of poison, the notion that certain arrangements of words will, like a mushroom full of prussic acid, automatically & involuntarily do harm. There is an educational rhythm to be followed, analogous to not giving beef-steak to babies; but knowledge, being conscious, is based on character, & has no automatism. To the true critic there is nothing poisonous, because poison, unlike food, works automatically in the mechanical, not the organic, sense. (CW 23: 267–8)

**Painted Faces.** In a magazine recently I saw an advertisement the chief feature of which was a woman’s face. Her mouth was open to a preposterous extent––she seemed bent on displaying every tooth in her upper jaw––in what was evidently intended to be a disarming smile. Each feature was unnaturally regular and the general effect was that of a cleverly painted skull. Underneath was the caption that she was a famous actress, of whom I had not heard before. The important thing was, however, that though she was a mature woman of well over thirty, she flattered herself that she had succeeded, thanks to the diligent use of the product advertised––I think it was soap––in making herself look as much like a half grown girl of eighteen or so as possible. I could not repress a shudder of disgust when I saw that, and I thought that if I belonged to her sex I should be ashamed of the ubiquitous prostitution which compels so many women to paint out the light of intelligence from their faces and substitute a reassuringly stupid death mask prettiness.(“1932 Notebook,” 22 July)

**Palm Reading.** The will to believe applies primarily to magic & divination. If someone reads palms at a party, most are interested, many hope, if they don’t actually believe, that there’s “something in it,” & one or two may even say so. The notion of synchronicity, that every object is an event & every event a signature of a total entity, makes a powerful appeal. Belief in a God, when it’s a will to believe, is usually a belief in “providence,” i.e., something that intelligibly explains what happens. (CW 13: 205)

**Parataxis.** Marcus Aurelius says that the mental basis of the willingness of Christian to die for their faith is παραταξιs [*parataxis*], which means literally arranging soldiers in order of battle. “Esprit de

Corps” would be an excellent translation with capital letters attached to both words. What a language Greek is! The whole theology of the Church Militant summed up in a word by one of its enemies! (CW 15: 9)

**Part and Whole.** The fact that the gospel is both social & individual makes it particularly the area of the alternation of whole and part perspectives. Christ is the whole man of whom we are all parts: I am a whole individual of whom “Christ in me” [Galatians 2:20] is obviously a part. (CW 5:107)

**Passionate Commitment.** Some years ago I was told about a conversation between two students of mine in which one student said, “What’s with that bag of sticks Frye. He stands up and he just rattles. I’m sure he’s making jokes every three or four minutes, but there’s never a crack in his face. What does one do with a person like that?” The student that he said that to was born in Ontariobut had Maritime parents. She was a very astute student indeed, and her name was Margaret Atwood. She said, “Well, don’t you understand. He’s a Maritimer, and that’s the Maritimer’s way to express passionate commitment and be overwhelmed with emotion.” That’s an example of defining something in cultural terms rather than simply political or geographical ones. (CW 25: 50)

**The Past.** When we are dragged backward in time facing the past, the study of the past is the study of what is directly in front of us. (We’re all bound in Plato’s cave facing the wall like Epimetheus, with the stolen divine fire, the candle of the Lord, burning behind us: hence we’re all in the position of Prometheus bound when he’s put under the world—maybe I could start identifying Plato’s mythology by linking *Protagoras*&*Republic*.) The past is shadowy, but it’s all that’s there, & those engaged in the study of the past are, as much as if they were on barricades in the streets, fighting for their lives & their liberties. (CW 23: 224)

**Pasternak’s Symbolism.** But all the time we are aware that some different principle of unity is holding the book [*Dr. Zhivago*] together, a principle based, as in most poetry, on the imagery, and on the symbolic values attached to that imagery. It is not the picture of the revolution and civil war that organizes the narrative; it is the meaning that the author gives to such figures as the caryatids on a building, to iced rowanberries and lilacs, to the weeping face of the heroine Lara, to a waterfall that is associated with the dragon of a knight-errant romance, to the Siberian forest and its wolves, to the incessant references to the festivals of the Church, especially Christmas and Easter. The author himself says that his hero was a poet interested in the techniques of *symbolisme*, because it is based on the principle “that communion between mortals is immortal, and that the whole of life is symbolic because the whole of it has meaning.” (*Canadian Forum* 38 [December 1958]: 206–7)

**Pathos, Agon, and Anagnorisis.** I think Bach is the great Protestant poet of the Pathos: not only two Passions, but even the B minor centres on the Kyrie and the Crucifixion. Milton and Bunyan are the Protestant poets of the Agon: Blake of the Anagnorisis. I wonder, if the Mass were analyzed from this point of view, what would happen. (CW 25: 166)

**Penelope.** We say that it was easy to see in the final scenes of the Odyssey a Penelopecentered version of the story, in which Penelope is able to make free choice of her suitor. (Or, of course, relatively free: usually, in romances, the heroine’s lover is predestined by a force outside her will, however complete the exercise of that will within those limits may be). Now if Penelope is thought of as the autonomous centre of the action of the poem, her weaving and unweaving of her web would be, not an easily seen-through device for stalling her suitors, but something much more like a spell or charm for calling her destined lover from over the sea. Such a spell or charm could be a part of an earth-centered music which could draw down the moon, if need be, in the manner of other female enchanters. It could be also a part of the music of the spheres, so far as that assumes an earth-centered universe. (CW 15: 222)

**Pepys, Samuel.** Pepys knew perfectly well what he was doing: he wrote a book which he well knew to be an art-form. His motive in doing so is not obvious, because his *genre*, the diary, is not a branch of autobiography, as Evelyn’s is. He was a supreme observer, making himself a visionary, *se faire voyant*, as much as Blake or Rimbaud. And he knew perfectly how effective & oracular the random is: his camera keeps on clicking after he gets in bed with his wife because he knows better than to shut it off. A real & artistic passion for observation in itself with no attempt at a creative follow-through is rare, but it exists. And there’s a riddling, gnomic quality in the photograph absent from the painting. When I try to visualize Pepys I visualize clothes & a cultured life-force. I have a much clearer vision of the man who annoyed Hotspur or Juliet’s Nurse’s husband. I feel that Pepys makes the dead eerie and transplanetary, not our kind of species at all. He does not observe character either: I can’t visualize his wife or my Lord. Even music he talks about as though it were simply a part of his retiring for physic. (CW 8: 29)

**Perdita.** I am now facing my anima, in a spectre-emanation relationship, trying to separate the anima from mother, wife, ex-girlfriend, & fantasy figures. She’s a statue I’d like to make come to life. The Great Work is not, after all, the begetting of a child from this, but the recognition that the child already exists: our Perdita is found. A female statue comes to life, a dead female comes to life also, & the two cycles synchronize. No. Perdita is not the dying & reviving female: that’s Hermione. Perdita is the child who refuses to die. She isn’t born; she’s *found*. End of the Magi’s journey: all the Magi begot Jesus, & yet none of them did. (CW 13: 338–9)

**Permanent Poet.** T.S.Eliot provides an unbreakable anvil to hammer on, like Shakespeare and the Prelude in C# Minor. Besides, he has a special claim on our attention as the first poet of English literature to study at MertonCollege who ever became more notable for anything else. And he is not, of course, hackneyed without good reason. The small volume of his writing keeps its head well above the flood of contemporary literature like an epigram among platitudes, and he has established himself as almost the only living poet whom it is safe to call permanent, which is as close as one can reasonably get to the word *immortal*. This is largely because he is so preeminently readable: of all poets since Keats, while there have been many bigger and bulkier than Eliot, there are none less likely to fbe left unread by posterity. That of itself would do nothing to establish his “greatness,” whatever that means, but it does ensure his lasting significance and importance. (CW 3: 419)

**Permissiveness.** “Permissiveness” as the cause of student unrest & the like. There are three kinds. One is not tormenting & humiliating people but respecting their dignity. One is cowardice, or giving in to a vociferous ego which can be reckless because it doesn’t have to consider the consequences of anything it does. Finally, there is the kind which results from the lack of faith in an ideal society. (CW 13: 125)

**Personal Encounter.**This book [*The Great Code*]expresses my personal encounter with the Bible, as a twentieth-century mind, and at no point does it express the authority of a scholarly consensus. Anyone dissatisfied with such a reader’s contract should try another book. (CW 13: 307–8)

**Personal Truth.** I often have the feeling that my thought is an elaborate rationalization of my own temperament and social attitude, & that its profoundest areas are verbal formulas connecting one prejudice with another. I used to worry about this & feel I ought to become more objective and impersonal & what not. But now I think it’s only what’s true only for me that’s really true. That is, it’s all that gets into the higher area of personal truth, & thereby becomes absolutely or universally true on the flight-of-the-alone-to-the-alone principle. Impersonal truth is only a drop in the ocean of the petty omniscience of a God who hasn’t yet been incarnated. The model of personal truth is the poet’s vision which only the poet can see, and I think I understand more clearly now Blake’s identification of the imaginative and the divine. (CW 9: 207–8)

**Philosophy of History.** For a philosophy of history one has to work with three organic unities, the individual, the historical, and the evolutionary. The first unit is too small, and any attempt to explain history from the hero-idea, like Carlyle’s, becomes chaotic and irresponsible. The evolutionary unit of the species is too large for history, because it is all one movement; hence the progress-theories are also inadequate. Hence there has to be a historical unit in the middle; one double in nature, biological or individual, and at the same time evolutionary to allow for the genuine element of advance. The value of Spengler’s work lies in his having realized and defined the former as the culture: a historical growth subject to the organic laws of maturation and decay. The other element was attacked by Hegel from one side, and by Marx from the other, who failed for complementary reasons, at least as far as this particular problem is concerned. Its unit is not the culture but the Incarnation, which permits of a Christian development beyond Spengler, probably the last heretic of the first rank in the modern world. Spengler’s own thinking, incidentally, owes very little to either Hegel or Marx. (CW 1: 364–5)

**Phony and Pinchbeck Christianity.** Any sensitive person with any accuracy of instinct would, it seems to me, find what the Eaton Memorial Church substitutes for Christianity a pretty phony & pinchbeck thing. Even I, who am not attached to the ceremonial side of religion, would have been a little chagrined at being caught in the Eaton Memorial Assembly Hall by one of my friends, at any rate without a pained expression on my face. I can also see that if I went to the UnitedChurch more regularly I should understand better why people turn Anglican & Catholic. My objection to conversion is not that the church you join is no better than the one you leave, but rather that I feel, for myself, that any coincidence of any church’s service with what I’m looking for would be accidental. (CW 8: 85)

**Piano Practice and Language Learning.** I’d like to put some of the early morning on piano practice, as it’s often difficult to get at the piano later, and it’s the one thing I can’t do at the office. Practice pedal of course if too early. I’d like to build up a memorized repertoire of 18th c. music for this year, starting with the English school, going on to the Italians, then the Germans & finally the French. It’s an advantage not to plan too extensively for piano work. Another piece of daily routine is this unending nightmare of languages. I had thought of German, Italian & Latin for this year [1949]. (CW 8: 52)

**Pictorial and Verbal Reality.**Painting begins in the depiction of physical objects & so appears to be a second-hand copy of nature, but before long the painter drops this & sees only pictorial reality, stretching from a Tintoretto Last Judgment to a Cézanne apple. So literature is an autonomous language of mental comprehension that begins by commenting on a “physical world” or “life” or “reality” outside it, & bigger than it, but ends by transforming the whole of this objective existence into a universe of verbal reality. The feeling that all reality is potentially & not actually verbal should not be confused with the feeling that life is infinitely bigger than literature, the latter being the vulgar notion of the former. Verbal reality is at the circumference of the common field of experience, not at its centre. From the point of view of the verbal universe (Eden) the “real” world is a reservoir of potential unborn themes: in other words a place of seed or Beulah. From the point of view of the “real” world, the verbal universe is unreal & imaginary, a Beulah fairyland. This ambiguity is reflected in Shakespearean comedy. (CW 23: 44)

**Pin-Pricks of Fools.** Well, I suppose all rhetoric lies about everything. That’s because it seeks reconciliation and so tries to eliminate everything that doesn’t fit the kind of thing people who don’t know what they’re saying say I do. I wish I could get over resenting the pin-pricks of fools: things won’t get clear until I do. (CW 6: 644)

**Play.** Wisdom playing before God is an important medieval conception: I don’t know what scholars say about the Hebrew text here. The word is *sachaq*, & it has its apocalyptic sense here & a demonic one in Samuel where it means fight to the death. AV has “rejoice.” Note the connection of medieval “speculum” titles with the analogical habit of mind. Anyway, the AV’s “rejoicing” is a greatly weakened form of the great Vulgate phrase “ludens in orbe terrarum.” (CW 13: 344)

**Plotinus.** I’ve been trying to read Plotinus (in MacKenna) with little success. I don’t mean I can’t get through him, but he doesn’t give me any ideas. The positivistic streak in me is much stronger than I thought—I keep saying this is shit, although I thought temperamentally I was akin to it. I ain’t. However. If MacKenna’s admirable style represents the original, it’s an interesting style: discontinuous, easy-going meditative, question-&-answer rhythm, which is partly addressed to a reader & partly not. It’s an Avatamsaka rhythm too: each tractate is the centre of the system, so that a sufficiently astute disciple could reconstruct the whole system from any one. (CW 23: 286)

**Pocket-Sized Summaries.** I’ve been asked by EmmanuelCollege to do a series of three lectures for their alumni reunion in May of 1990. Passing over the question of whether or not it’s an imposition to dump an assignment of that size on me with five months’ notice, I’d like to make it one of my three-lecture books providing a pocket-sized summary of my *Great Code* and *Words with Power* theses, more particularly the latter, in the way that *The Educated Imagination* was a pocket-sized *Anatomy*. (CW 6: 612–13)

**Poem, the World’s Profoundest.**I am about to write the world’s profoundest poem, with apologies to William James, the only one who has touched my level of genius:

Hogamus, higamus, God is polygynous.

Higamus, hogamus,

Christ was androgynous. (CW 5: 274)

**Poet as Prophet.** Poets and novelists and dramatists, when deeply serious and responsible possessors of vision, are still prophetic: neither they nor their readers may know what Messiah it is that they’re prophesying, and when they suggest one (Nietzsche) they get it grotesquely wrong. But they’re prophets in one sense: they know that they’re far bigger, or are attached to something far bigger, than any ideology, and can’t function in Stalin’s Russia or any other such pseudo-community. (CW 6: 680)

**Poetic Charm.** Aldhelm of Malmesbury constructs a poem in the form of a double acrostic, initial letters, reading down, making an extra hexameter, final letters, reading up, another. Or he will write a sentence of sixteen words of which fifteen begin with “p.” When he’s finished, what has he, a puzzle? Not at all. He has an abraxas, a talisman or charm, and its twisting, grotesque, involved lines imprison a mysterious power. So do the tangled lines and mangled words of the Lindisfarne Gospels. (“Intoxicated with Words”)

**Poetic Greatness.** A poem is a particular selection of universal experience: consequently, the real greatness of a poet is estimated in two ways: by the very general argument which presents the range and scope of his thought and his constructive ability and by the minute analysis of his technique. A critic who has the strength of mind to grapple with the former is generally not afraid to be pedantic about the latter. (CW 3: 435)

**Poetic Language.** Romantics put poetic language “higher” than reason; Freudians put-it “below” in a subconscious; *symbolisme* in France put them side by side, with their backs turned to each other. (CW 6: 602)

**Poetic Justice.** The reason for so much “poetic justice” in romance is not moral but structural. Its structure takes in two worlds: these are not strictly innocence and experience, but an idealized heroic or erotic world and, so to speak, an “idealized” evil world of witches & villains & dragons. The recognition involves a dialectical separation of the two worlds, involving such rituals as: the chasing out of the scapegoat (Braggadocchio in Spenser); the voluntary withdrawal of the melancholy individual (Jaques in Shakespeare); the separation of heroine from her own role as victim. If the ending is tragic, of course, the hero remains in the lower world. (CW 15: 281)

**Poetic Thought.** I’ve said this many times, of course, but still: all that crap about poetry making pseudo-statements in a world of science implies that there is no poetic thought, only conceptual thought. If only people knowing nothing about literature said this it would be bad enough, but it’s literary critics (starting with a 1926 essay by I.A. Richards) who say it. (CW 5: 394)

**Poets, American and Canadian.** Last night I went to a Poetry Conference organized by the Harvard summer school. Ransom, to whom I’d just written a letter, Spender & Viereck spoke. I thought Ransom dull, Spender rather impressive & Viereck brash, noisy, and adolescent & obvious. At about ten o’clock he finally shut up & they began a half-hearted discussion of why poetry wasn’t

“heroic” any more. I could have told them, but nobody asked me. And who should be there but Klein, Frank Scott & Art Smith. So I made a date for lunch. I’d never met Klein before: he’s an orthodox Jew & whenever I’ve been in Montreal it’s always Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur or some other devotional reason for disconnecting his telephone. (CW 8: 435)

Then the poets present read their own stuff. The general effect was solemn, youthful, & a bit owlish. The two Canadians had all the wit, & Klein was very contemptuous of the Americans afterward, but he perhaps forgets how mature he is in comparison with them. I liked young Lowell, a very poor showman, which I thought was all to his credit, and I liked Richard Eberhart better than I expected to. Spender & Marianne Moore & Ransom wouldn’t read. Viereck I thought dull & bad, Coleman, who sat beside me, just dull, John Ciardi was, I think, bad. A man named Wilbur & Theodore Roethke I thought had a bit more on the ball, but in general I thought there was too much romantic whinny & too much straining after profound thought & too little after disciplined speech. They’re confused by the notion that poetry ought to be socially effective or morally elevating, I think. But above all, the reason for the curiously strangled & muffled sound that came from them was the absence of any sense of decisive tonality. The terrific impact of *Captain Carpenter* & of the *Golden Vanity* is due to the presence of the hard, concrete, impersonal form of tragedy in them. And here Spender yesterday was raising the question whether there really was objective form in poetry or not—he rather thought not. (CW 8: 437)

**Political Action.** It may be just the influence of the *Tao Te Ching* I’ve been reading, but it seems to me that slackness, laissez faire in a general sense, expediency & pragmatism, in short *wu wei*, is the hallmark of political action. Action according to principles, dialectic movement, seems to me necessarily religious in nature and perhaps ecclesiastical in direction. Dialectic political action, political action according to principles rather than opinions, seems to me to lead to stagnation & tyranny; & such action is therefore successful in proportion to its malignancy & destructiveness. Ezekiel, Confucius, Justinian & Manu are the other side of the case; or, if not Ezekiel, at any rate Moses. It seems to me too that in modern times the exponent of dialectic political action is Hegel, who achieves his aim by turning ideas into half-ideas in order to sharpen their cutting edge. The obligation to identify oneself with one part of an antithesis is the mark of the beast, the cause of all wars, the death-principle at the heart of all revolutions. (CW 23: 117)

**Political Endorsements.** I have thought about your letter very carefully, and have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it would be better for me not to join your committee of support [for Duff Roblin as leader of the Conservative party of Canada]. I understand very well that the issue is one of having a sufficiently good man as the head of a major party, and has nothing to do with coming out myself in support of the Conservatives. But I doubt whether the public would make this distinction. I also have some reservations about the tendency in Canada, which seems to me too strong already, to follow the Americans in emphasizing the personal qualities of the leader rather than the principles of his party, but I feel that I don’t have the right to take sides in the strategy of a party to which I am not myself committed. I am sure you will understand my reasons, whether you would agree with them or not. (Letter to W.L. Morton, 21 August 1967)

**Political Prediction.**New Years is a dull holiday if one makes one’s festive effort at Christmas, and the news from Korea was bad enough to spoil whatever of that spirit remained. But, if the first half of the century saw the passing of Fascism, the second half may see the passing of Communism. I don’t look for catastrophic war, but for restricted bleeding wars, threats, interdicts, and an attempt on the part of each side to wait for the enemy to blow up through internal contradictions.(CW 8: 542)

**Positive Analogies.** The use of Classical mythology in Christian poetry made the former a positive analogy of the latter. Similarly the poets made Eros a positive analogy of Agape, and poets talking about their Muses made the writing of poems a positive analogy of Eckhart’s theological doctrine of the birth of the Word in the Soul. Erich Heller (Parsifal book) on praise as intransitive verb. (CW 5: 153)

**Possession by Words.** Once, when I was listening to a Mozart symphony, the first movement, and thinking of this complete and utter serenity of spirit, it suddenly came to me that this is the sonata form taking over. Mozart is one of those very rare spirits who can occasionally just lose himself and be taken over. It is same thing that fascinates me, with some work I’m now doing on the Bible––the point at which you pass from possessing words, from being the wise man to the point when the words start possessing you and turn you into a prophet. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Post-Biblical Doctrines.** I wonder if I could establish that everything “Churchy” about the Church comes from something post-Biblical (Harrowing of Hell, St. Anne) or inserted (Trinity) or, in the most crucial places, apocryphal. Change in substance, e.g., is only from the Book of Wisdom. So’s silent night. (CW 13: 237)

**Potential for Creativity.** One diachronic illusion is the democratic election ritual: the pretence that the new leader will begin afresh. Actually, every leader *inherits* a situation; almost everything he can do is prescribed for him. The head of a great power, like the President of the U.S., has a considerable potential power of destruction, but relatively little chance for creativity or innovation. Again, many things are technologically feasible which will not be done without a sufficiently powerful economic or political compulsion to do them: hence the sense of science-fiction unreality in so many gazes into the future. (CW 9: 219)

**Poverty.** When we look into the question of poverty, we find that it is not a question that can be treated in a scientific way. You may, for example, try to define in quantitatively. You may pick a figure out of a hat and say that the poor are those who make less than $2000 a year. But the one thing that is absolutely certain is that whatever you do, those who make just over $2000 a year are going to get a very raw deal. Further, we can understand what disease is, we can give a definition of disease, we know that health is the opposite of disease and that it is a good thing and disease a bad thing. But what is the opposite of poverty? It is obviously not riches. We cannot say that that is a good thing against which poverty is bad. We go into the underdeveloped areas of the world in Asia and Africa or South America, and we find a great deal of poverty there. It is wrong to be complacent about it, to feel that this is what these people want or are used to. And yet at the same time that we see the poverty, we also see many beautiful people there, and we see people with the kind of serenity and wisdom which we do not see in our supermarkets. So we come back to our own society and we wonder about the overtones of this word “poverty.” We approach the outskirts of a large city, the ribbon development with its hot dog stands and used car lots. We look at the bleak hideousness of this, and we wonder if there is not perhaps another type of poverty, a poverty of imagination, a poverty of creativity, and whether by those standards our own civilization is not a miserably squalid civilization. In other words, as soon as we look into the question of poverty, we are raising the question of the use and meaning of words, and we are coming very close to the principle that the real meaning of important words, like “poverty,” is really rooted in our vision of society. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**Prayer.** When somebody asked me what I thought prayer was, I said that it was the only form of self-awareness that did not involve introversion.In other words, it is the attempt to place in the center of one’s experience something which is neither subjective nor objective but like a work of literature, only in a different way.It forms a potential community of vision.And if you are producing anything, whether it is a work of criticism or literature or music, you are at the same time conscious of or at least sensitive to the religious implications of what you are doing.You will think of it as an offering, and the value of what you are doing will depend on the acceptance of that.I don’t know that the activity of prayer really differs in quality from that, though it may in a different context. (“Seeing, Hearing, Praying, Loving”)

You start on the spiritual path as soon as you move from prayer in the context of asking for special favors to Solomon’s prayer for disinterested wisdom or knowledge of the spiritual world [2 Chronicles 1:10]. At that point the next thing you want is to speak the language of that world, without talking about “things unlawful to utter” with Paul [2 Corinthians 12:4]. All gabble belongs to the Tower of Babel. (CW 6: 620–1)

**Presence of God.** The stars in the old construct were thought to be images of the presence of God. After Newton they became images of mechanism, which left the organism on earth the supreme thing we know about in the universe. Science still thinks of nature as a machine without a ghost. God can, Blake said, only operate within a conscious organism: maybe the universe is one, but we can’t see whether it is or not. (CW 6: 683)

**Present Stage.** There is nothing more sterile than over-systemization. Take me, for instance. Samuel Butler says embryos always think their present stage is their final one. Well, who isn’t an embryo? The Blake book was good because when I finally got to writing it I threw everything I had into it quite recklessly. I wrote practically (not quite) as though I would never write another book. I not only exhausted my material but depleted my reserves. Because I now know, thanks to my very subject, that the human mind is inexhaustible if it’s determined to be. As a result I now have my five-book scheme. *But* I must be careful to exhaust all my resources in exactly the same way in my next book (or next two: they’re getting to be such a pair) and just hope to God for the best. (CW 15: 16–17)

**Preserving Canadian Identity.** If you ask, “What is a typical Canadian?” there is no particular answer. I’m not sure that there should be one, but in any case there wasn’t. There is no Canadian life-style from 1867 to the first half of the twentieth century, which differed in many important respects from the American life style. There is a sense of shared social and historical heritage with French Canada, but the same sense of shared heritage in English Canada was largely shared by proxy with the British Commonwealth. After all, if a country is valued mainly for its beaver pelts and its softwood forests and the soldiers that it can supply to other countries’ wars, it can hardly have much of a cultural identity or anything beyond a general feeling of confusion as to why it should exist.This stage of Canadian life––of cultural impoverishment––began to end around the close of the Second World War. It was at that time that Canadian cultural feelings began to emerge but in a pluralistic form. It is not a single cultural entity that emerged but quite a large number. We used to study Canada on Mercator maps in geography, which showed, which show Canada as being at the end of the earth––a large pink spot which extended up into nowhere and vanished into the stars. But in the twentieth century Canada is now in the same position that Switzerland was in in the nineteenth century in Europe. It is surrounded by the world’s great powers––the United States in the south, the Soviet Union in the north, Japan and eventually China on the west, and the Common Market on the east. And like Switzerland, it can preserve its identity only by having many identities. (CW 25: 51)

**Priapism.** The theory of tactile responses to painting comes from the 18th c. Burke––Sublime &

Beautiful. Rococo decadent fussiness, when everyone went around in a vague state of priapism gazing at Boucher. The great painter of nudes was the painter who also made you want to lay that nude.(“1932 Notebook,” 22 October)

**Primary Concerns.** Why was I so fascinated by Frazer? Because he linked mythology with anxiety about the food supply—a primary concern. Why am I fascinated by *The White Goddess*, a wrongheaded book in many ways? Because it links mythology with sexual anxiety, a primary concern. Why did I get so fascinated by that sybil G.R. Levy? Because she linked mythology to shelter & buildings, a primary concern. Food, sex, shelter, *are* the primary concerns, all grouped around God the Father & Nature the Mother. (CW 5: 77)

The point about progress is coming clearer: people who say they believe in progress usually mean technological development, and that’s always spear-headed by weapons of destruction. That’s why a belief in progress is so foul: we sacrifice ourselves to our future, and then it turns out that there isn’t any future: we’re just sacrificing ourselves, period. If anything is Moloch-worship that is. On the other hand, it’s quite true that we always judge the past by the norms of the present: we can’t take the stinker God of the Old Testament when our own norms are so much better behaved. What history does move toward, as my remark about the abstraction of Hegel’s freedom implies, is a growing sense of the primary nature of primary concerns, and along with that the discovery that man is an animal in nature, and as soon as he thinks outside that context he’s in all the unhappyconsciousness crap, loaded down with anxieties and aggressions. Of course the ambiguity of the two natures, the “real” one and the inner paradise, remains: we always say we love nature, not the ferocious predators who animate nature. But if we can’t exactly love sharks we can be curious about them, study their habits, and leave them alone to make their own way in nature, and that’s a kind of love. Anyway, history moves toward the progressively clearer discovery of the utterly obvious: we want to eat, fuck, own, and wiggle. (CW 6: 640)

I think mythology expresses the primary human concerns, and ideology the secondary and derivative ones. It seems to me at the moment that the primary concerns have four main kernels: food, sex, shelter and play. Food expands into a concern with bodily identity; shelter into construction and creation; play is the free energy that work is aimed at. (CW 5: 103)

Why aren’t clothes a primary concern? I suppose they have shelter, sexual and play links. In the Bible their original function was to conceal the genitals after the loss of innocence. (CW 5: 88)

Religion may be an “ultimate” concern, as Tillich says: it can’t be a primary one. We can’t live a day without being concerned about food, but we can live all our lives without being concerned about God, impoverished as such a life would be. (CW 5: 103)

I’m wrong about religion as an ultimate but not a primary concern. Where did I come from and where am I going are primary concerns, even if we don’t believe there are any answers. But if only the social institution answers, the answer is ideological only. Maybe that *is* something we learn about only from literature, but God, the digging & burrowing to get at it! (CW 5: 121–2)

**Primary Sources.** I suppose the terrific teaching load I assumed at the beginning predisposed me to look for structural similarities in primary sources. In any case I put all my time on primary sources: there was no time to read secondary ones. Here a major influence, I think, was Wilson Knight, then at Trinity. There were times when I suspected that Knight didn’t know a Folio from a Quarto text—certainly he didn’t care; he worked entirely with a Globe Shakespeare and a mass of pencilled annotations. Still, when I compare what I got out of *The Wheel of Fire* compared with what I got out of other Shakespeare scholars, I felt there was something to be said for primary sources. I found much of what then passed for “historical” criticism phony, because so many of these historical critics didn’t know anything about the actual history of literature—what they knew, at best, was history outside literature. (CW 25: 36)

**Priority of the Theatrical.** Shakespeare has no precedents for tragedy except Seneca, who may not have written for the stage.*Titus Andronicus* is a very Senecan tragedy: even those who would detest it for its brutality and crude melodrama would have to admit that it was superb theatre.That tells us something important about Shakespeare: that for him the actable and theatrical element comes first, not the qualities we think of as more typical of a major poet. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Prison of the Self.** *Hamlet*: We’re imprisoned *by* what we’ve done, but unless we’ve committed a major crime like Claudius we’re not too crippled by it: we adjust to the gradual narrowing of our abilities and interests.But there’s a deeper imprisonment *in* what we are (“characterological armor” or whatever), and Hamlet is the most impressive example we have in literature of a titanic spirit thrashing around in the prison of what he is. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Private Mythology.**As for Eliot & that “minor mythology” stuff, I’ve learned from Blake that there’s no such thing as a private mythology, or rather, that all mythologies are private to the poet and it’s the critics business to see that they aren’t private to anyone else. The mythology of the Christian Church was doing a bit better when Isaiah saw God in the temple, & when Elijah heard the still small voice, than it ever did when it was able to force millions of people to say they believed it or get burnt alive. The critic proper is to the biographer what law is to history—a spatial crosssection. Besides, it’s the dispossessed mythologies—Jewish & Celtic—the despised & rejected ones, that really get there: I don’t understand Eliot & Arnold on the nose-counting. (CW 8: 346–7)

**Product and Process.** The Aristotelian distinction of form and content refers only to works of literature as products, as completed things. Translating them into a process, what corresponds to form becomes the shaping spirit, and what corresponds to content becomes the sense of otherness, the resistance from an independent material. Wallace Stevens’s imagination and reality express this, up to a point. (CW 15: 295)

**Professional Rhetoric.** I’ve so often been asked: but can’t you do anything creative like writing poetry or fiction? My creative powers, I’ve said, have to do with professional rhetoric, on both sides of myth-metaphor. To carry this farther I’d need a distinction between specific (Biblical) and general kerygma. Though that wouldn’t help if the latter were just inspirational. It would have to be something part of specific kerygma though not its precise context. A lot of kerygma in the Bible is faked anyway: the “still small voice” [1 Kings 19:12], for example. (CW 5: 415)

**Professors.** No, I don’t want to be a professor. Theoretically. In practice I should like it well enough. But there is something about such an eminently cultured occupation that would make me feel as though I were shirking something. A professor is, as I think I have said before, an orchid,—highly cultivated, but no roots in the ground. He deals with a crowd of half-tamed little savages who get no good out of him except intellectual training and, in some cases, the radiation of his personality. He is not a vital and essential force in a community of live people. He is not a worker in the elemental sense of that word. Most professors, to gain a reputation, specialize so intensely in their work that they are cut off even from the undergraduate. These are the pedants. The rest are not so cut off from reality, but they are cut off from life. (CW 1: 52)

**Projecting the Anima.** Ispoke of Jung’s archetypes as existential. I meant that they were the archetypes that emerge during, say, a Jungian analysis as elements of the personality which have been conditioning the social behavior of that personality. That is, when he discovers from Jung what an anima figure is, he realizes that in a man’s experience with women, this inner anima figure gets projected on various people and as a consequence is a conditioning aspect of behavior. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Projection.** Polytheism is projected schizophrenia. That which is projected dissolves into abstractions, thence into an indefinite cycle. Nothing to do but go back home, & collect all the gods again into one personal form. War, the struggle of the brothers, is also projection. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

**Prolonged Peroration.** This morning I got to the Baccalaureate service. . . . I had to play the piano. It wasn’t so bad, even if I was badly out of practice. Harold Young did the sermon, not as well as last time, but acceptably enough: he has some idea what a student is. I thought it went on about seven minutes too long: I have a very exact limit of recipience to sermons, & beyond that limit I curse every sentence that isn’t the last one. It usually sounds as though it were going to be, too, in parsonical oratory—nothing is so hard on the nerves as a prolonged peroration. (CW 8: 307–8)

**Propertied Middle Class.** We went out for a walk along residential streets, seeing the lighted windows against the graying sky. It’s the kind of thing that always fascinates me & always depresses Helen. I guess she thinks of the propertied middle class in terms of its facade, & I tend more to look under the skin—I don’t know. I love the propertied middle class, though not for being that, & never walk along residential streets in Toronto without thinking that it really is a very great civilization. I see it now somewhat as our envious great-grandchildren will. (CW 8: 257–8)

**Prophetic Conceptions of God.** The prophets aren’t inspired about God: their conceptions of God are often unbelievably silly & crude. Haggai’s God sulks because he hasn’t a house, & threatens plagues & famines [1:1–12, 2:6–7, 21–2]. Ezekiel’s God is obsessed with punishment because he’s deeply insecure of his own existence, or at least of his people’s recognition of it. “Then shall they know that I am God.” The significance of what the prophets say is in what the people did to them for saying it. (CW 13: 231)

**Prophetic Fools.** . There are a lot of Biblical references to prophets as fools. Such people form a powerful negative focus in society: John the Baptist retreats into the wilderness and people swarm out to find out why he doesn’t like them. The Classical equivalent of this positive-fool figure is the cynic, the pivotal point of the Menippean satire, with its ramifications into Athenaeus and others. Note that there seems to be no such figure in any of the Platonic dialogues. But already in AngloSaxon literature we have examples of the Solomon-Saturn dialogue, of the type that finally emerges full-blown in Diderot’s *Neveu de Rameau*. The archetype is the mocker of the gods—note how this modulates in the O.T. with Elijah’s ridiculing of Baal and his priests [1 Kings 18]. The thaumaturge figure has a different origin, but, by way of his smith connections, not totally separate. (CW 6: 562) **Prophecy.**Prophecy is the “outsider’s” view of society: it begins in thaumaturgy and culminates in the teaching and healing Messiah. The prophet addresses himself to the question of what we must do, the tropological or moral level. The gospel is the spiritual community united by its faith, faith being essentially the vision of what to do. It’s the leap outside the aesthetic play of wisdom. (CW 6: 514–15)

**Prose and Associative Rhythms.** There aren’t many issues in contemporary critical theory that I haven’t raised & discussed in my own context. My distinction between prose & associative speech is an example: prose is the language of *écriture*, & makes no sense without it. It gets influenced by associative rhythms from oral speech and by rhetorical devices from verse in oratory; but there’s no prose without writing.(CW 5: 75)

**Prose Forms.** Notice the curious American avoidance of the novel: its (American) literary forms are overwhelmingly prose, yet there is no great American novelist except (a doubtful, or rather a significant, exception) Henry James. The others all write tales, romances, anatomies, and confessions. Logically, Joyce’s lyric–epic–drama scheme applied to prose should be confession– anatomy–novel & tale, but there are difficulties in that. For the confession, the subjective epiphany, the models are people like Montaigne, Pepys & a host of Americans including Thomas Wolfe, who apparently develops out of Melville’s *Pierre*. Things like *TristramShandy*, where the hero is not quite the author, are less clear examples. Mill, Carlyle, Newman & other 19th c. thinkers produce more examples. The diary or journal, one of the American staples, is a form of confession. I think American literature has been greatly hampered by its lack of knowledge of the book I’m going to write about prose forms. (CW 15: 64)

**Protestant and Catholic.** The dilemma the Church put modern man into is this: the Catholic position is that the Church contains the Word: the Protestant is that the Word contains the Church. Now the doctrine of a separate authoritative Word—i.e., Bibliolatry—is the first uneasy resting place, & a quite untenable one. The Word in the heart, the Joachimite age of the Spirit, comes next, & the difficulty is to formulate that & avoid the “subjectivity” or “private judgement” rat trap. The only possible way is to point out that the privacy & the innerness of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospels are not subjective but a recreated vision of life, the contemplative vision of charity. This is the city in the garden, the jewel in the lotus. Thus the Scripture forms the kernels or seeds of the total verbal vision, as commandment, parable, aphorism & oracle expand into the containing myths or archetypal *teloi* of law (the social sciences), history, philosophy and (?) art—anyway, certainly prophecy. (CW 15: 163)

**Protestantism.** Protestantism is a wonderful religion: I wish I knew what Tillich meant by his “principle.” It has no real cultural substance. One thinks of Hopkins as a Catholic poet: one doesn’t think of Byron & Shelley & Keats as Protestant poets, even though two of them were buried in the “Protestant cemetery” in Rome. The hidden genius of the faith of the released Word transmuted them into something rich and strange. (CW 5: 444)

**Protestantism, Scottish.** I do not think it desirable for a Protestant minister to pose as a necessary intercessor to salvation, but I do think his education and strength of character should be sufficiently above that of his parishioners for him to be a liberalizing and cultural influence in the community, and that he should know enough of the traditions of the church to maintain its dignity. In questions of ethics, philosophy, and theology he should be an expert. But the Scotchman loves to lay down his theological laws, and so wherever he penetrates, which is all over the place, he originates a solid body of befogged worshippers who insist on putting themselves on the level of the minister in every way. Anyone who agrees with them on all points holds the keys to Paradise. Therefore an intellectually honest minister cannot work with them, and so the Nonconformist minister––the Anglican, of course, is ipso facto hopeless––is usually a mediocrity or a moral coward, and socially a parasite. I do not see why one who refuses to examine his beliefs should not derive them from one who knows what he is talking about. But the organization of the Scottish Kirk, which is a product of the fatal democratizing tendency of the Scotchman, has to answer in large measure for the degradation of ecclesiastical Christianity today. The Scotchman started the custom of making an instinctive response to any religious proposition and on arguing with the minister on terms of easy familiarity. The effect is pernicious.(“1932 Notebook,” 13 June)

**Providence.**One of the difficulties about “Providence” is that it’s not really a religious conception: a compulsive gambler would have such a belief, especially if he won, and a burglar finding a door unlocked might well ascribe it to the benevolence of some descendant of Hermes the thief. (CW 13: 378)

**Prudery.**I remember the *New Yorker*’s account of a play, I think Sean O’Casey’s, where Lillian Russell was billed as a “Young Whore.” Several papers printed it as a “Young Harlot” (more cushion for sensitive moral fundaments in two syllables). One “blushed prettily and whispered ‘A Young Girl Who Has Gone Astray.’” One said “with Miss Russell and the following cast.” This combined with the banning of Freud makes me wonder if we are in for a wave of prudery as a defence against the licentiousness of war. (CW 8: 33)

**Pseudo-Questions.** Is the “I” of the Psalms individual or collective? Are the workers of iniquity political enemies, personal enemies, witches, members of rival sects, or just bad men? Is the reference to the underworld of death or mortal illness metaphorical or actual? These are all pseudoproblems. The Psalms put the “I” into God’s universe, which is not objective for us but is revealed emphatically and where, by the royal metaphor, things cease to be either-or questions. This is the universe of *Spiritual* good and evil, of guardian angels & devils, of a world “on high” & a world below the grave. (CW 13: 336)

**Psychological Pitfalls of Automobile Ownership.** If a man does not own an automobile and is in the least dependent on others who do for his transportation, he would do well to go in debt and buy one for himself. If there is any petty tyranny or arrogance in a nature, the possession of a car will bring it out as nothing else will. This has been noticed in questions of speeding, road hogging and so forth, but the mere passive fact of ownership sets the same psychological trend in evidence. No poet ever waited on a patron, no flunkey on a master, no poor relation on a rich one, more than a pedestrian on a friend who is “going to call on him in his car.”(“1932 Notebook,” 22 April)

**Public Opinion Tyranny.** Stendhal speaks of the despotism of public opinion in small towns & provinces as a tyranny abhorrent to those coming from the “republic of Paris.” Note that the term for those on the revolutionary side was *citoyen*. He says public opinion tyranny is what makes

England & America so gloomy: I don’t know how he accounts for London & New York. (CW 5: 387–8)

**Pure Junk.** My own first job as a literary critic was to try to figure out some of the long, difficult, and symbolic poems of William Blake. And at that time when I began to work there were several dozen books on Blake and several hundred articles about the prophecies, all of them pure junk. There was one good book, and that was it. In other words, the flow of information was really a flow of misinformation, and the trick was to get rid of it and not to absorb it. To the extent that my efforts were original, I think they demonstrated the general principle that any form of originality consists of arresting this kind of flow of information. The original person, whether he is an original poet or an original scientist, is bound to wander by himself, to make sure that he thinks up his own ideas and is not bedeviled with the growing efficiency of information. (“Communication and the Arts”)

**Purgatory.** Apocalyptic literature is a response to persecution, & hence it’s sometimes viciously vengeful, hence the projection of its polarized imagery into an unchanging heaven & hell. The only conception of an after-life that doesn’t identify God with Satan is that of purgatory, a realizing of one’s true nature in a process which is still temporal but leads out of time. That next step is to realize that this abolishes hell, as in the Quartets, & must therefore, sooner or later, abolish heaven (except that another kind of heaven remains as the *telos* of purgatory). The next step is to see that if this is the only notion of an after-life that makes sense, it’s also the only notion of this world that makes sense. Hence Keats’ “vale of soul-making.” Keats’ letters are next to Blake as revelation, I think. (CW 13: 254–5)

**Puritans and Presbyterians.** A Puritan is an individualist and a Protestant armed with Calvinism and logic in full revolt against Catholicism. A Presbyterian is a sectarian armed with a solidified Calvinist creed which transforms the Protestant spirit which gave it birth into a Catholic one.(“1932 Notebook,” 6 May)

**Pynchon, Thomas.** Canadians are slightly paranoid about their identity, which is a good thing. Gravity’s Rainbow suggests that paranoia and the impulse to find (necessarily anthropo-centric) patterns and designs in things are the same phenomenon. That is, perhaps insisting on our identity will actually help to create it. In fact it has. This notion of creative paranoia is a teasing one. It’s of course more obvious in French than in English Canada. In French Canada there has never been the record of real persecution and discrimination that, say, Catalonia or the blacks in the U.S. have had, but they’ve made everything of what there has been.Pynchon says that total non-paranoia, i.e., the ability to view the world without human-related patterns at all, is so detached as to be intolerable. He seems to think in terms of a “counter-force,” a creative movement of design that works against the engineering one.(CW 25: 203)

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**Quaintness.** I was looking at Currier & Ives prints last night & was thinking how time modifies the aesthetic nature of things. In its day those prints, along with Dickens and 19th c. architecture, were vulgar: that is, popular and blowsy. They remained that as long as the “revolt” against that type of civilization lasted. Now they are joining the minor medieval frescoes & 18th c. gimcrackery in the softer lighting of “quaint,” after a short intervening limbo of being just plain corny. In a few more centuries they will begin to take on some of the archaic dignity of the primitive, as the minor medieval frescoes already have done. (CW 25: 10)

**Quaker Meeting.** I wonder if there isn’t a contrast between chatter and inner dialogue, and that the latter is important to preserve. Chatter is (a) mechanical, triggered by the associative mechanisms that psychology has studied from Hartley to Pavlov. And (b) it’s partly repressed, conforming to censorship but full of disguised malice and resentment. The psyche is a Tower of Babel, a structure of pride and dictatorship with a “babble” of voices inside, all unintelligible to each other. Perhaps the ideal is a Quaker meeting, silent until the Spirit speaks from somewhere. (CW 5:

200)

**Quartets.**  Eliot *Quartets* maybe have the answer to my problem about a lower oracular world *below* hell: “descend lower” [*Burnt Norton*, l. 117]. Interesting if Eliot has the feature that blows up the Christian demonizing of the lower world. (CW 6: 688)

**Questions.** I made a silly remark to my Spenser class about not wanting to go to the memorial service for the king [George VI] that I regretted: I must remember that I’m likely to start saying silly things at this time of year, and must watch myself. Particularly with so many student talks coming up. It’s at this time of year too that students begin to get on my nerves. I begin to resent the fact that they don’t read anything and that most of their questions are largely motivated by a desire not to think. It’s an infinitely small vision of what I’ve noted in the Gospels: that the questions asked Jesus were unanswerable because they were so badly motivated that they were really temptations. (CW 8: 309)

I want students to ask questions, but it’s a problem to know how to answer a question which means simply a lack of comprehension. It brings into the focus of a practical problem my own point that the teacher doesn’t answer a question so much as try to raise the questioner’s mental level to where he can outgrow the question. (CW 8: 540)

**Quixote.** With Don Quixote one distinguishes what he really believes in, which is apocalyptic, from what he thinks he believes in, which is quixotic. One is genuine & the other aggressive romance, one the genuine pastoral vision and the other the childish Walter-Mitty fantasy. Much romance is aggressive, stories of invincible heroes; but the *dianoia* of romance in its genuine form is the higher identity in the mystical tradition. (CW 9: 35)

Don Quixote was a brave and intelligent man who went mad by reading romances. The mad

Quixote, of course, was the one who tried to re-actualize the medieval knight-errant notion in a Spain that actually became poor and backward country partly because it tried to hang on to so much of it. The sane Quixote is the Castiglione courtier who has found his vocation, which is to be an adviser to Sancho Panza. This is the Mediterranean island humanity’s really looking for. (CW 15: 234)

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**Rachmaninoff**. I suppose the reason for the popularity of the Prelude in C# minor is that its first three notes make such a hell of a noise that the listener is startled into attention, and, hearing those repeated, listens all the way through. He has not done this before, and he finds the sensation agreeable. But in truth, it is infernal music; a cheap exploitation of romantic music’s most gorgeous key, a complete defeat of counterpoint, subtlety and vitality. It moves by mechanical propulsion, and its clanging open harmonies trample on the unresistant body of living music with a fiendish collocation of howls and bellows. It is music of the machine age, strident, vulgar, powerful and dead. To call it the “Bells of Moscow” is the same grotesque error, resulting in identifying the cheap proletarian agitations of our big city slums, living off the Jewish ghetto philosophy elaborated by Marx and Engels, with the awakening soul of Russia.(“1932 Notebook,” 9 October)

**Ramon Lull.** Perhaps by the tests of the world Lull is a failure. As a philosopher, his dialectic is not the divinely inspired instrument of truth he thought it. As a missionary, he failed to reclaim any part of the Islamic world, even the North Africa from whence Augustine had sprung. As the organizer of an order, his dreams were ignored and faded away; his project for missionary colleges came to nothing; the Christian world rushed forward to its great cataclysm unheeding. He saw his Aristotelian opponents given more authority than ever. He himself gained after death the reputation of a sorcerer, a dabbler in the black art, a disseminator of superstition, a charlatan, and a heretic. But for seventy years he fought without once giving up; when one project for the advancement of his faith came to nothing, he started another, and when he gave his life at the end, he did so with an unalterable conviction that those who fight for the true God are never defeated; that however futile and quixotic they may appear to the world, God is using them in the advancement of his purpose. (CW 3: 233)

**Rational and Reasonable.**I’ve noted Samuel Butler’s claim that the reasonable is the opposite of the rational (“claim” is a silly word): the explanation is in the half-truth setup of dialectic. In the Euclidean world the shortest distance between two points is always a straight line, but we do not live in that world. (CW 5: 316)

**Reader.** I’ve said that the canon of the Bible gives its imagery a context, & that I’m suggesting that all literature is potentially canonical, the Word of creative man telling a single story. I quoted Graves on it in *The Educated Imagination*,and all the selective-tradition people assume it, picking a canon out of literature, and writing the rest off as apocryphal repetition. I want to make the canon big enough to find a place for every genuine piece of writing. I’m not a great 17th c. poet like Milton, or a greatprophetic artist of the 18th > 19th c. like Blake, but it’s possible that I’m a great 20th c. reader, and this is the age of the reader. (CW 5: 376)

Importance of written book: reading is an act of magic (“gramarye”), invoking an absent presence, as Derrida I think says. The presence doesn’t stand behind the absence but in front of it in the reader’s mind, the buried substantial Christ who’s the real king. (CW 13: 364)

I think that in certain most highly concentrated literary forms a communion with a real presence takes place, & one feels that the author is not only a guru but a Tathagata, one going the very same road, i.e., identical with his reader, & not just a “semblable” or “frère.” (CW 15: 70)

**Readership.** Helen’s article [“Canadian Handicrafts Abroad”] in the *Star Weekly* came out today & we went over to the corner to have tea & take a look at it. Nearly a million copies—much wider circulation than anything I write will ever have. Curious how little that means. It occurs to me that the marriage vow, where the man says cherish & protect & the woman honour & obey (or used to) ought to be reversed for a matriarchal society like ours, where the woman affords the man protection in her home in return for unquestioning obedience within it. (CW 8: 124)

**Reading.** Before reading develops, society is dependent on the oral story-teller. But of course he’s a visual focus as well: there is all the body language of gesture and the like: we’re even told that we do a certain amount of unconscious lip-reading. All these things are forms of reading, before the more specific activity generally known as reading makes its appearance. A shepherd making his living in the country may be technically “illiterate,” but he’s constantly reading the signs of the weather and the like, often with uncanny accuracy. The whole conception of nature as the second book of God develops out of this primitive form of reading. All such reading focusses on riddle: what is that? That is, what’s its context and predictability of behavior? All writing that preserves the sense of the visual, like Chinese with its ideograms and its emphasis on calligraphy (merging of writing and drawing) also has an affinity with riddle. (CW 6: 439–40)

I suppose I should follow my own leads on the question of reading. When I was reading the Charles Pseudepigrapha, I was really onto something: reading in that area is easy for me, so it must be good. Reading comparative mythology is easy; modern poetry is pretty fair; fiction I do a lot of resisting with; philosophy I do too, but I think if I had a sense of direction about it I could read it. (CW 13: 130)

**Reading Program.** I should like to systematize my reading more along the lines suggested by the chapters of my Blake book. First, psychology & epistemology; second, metaphysics & theology; third, political science, economics & law; fourth, aesthetics & the criticism of the arts; fifth, comparative religion & anthropology; sixth, history; seventh, biology. The other sciences go on from there. I want to try to get the essential principles of Aristotle through my head in the second group, & then go on to St. Thomas. I think what I’m looking for in one is primarily the archetype. I’ve been reading Dante’s Convivio, & I notice that he says, very calmly & flatly, that the Platonic idea, the Aristotelian telos & the Thomist universal are all the same thing. Also that the pagan gods are vulgarizations of this conception, just as “angels” are vulgarizations of the stellar intelligences. If I could link this up with a psychological archetype I’d be all set. I don’t mean just Jung’s archetypes either: I probably mean several categories of them. (CW 8: 244)

**Reading Music.** I don’t see why music should depend so completely on performance: if there were a decent level of musical education in the country we could read music just as we read books. Someday perhaps the sort of development indicated by dreamy long-winded formless rhapsodists like Mahler & Bax will get to the point at which symphonies will be as long as novels. If so, presumably orchestration would get less elaborate. But there’s no reason why there shouldn’t be incidental music to a novel as well as to a drama: if Wagner had been a musical novelist he might have been a greater artist. And if Socrates is right that rhetoric is a minor art, what becomes of such music as, say, the Chopin A flat Polonaise, op. 53, which is mere demagoguery, as compared with the op. 61 in the same key, which is evidently intended for private reading and meditation rather than performance? Still, I suppose when we get to read music, the romantics of the future will sigh for the good old days when all writing was intended for immediate performance and its rhythm beat time to the hearts of people. (CW 25: 8)

**Reagan, Ronald.** Why do Americans continue to cherish Reagan, including millions of Americans who know he’s an ass? I think they’re bored by their own indifference to the world, but can only focus their minds on a boob-tube leader. (CW 5: 273)

**Real Form of Society.** One of my favorite ideas is that the real form of society is not the Church but the university, which can never become autonomous because it always has to listen to something, & that the clearest visualization of this is Rabelais’ Abbey of Thélème. (CW 8: 86)

**Real King.** The real king is not that man there with a unique authority; the real king is the invisible presence which is the real individuality within a community. The real king in short is the one who is symbolically killed, eaten & drunk in pieces, & then rises again as what’s really individual in each of us. (CW 13: 346)

**Reality and Illusion.** In proportion as subject-object antithesis becomes illusory, the intelligible world connecting them becomes reality, a reality Stevens calls a supreme fiction. Interchange of reality and illusion in, e.g., T*he Tempest*. Viconian principle of *verum factum*, reality in the world we make and not the one we stare at. (CW 6: 545)

The Shakespearean romances reverse the ordinary standards of reality & illusion, but perhaps that distinction is itself the last illusion, reality being an illusion that lasts a little longer. That’s why the theatre, for which nothing exists except the epiphanic, is so central an epitome of life. (CW 13: 323)

There’s a lot of yap now about the point established in my metaphor chapter, that there’s no “reality” behind the words that the words stand for. That’s a metaphorical dilemma: the reality is in front of the words, that is, it’s in the mind of the reader or audience: the mood generated in him or them is what the reality is. Art begins by inverting the usual real-illusory relationship: a drama is an objective illusion generating a subjective reality. After you get past the subject-object antithesis implied in that, you begin to understand what the real metaphorical problem is. We think of reality as out there and of illusion as mostly in here, but if we go into a theatre the illusion is what’s out there and the reality is what’s generated in the mind of the audience. There’s no reality behind, in the wings or the dressing rooms. What applies to a play applies to every text. Nothing behind; everything is recreated by the reader or audience. I’ve just got through saying that, for Christ’s sake. Well, it’s the moral of the metaphor chapter and the what-is-literal-meaning discussion. (CW 13: 363)

**Realms of Reality.** Dante comes into the presence of God and suddenly realizes that the universe is God centred and not Earth centred. It connects with the image of the vortex, the gyre that seems to run through all literature: that you are continually passing from one realm of reality into another one, which is the first one turned inside out. And that’s what happens in the descent theme when it turns into the ascent theme. (“Romance as Secular Scripture’)

**Regulating Music.** Confucius is often quoted as saying that if he had his way he’d begin by regulating music & ceremony. I understand the ceremony part: it’s the assumption, which is thought of as magic but may not be altogether, & incidentally a notion the Taoists have too, that ceremony imitates & thereby harmonizes heaven & earth. But I don’t believe Confucius ever said “regulate music”: if he did he shouldn’t of [sic]. “Regulate by music” would make sense, & would put him in the class of Plato and others who talked as though they understood what music was all about. Except that Plato certainly did want to “regulate music,” which means he knew nothing except his own obsessions. (CW 5: 117)

**Reincarnation.** Speaking of reincarnation, there’s my friend who was told by a sincerely worried Hindu student that because he ate beef the best he could hope for in his next life was to be reborn as a dog. One can’t prove that one is not going to be a dog in one’s next life: nevertheless, the only possible response to such a notion is “the hell with all *that* stuff.” It’s relatively easy for us to do this with Hindu beliefs, but with our own conditioning the same principle holds. The less we believe the better: faith is not a virtue in itself: the principle of Occam’s razor applies to belief as well:

Christian’s burden of sins was not nearly as bad for him as the burden of his beliefs; William James’ principle that we believe as much as we can is another way of stating the doctrine of original sin. (CW 13: 143)

I still wonder about reincarnation and why it seems excluded from the Bible. The other great principle is hereditary succession, the basis of aristocracy and the like: maybe they represent opposed mythological pictures. Choosing the younger son seems to suggest that election, the divine choice, is the essential thing, whatever nature elects, in its genetic code or elsewhere. I still can’t buy the notion of a soul floating around and eventually getting “into” a body which reincarnation seems to involve. (CW 13: 286)

**Religio.** The “religio” element in religion is, or first appears, as an external compulsory bond, acting first through the mysterious power of nature, later through the communal hypnosis of the state. Existentialism has worked out the theory of the recovery of *religio* for the subject. When Hegel, & Marx after him, places the absolute in the subject instead of in the (projected and objectified) conception of “substance,” the history of philosophy takes a fateful turn. And of course myth itself moves from the projected story-of-God form to the revolutionary form (cf. Sorel) of the choice of a line of action. (CW 9: 86–7)

**Religion.**  Religion is the definite and organized attempt to gain an integration of all the faculties of the soul, including the knowledge of the outer world afforded by science, but where science deals with phenomena, religion struggles with thenoumena lying behind them, the forces of absolute reality which we cannot know, but can experience. The religious impulse is as perennial and unbroken as the scientific, and the two run parallel in all ages. (CW 3: 141)

**Religion and Art.** I propose spending the rest of my lifeon various problems connected with religion and art. Now 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. They constitute, in fact, the only reality of existence. So I must turn a deaf ear to the arguments about Communism. I quite recognize the challenge; in a possibly quibbling and dishonest way I recognize the necessity for and importance of Communism. But it just won’t do, not for me. Obviously the world is entering a prodigious change, but the new morality will have to be something better than a rehash of the vague deistic and utilitarian sentimentalism of the very capitalistic system the Communists are most concerned to attack. There will have to be something better, for me, than the Communistic exploiting of emotion by intellect. Atheism is an impossible religious position for me, just as materialism is an impossible philosophical position, and I am unable to solve the problems of religion and art by ignoring the first and distorting the second. Read Blake or go to hell: that’s my message to the modern world. (CW 1: 425–6)

**Religious and Ritualistic Language.** Doubtless a Sumerian or Egyptian of 5000 B.C., engaged in “demotic” activities such as ordering stone for a building, arranging a marriage with prospective inlaws, assessing the amount of tax owed by a farmer, would use the same linguistic distinctions of true and false, reasonable and nonsensical, credible and fantastic, that we use now. But the public and ceremonial language of religion and ritual, and the individually derived public or semipublic language of priest or prophet or poet, has that metaphorical quality of evoking the image that I’m after. (CW 13: 293–4)

**Religious Knowledge.** Victoria College does not “teach religion.” It has courses in Religious Knowledge, which means that religion is taught as an academic subject without reference to any church commitment, just as Political Science is taught elsewhere without reference to making students into Conservatives or Liberals. There is no course in Religious Knowledge at Victoria that could not be taken by, say, a Marxist, a Hindu, a Rosicrucian or a tree-worshipper, without the least violation of his conscience. The notion that the teaching of other subjects at Victoria is given some kind of Nonconformist colouring would be too silly to mention if I had not occasionally run into it. (“Response to the Macpherson Report”)

**Religious Leaders Talk.** Of the great religious teachers, Jesus, Buddha, Socrates, it seems for some reason significant to say that they do not write. They talk, though, and their words are recorded. Philosophers who seem close to an “existential” position seem to give up the continuous prose form in favor of an aphoristic sequence. (CW 15: 77)

**Religious Viciousness.** Islamic people are very confused about the Salman Rushdie business, and of course we get journalists exuding the inevitable bromides about how Islam can’t possibly be really religious: it must be all economic or social. It ain’t: there’s a special viciousness in religion that’s found nowhere else. (CW 6: 661)

**Renaissance Culture.** It is very possible that I shall spend my life revolving around a principle enunciated by Berdyaev and inferable, I think, from Toynbee: that the Middle Ages represented a consolidation of Classical culture and that the permeation of Christianity into culture really began with the Renaissance and Reformation. If so, the inference is that the profoundest depth of human culture is in the age of the great Reformers, Montaigne, Rabelais, Paracelsus, Shakespeare and their contemporaries, before the inevitable entropy set in. (CW 25: 23–4)

**Repentance and Remorse.** More about the distinction between repentance & remorse, which are always confused even by those who insist that they’re distinguishing them. Remorse is the comparison of one’s actual self with an idealized self, of what one actually is with what one naturally might have been. Hence it is a reaction of wounded pride. Repentance is, first, the same dissatisfaction with the actual natural self, but from then on it seeks reality instead of regrets. Writing off the debt of the past (the forgiveness of sins), what powers remain in the present? To write off the debt of the past doesn’t annihilate the consequences of the past: it merely adjusts one to the position from which to meet the present. And so to work. (CW 8: 402)

**Rereading.** Roland Barthes says somewhere that genuine reading starts with rereading, because on a first reading you are apt to see only your own reflection. Reading thus begins with objectification and entering into that verbal object. (CW 5: 63)

**Resurrection.** The resurrection is revealed in the risen *event* or experience. It may be a work of art or a moment of charitable illumination, but it’s the microcosm of the total vision of life that perhaps the mythical framework presents macrocosmically. What rises, as the *Winter’s Tale* shows, is nature herself, or body only. Church my ass: it’s Nature that’s the bride of the risen Christ, the “Earth” of Blake’s Introduction, & I suppose Jerusalem too, if that’s expanded to include Beulah, the married land. *La Jeune Parque*. I suppose the creative or repetition cycle of *Finnegans Wake* is also the *EwigWeibliche* of Goethe. (CW 13: 229)

**Returning Home.** In the epic the point of return home is often mysterious. In the *Odyssey* the hero sleeps in the cave of the nymphs & wakes up in Ithaca. In the *Inferno* the passage through to the other side of the world goes by in half a line. The Argonauts evidently hoisted the Argo somewhere around Moscow& portaged it out to the Baltic. Something of waking up from a dream, of course. It’s Freud’s link with the unfathomable: note how Beethoven pretends to lose his way in sonata forms just before the recapitulation; remember *Lycidas*& the appeal to *tradition* as the poet returns from wandering: in Christianity one dies to return. Conceptual analogues of it should be traced, in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*& elsewhere. (CW 23: 282–3)

**Reuben the Reconciler.** I’ve always distrusted what I call Reuben the Reconciler in thought: the syncretism that “reconciles” Plato & Aristotle or St. Thomas & Marx. I think every great structure of thought or imagination is a universe in itself, identical with & interpenetrating every other, but not similar or harmonizable with any other. Syncretism is Coleridge’s fancy playing with fixities & definites, & it leads to the net of relations, not to the archetypal universal unique. My earlier notebooks, where I wanted to move all the big names in modern literature and thought around like chess pieces, were fanciful in this sense. What I now want to do is pick epiphanies out of them for my own purposes. (CW 9: 39)

**Revelation.** The Bible is revelation to the intellect & deliverance to the will. What it delivers us from is the law, meaning the legal metaphor where God is judge listening attentively to Satan the prosecutor. One is delivered from the law by internalizing it, & the process of internalizing (the imagery) is revelation. (CW 13: 337)

**Reverence for the Animal in Us.** Sir Thomas Browne’s remark about the seventh day means that human art imitates nature which (or who) is the art of God. That won’t do. But the “sabbath” implies the need of a conscious being to objectify his environment, rely on his distancing senses, and postpone the instant gratifications of food & sexual mating. This last links with the dietary laws of the O.T. & the maudlin cult of celibacy that starts with the New. It’s why secondary concerns must exist, though it’s a perversion to make them dominant on the plea that they’re what distinguishes us from mere animals. Unless we go back to the proper reverence for the animal in us that evidently the Magdalenian painters had, we’re sunk–sunk in the deluge. That doesn’t mean we should imitate the shrew, eating three times its own weight every day just to stay alive, or, like contemporary Americans, assume that we have a right to fuck everything with a hole in it. There’s a middle course in such matters. The implications in this entry are quite important: the function of law in sublimating impulse I already have [that is, has already written about], but not the “human” aspect of secondary concern. (CW5: 314–15)

**Revolution and Revisionism.** Two things splashing around in my mind may be relevant: the narrowing of commitment in a revolutionary movement that makes Christianity intolerant to start off with, & Protestantism narrower than Catholicism. The other is the fact that defenders of the revolutionary thinker (and Jesus was one) resist “revisionism” (vide Marx & Freud), & keep going back to his primitive Gospel. (CW 13: 79)

**Revolutions.** Every society today has gone or is about to go through a major revolution: the age of post-revolutionary societies is the reverse of that of the pre-revolutionary ones, very loosely. America, the new found land, is the oldest country in the world to have gone through a revolution;

European countries followed it, with South America; then came the big Asian countries, Russia, China, and Japan, then India, and the last of all, the “Revolt of Islam,” is still ahead of us. The determining factors of such revolutions are economic and political: they can be progressive if the society is lucky, or regressive, as in South America today or South Africa, if it isn’t. (CW 6: 553)

Every country in the world is heading for, or has recently had, a technological revolution. The United States is the world’s oldest country on that score; Europe followed in the nineteenth century, the Communist countries, Russia and China anyway, along with Japan, in the twentieth. The “third world,” including South America, has yet to do it. In my student days we all believed that socialism was the fulfilment of capitalism; now we know it’s only the antithesis of capitalism. Anyway, there’s no doubt about the omnipresent technological revolutions, or that they invariably cause a great deal of restriction on freedom of movement, of thought, and of creativity, whether they mean to or not. Here again genuine culture goes in the opposite direction, towards the pre-revolutionary, which is not towards reaction. (CW 15: 320–1)

**Rhetoric.** Rhetoric has always meant both the moral or persuasive and the tropological or figured. That’s because it’s intermediate between the dialectical and the poetic, deriving its kinetic aspect from one neighbor and its ornamental aspect from the other. Nothing new here, of course, but it’s better to get these things as clear and explicit as possible. (CW 5: 341)

I see two meanings to the word rhetoric. One, it’s an art of persuasion expressed in oratory. Two, it’s the art of disinterested verbal elaboration. One is the opposite of the other, which is why they’ve been traditionally associated. Persuasive rhetoric is, as such, illegitimate in poetics, & enters literature only in (bad) allegory. As Aristotle says, it’s the “counterpart” of dialectic, which latter persuades to act on objective truth. (CW 23: 208)

**Rhyme.** Rhyme is the binding and linking rhythmic force which prevents the energy of movement from relapsing into chaos. (CW 3: 98)

Rhyme is the great external musical symbol in poetry, because it draws attention to the word as pure sound. (CW 3: 68)

**Rhyme and Alliteration.** The comparatively classical and restrained vocabulary of the best medieval poetry is due largely to the fact that it is either southern and has rhyme without much alliteration, or northern and has alliteration without rhyme. Both traditions retain the musical tradition stemming from Cassiodorus, but it is only when alliteration and rhyme come together, as in the Pearl, that the sheer effort of hunting for words produces the evocative effect of poetic diction. (“Intoxicated with Words”)

**Rhythm and Cycle.** Art begins in the perception of rhythm & pattern, & rhythm is derived from the cycle. There are four major cycles in life: the cycle of waking & sleeping (psychological), the cycle of life & death (historical), the cycle of summer & winter (anthropological), the cycle of day & night (theological). These produce in poetry the romance, epic, drama & scripture respectively. The first two are human self-knowledge, & may relate to reason & grace respectively (though the reverse pattern is suggestive); the next two are extroverted, & relate to nature & revelation. (CW 23: 61)

**Riddle.** As soon as you *name* “what it’s about” (in some cases pronounced the name of the riddler) you’ve sprung the trap & escaped from it. Riddle is also the cognate object of read. I read riddles; I don’t “solve” or destroy them. But what’s riddling about them, in this sense, is their egocentricity, their isolation from the rest of literary experience. So the motto of the book is interpenetration, the identity of the one and the many. You don’t reduce the many to one, nor do you keep them many, as you do when you solve or “explicate” them. (CW 9: 326)

**Rigor (Mortis).** Some of my readers say that my approach lacks rigor; I hope it also lacks rigor mortis. (If this goes in the reaction to Kermode goes out: I’m sunk if I start slapping all the mosquitoes. One has to sacrifice one’s blood to insects who need it to fertilize their own wretched little lives; but in this area I should have some control over the itch.) (CW 5: 239)

**Risky Business**. What I’d like to prove is the shape of my third Massey lecture: the dialecticprimary quest, pre-Romantic in statement, containing the cyclical-antithetical one. The drunken boat is the *Luvah* boat; the solar one isn’t ever that close to water. So the Romantic, & therefore postRomantic, construct is the white-goddess & black bride cycle. Naturally this idea is as full of bugs as a slum tenement, but if I crack it the Bampton lectures will be a piece of cake.I’m not sure what holds these metaphors together. “Dialogue” with oneself is a risky business. (Notebook 9)

**Ritual Analogy.** Instudying any major convention or genre of literature, it is always useful to look at the ritual analogy: the Adonis lament in the elegy, the Olympian games in the Pindaric ode, *komos* in comedy, & so on. The twisting of this into a pseudo-historical conception of source & derivation I have already attacked in *Anatomy of Criticism*. The mass is not a “work of art”: the use of the contact senses of smell & taste shows that it’s ritual, an analogy of art, capable of repetition but not of recreation. As repetition, it’s memorial, and as memorial it’s a starting-point of recreation. (CW 9: 277–8)

**Roberts, Charles G.D.** I was so personally put off by Charles G.D. Roberts that it took me some time after his death to get his poetry into focus. But time takes care of everything, especially when it is history as well. (Letter to Irving Massey, 26 May 1986)

**Rococo Music.** I’ve been listening to my rococo record collection. In the 17th–18th centuries the central theme seems to be the conflict of creation & chaos, the virgin leading the monster, the enthroned sun against storm & tempest. Chaos imagery is chromatic, with the minor on its side. Haydn’s *Creation* has the chaos-prelude & the diatonic “Heavens Are Telling.” The Tempest variant is in Bach’s Aeolus cantata; & of course the same archetype makes Orpheus central. Kuhnau on David lashing Saul. Maybe the Beethoven 9th, beginning in tohu wa bohu [chaos and disorder] and ending in the diatonic. *Ode to Joy* is the summing up of this development. Probably a second development starts with Mozart & runs through to about Mahler, but I don’t know what it is. Haydn is a genius of the idyllic unfallen world: it can’t be just accident that the *Creation*& the *Seasons* sum him up. Incidentally, the spinning song in the latter is amazingly sinister: the spinning wheel of the fates. The words superficially cosy & domestic, have Vala overtones he caught, though there’s no passion or fatality as in Schubert’s Goethe song. (CW 23: 295–6)

**Roman Catholicism.** The Roman Catholics have moved closer to Protestantism in the last two or three decades than I would earlier have believed possible, and I suspect that even my central belief that a church mired in history has to be constantly “reformed” by dialogue with a Word of superior authority is one a good many Catholics would accept. Newman was a pint-sized Marxist who thought he believed in a historical process: he actually believed (as in *The Arians of the 4th c*.) in a mythical repetition of events. His “Via Media,” too, was a dim vision of an autonomous Word. (CW 5: 244)

**Romance Raised to Scripture.** If I look at my circle of dramatic genres, I see four zones in it, epiphany, spectacle, mimesis & irony, the middle two being archetype & allegory. These are the Eden, Beulah, Generation & Ulro forms of art. Art begins in Beulah with the romance, & as it ages goes into realism & Generation. There are two ways of hypothesizing: fantasy, or the use of a let’s pretend world, and selection, & these two give us the middle terms. But fantasy as an end in itself lacks a teleological point: this is anagnorisis or revelation (epiphany), the thing revealed being the infinite form of the innocent world, the form of work. The emergence of this from romance raises romance to scripture, & as the real presence of this world is the central teaching of all religions worth anything, we learn about it mostly from religious literature. The arrival at epiphany is the end of the quest, the consummation, a new birth, a marriage & a fertile fuck all identical with the burning of experience. (CW 23: 81–2)

There seem to be two foci of romance, one in action, visibility and community, the other in oracle, solitude and mystery. One is the social dream or ritual & the other the individual dream or oracle. The archetypes are much the same: they approach the waking world in fiction & the divine world in scripture. (CW 23: 96)

**Romanticism: Its Two Stages.** Had Kant been universally accepted, or, rather, had the implications of his teaching been recognized, we should have expected that the whole subsequent philosophical activity would have been positivistic, or simply repetitive. Romanticism is under the influence of the great systematic tradition, and its philosophy is just as much of an art form as that of the preceding age, its very name being a metaphor derived from the arts. It is a sort of appoggiatura, or suspension, of positivism. We, therefore, find two stages in its development—one the idealistic stage of enthusiasm, the other the weary disillusioned stage which turns to positivism.

Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher represent the first stage, in approximately that order; Schopenhauer is the supreme example of the second. (CW 3: 37–8)

**Rome.**Rome is horrible.I wasn’t quite prepared for the national monument to Victor Emmanuel II, but after I’d seen it, it fitted in. Rome built that Colosseum barn, Rome built St. Peter’s with its altar canopy a hundred feet high and its elephantine Cupids in the holy-water basin. . . . Rome produced a long line of tough dictators and brutal army leaders and imbecile Caesars and Mussolini. What Prussia is to Germany, what Scotland is to Britain, that Rome is to Italy—sterile as an egg and proud of it.Romans stare and peer at you hostilely and sulkily in the streets where north Italians are merely interested in you; Rome is full of Germans where Florence is full of English and Americans; Rome gave me a disease that felt like the seven-year itch but is gradually wearing off; Rome stunk; Romans gyp you; Romans break out in a rash of flags the day you arrive and welcome the return of their prodigal son Mussolini. History of Roman art: bastard Etruscan, bastard Greek, stolen Greek, bastard Oriental, bastard North Italian, bastard copies of bastard Greek, bastard Dutch, and various kinds of eclectic bastardy. Its one original art is the circus. By far the most interesting and genuine of the churches was San Clemente, and I liked some of the mosaics—the Cavallinis in Santa Maria Trastevere and the Torritis in Santa Maria Maggiore particularly. The classical museums, the Thermae, the Vatican, the Lateran and the Capitoline being the ones I went to, were huge junk piles, but there were good things in them, and I did get a vague idea of the development of Greek sculpture from superb archaic things like the Ludovisi throne to the Pergamene and Rhodian stuff. As for Rome—well, Rome contributes tons and tons of sarcophagi with the Romans depicted in relief as “conquering the barbarians,” i.e., cutting unarmed men to pieces, making their horses step on women’s faces, burning houses and stabbing yelling children. And a floor mosaic in the Lateran, covered with pictures of broken bones, pieces of asparagus, fish heads and other things that some filthy swine would naturally throw on the floor while he was eating—that’s the kind of idea that could occur only to a Roman. More mosaics from the Baths of Caracalla, with the most brutal subhuman faces on them I have ever seen depicted in art. There are fine things in Rome, or would be if one didn’t have to go to Rome to see them, but some are over-rated. Parts of the Vatican are fine, though one can’t forget that one is in the Vatican, what with all their obscene fig-leaves. St. Peter’s certainly had to be seen to be believed—I knew it was hideous but I didn’t think so big a building could be so pitifully unimpressive. (CW 2: 724–5)

**Roseate Glow.** The intensified reality, along with the equally intensified serenity, of one’s nostalgia and memories of the past come, I should think, largely from our realization at whatever level of consciousness, that we have survived that period. The present moment, where it’s still possible that we might die, has nothing of that roseate glow. I wonder if this has anything to do with the 19th c. practice of dating contemporary novels back several decades. I suppose that when this heightened intensity does come into the present moment, it may often come as an intuition of immortality. (CW 15: 270)

**Rossini, Gioacchino.** Well, well. Rossini had always been to me the type of the detached artist, who simply quit when he’d made enough to retire, instead of flogging his genius every inch of the way, like a true artist. Now I discover a humorous but oddly touching piano piece called “Marche et reminiscences pour mon dernier voyage.” It’s a funeral march, with a very curious second theme marked “frappons.” Then follows snatches of all his operas, from *Tancred* to *William Tell*, with the funeral march interpenetrating them. At the end the “knocking” theme returns, & as the piece resolves on its tonic there are the notes “on ouvre,” and finally “j’y suis,” then “Requiem.” Maybe Shakespeare, too, cared more than I’ve been assuming. (CW 23: 269)

**Rousseau and Diderot.** I’ve been reading Rousseau’s *Confessions* without much pleasure (that dreary paranoid whine is certainly an ancestor of Dostoievsky’s *Notes from Underground*) and Diderot with considerably more. *Rameau’s Nephew* is a dialogue in the Solomon-and-Saturn tradition, one speaker Apollonian & the other, if not Dionysian, at least Lokian. (CW 9: 49)

**Rovescio.** I was reading a Haydn sonata the other day that had a “minuet al rovescio”—an eightbar period leading to the dominant, then you play the eight bars backward, reading the music right to left, and you have the second period leading back to the tonic. It struck me that this “rovescio” stunt has actually succeeded in defining the germinal or radical idea of the whole binary form, which, in pure forms like the Scarlatti sonata, is simply variegated mirror-writing. (CW 8: 565–6)

The binary form in music (A tonic to dominant; B dominant to tonic) is really based on the mirror principle, as the stunt known as “rovescio” makes clear (in e.g. a Haydn minuet). (CW 23: 269)

**Royal Crucifixion.** Myth is a story, a word originally identical with history but now distinguished from it. It’s a story which is both historical and anti-historical (i.e., didn’t happen). In totality it’s counterhistorical: it reverses the slithering movement of time and *confronts*. The Crucifixion is a myth: whether Jesus was crucified or not, many other people were, and Jesus was in every one of them. Hence the royal Crucifixion, the individual one that stands for all others, stays in front of us: this is what you are, so far as what you are is the summation of what you’ve done. (CW 5: 3)

**Royal Metaphor.** The royal metaphor is the take-off point for the cyropaedic theory of education, found in China as well as the West: the king is the model for education because he’s a microcosm of the community. (CW 13: 335)

The royal metaphor is the germ of the concept (*Begriff*) which unites the subject & object. Nature is otherness; the individual is oneself, the body politic is potentially both, but only the divine king is the real germ. (CW 13: 338)

**Rule of Charity.** Milton’s rule of charity is the only way of distinguishing belief from anxieties, the charter of freedom from the rationalization of bondage. It’s also the only moral standard for literature, as well as the standard for education, or imaginative as distinct from social mythology. (CW 9: 54)

**Ruling and Providing Metaphors.** Lowrie, the translator of Kierkegaard, says that English needs a distinction between a providence that rules and a providence that provides. All metaphors of God as sovereign, ruler, lord, master, king, all relate to the unity of the spiritual “kingdom” which is not of this world, and has a different hierarchy if it has any. As Job found, God doesn’t rule this world: Satan does, and what we get is at most a series of angels to wrestle with. The *provision* of providence is different: that’s the ministry of angels, or manifestations of God: it comes *from* God, but may come *through* anyone, including departed spirits. I suppose a prophet is a talking angel; there are prophetic figures like Soren Kierkegaard, but they often allow conceptual or lower-rhetorical idioms to usurp the function of the kerygmatic. (CW 5: 202)

**Ruskin, John.** Ruskin on ornament & imitation. One sees the design in things, geometrical relationships, the voids between the stars. It’s iconoclastic, stresses the ear (music is the most “ornamental” of arts, but literature is primarily ornamental too), & goes with the denial of incarnation. The other sees *presence* inthings. (CW 13: 206)

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**Sacred Books.** The Bible is a work in which authorship counts for very little & editing & redacting & glossing & conflating & expurgating a great deal. Because of this it’s also a *translatable* book, in contrast to the Koran, which is so dependent on Arabic that the Arabic language has had to go everywhere Islam does. The Koran seems to me a simple, logical, & totally inadequate conception of a sacred book. (CW 13: 84–5)

**Sacrifice.** There are many motives in primitive sacrifice: communion, propitiation, bribery, feeding of the god, establishment of a blood bond, reinforcing the efficacy of a curse, obtaining of an oracle, transferring of a disease to an animal, preserving a newly built house, and so on: but all of these fall under the two fundamental categories of communion and gift, or an application of either idea. (CW 3: 114)

**Satire.** Satire is an intellectual conception of society, & deals with pedants & bigots & cranks, & so requires a norm to bounce them off of, so to speak. It usually implies a low norm, or commonplace conventional person, & a high norm, or genuinely detached conventional person. Gulliver & Higgs are low norms: it isn’t Swift’s moral to say we should all be like Gulliver. The commonplace conventional is strong by virtue of his common-sense attitude, but is involved in the absurdity of the conventions themselves. But he & the absurd world reflect one another, like the normal & green worlds in Shakespeare, & the satiric resolution comes out of their interpenetration. Similarly with the Alice books, though that’s the pure comedy pattern rather than the satiric one. I must work on the relationship of comic & satiric resolutions from this point of view: my old “parabasis” problem. In Swift the high norm comes out in things like the humanity of the king of Brobdingnag: the

Houyhnhnms, however, are intended to represent the fact that the high norm is unattainable. In

Erewhon the low norm is Higgs & the high one the high Ydgrunites, people with an attitude like Montaigne’s. Butler of course developed this into his gospel of worldly wisdom. (CW 8: 158)

**Saying Nothing.** All the arts are speechless: they say nothing, but merely show it forth. This is obvious in painting & music, & will need a little reassuring blather to demonstrate in literature. Poem *qua* poem says nothing. The author may be nervous about this & insist on saying something, but this is always an impurity in the art, & can be disregarded or overruled by the critic, whose axiom must be, not that the poet doesn’t know what he’s saying, but that he can’t say what he knows. (CW 23: 52)

**Scandinavian Anabasis.** Under the pressure of cheap immigrant Latin, Celt, and Slav, the Nordics are retreating to their mountain fortresses. Hence the rise of Scandinavia, particularly in America. Sandburg, for instance, and in another sphere Lindbergh. The American ideal of beauty is Greta Garbo, strident, angular, and Swedish. All other actresses strive to make themselves look like her and become beautiful insofar as they succeed. I certainly think the welcome given Lindbergh was not altogether on account of his having flown across the Atlantic, which had been done before often enough. The point was that he was an idol as well as a hero; a statuesque figure.(“1932 Notebook,” 7 December)

**Scapegoat Ritual.** A rite doesn’t mean anything: it says something, & we can understand what it says if we know the language, & we all do know the language in spite of trying to pretend we don’t. Anthropologists get in silly stage frights over this: they assure us that the “primitive mind” is utterly different from ours: he doesn’t know the abstract, the uniformity or predictability of nature (the hell he doesn’t: magic knows that) or the subject-object distinction: when he drives out a scapegoat he shows he thinks of sins as material substances, yet he can’t conceive “substance” or “sin” & about all one can confidently say about his mental processes is that they’re pretty confused. But it’s absurd to pretend that our minds are dominated by artificial conventions of thought. Anyone who has sat in a group cursing an absentee & feeling a warm cosy glow by doing so knows what a scapegoat is perfectly well: we’d find we know the language all right, if we’d just let our imaginations go. (CW 20: 152)

**Schematic Book.** I have always wanted to write a book that will be schematic in form as well as in content. The original version of *Fearful Symmetry* had a hundred sections. Eros: twenty-eight sections, the lunar number of the cycle. Logos: twenty-two sections, the last one, corresponding to the Fool in the Tarot pack, dealing with the theme of redemptive descent. Adonis: twenty-eight sections again, and then Thanatos, twenty-two sections, with the escape theme the last one. Only, of course, assimilated to the two patterns in the Gospel: the Incarnation descent and Ascension return to & from Generation; the Harrowing of Hell descent & Resurrection return to & from Ulro. (CW 9: 130)

On the schematizing of this book: a certain number of loci or topoi, whether 100 or not, would be useful in classifying notes, but apart from that I should let the book grow as my other books do & then see if a schematic division fits. There has to be a good deal of introduction, for one thing, and an immense number of things cluster around the points of epiphany & demonic epiphany. I only think of schematization because all my ideas about this book seem to turn that way. Preludes in all the keys, e.g. The schematizing of Dante is solemn, but the over-designing of a detective story is amusing, & Yeats’s *Vision* comes somewhere between. (CW 9: 132)

All my critical career has been haunted by the possibility of working out a schematology, i.e., a grammar of poetic language. I don’t mean here just the stuff in *Fearful Symmetry*&*Anatomy of Criticism*& elsewhere, but the kind of diagrammatic basis of poetry that haunts the occultists & others. Whenever I finish a big job I seem to return to this. Right now, Poe’s *Eureka* is turning up on my agenda again, and I’m beginning to think it’s the time for reading Boehme. In other words, once again I have a hope reviving of making precise & detailed suggestions about—let’s say the diagrammatic basis of schematology. (CW 9: 212)

If I get a schematic device that really works it might drain off a lot of silly obsessions & compulsions that waste my time & mental energy. (CW 13: 135)

**Schleiermacher.** The underlying opposition of *Natur* and *Geist* remains, for Schleiermacher. Reason may conquer *Natur*, but that is all. The way out is to recognize that man’s nature is not by any means exhausted in his reasoning faculty, and there is something in him which lies deeper, which is far older, and constitutes his real essence. This faculty of feeling gives us ideas which transcend experience. It is true that these ideas have only a symbolic value. But if symbolism is present, there must be a reality outside all possible experience of which it forms a mirage. This is, of course, that unknowable force which is called God, will, or time, depending on the attitude. (CW 3: 45)

**Scholar’s Thesis.** Even the biggest book is fragmentary: to finish anything, you have to cut your losses. Nobody ever writes his dream book, like Coleridge’s treatise on the Logos. That’s why we make scholars finish a thesis first, that is, a book which, almost by definition, nobody wants to write or to read, to show how closely the reproductive & excretory systems are connected. (CW 15: 79)

**Scholastic Stick.** While Shakespeare was in effect what I mean by a Protestant, he can hardly have been a 16th c. Protestant, as that creed merely picked up the Scotist scholastic stick of the will to beat reason & nature with, & so deserted its discovery of the Word. The triumph of reason & nature in the 17th c. was partly due to the defeat suffered by sense experience at the hands of the new astronomy (with a consequent loss of prestige to vision) which shifted the conception of reality to the mathematical order. (CW 20: 142)

**Schools of Criticism.** Criticism breaks up into schools & isms & other consequences of nobody’s knowing very clearly what they’re talking about. The schools are not legitimate divisions of labor, like linguistics or the history of ideas. They are seldom genuine schools: I have been lumped with Miss Maud Bodkin, whose book I have read with interest, but whom as a critic I resemble about as closely as I resemble the late Sarah Bernhardt. (CW 9: 94–5)

**Science and Sir Thomas Browne.** The fate of Sir Thomas Browne, sandwiched between medieval fable and the revolutionary Royal Society, is that of all liberals. Like modern Christology. There is a theoretical conservative limit of literal truth in all four gospels and a scientific limit which reduces every word in them to myth and symbol. Between these are the liberals, trying to show that Mark is “more historical” than John, working on the will to believe historical truth, yet with a scientific or quasi scientific attitude which, being dependent on that basis, is cautiously controlled. That is Browne’s relation to the Royal Society––really interested in science only for its literary or symbolic value; like the medieval bestiaries he adopts a quasi-scientific attitude of enquiry and adoption of reputable authority. It is not his attitude but his interest, or subject matter, that is unscientific. Thus while the medieval scholars were interested in crocodile tears because they were an allegory of hypocrisy, Browne reads much the same set of authorities to see whether a crocodile has ever been known to cough, his real interest being that coughing symbolizes some difference between human and animal natures. The attitude is quasi-scientific, the interest away from science. (“1932 Notebook,” 19 November)

**Science Fiction.** I get puzzled at what a bind science fiction seems to be in. Roger Zelazny’s Amber books turn on a Platonic real world (Amber) and a number of shadow worlds thrown by it, of which our Earth is one. They go on different time-schedules, natch. But the real world is just the old revived chivalric world of Eddison again: nothing in it we haven’t already had ad nauseam in previous romance. Eddison, by the way, says his world is on Mercury, but in a few pages we’re reading about the moon: there’s no attempt to persuade us we’re on a different planet, or anywhere except in the author’s fantasy. Zelazny has his patter about different levels of time and reality, but at the centre of it is, as I’ve said, just the same bloody old chivalric wet dream. So I suppose other retellings of older myths, such as Evangeline Walton’s, would turn out the same way. I started *Dune* and a couple of Asimov books: what they recreated wasn’t strictly the chivalric pattern, but neither was there any sense of discovery whatever. I’ll go on looking, but cautiously: I can’t waste time, and they’re all pre-Quixote dreams, not that I think a neo-Quixote is the answer either. (CW 6: 608)

I’ve been looking at three “science fiction” stories by John Taine. I read better stuff in *The Boy’s Own Paper* at the age of nine, but it isn’t their merits that interest me. They’re all elementary displacements of golden age, fall & flood (earthquake in him) archetypes. Wonder if all science fiction is. (CW 9: 46)

**Science of Criticism?**I’m giving up the “science” bit in *Anatomy of Criticism*: it’s impossible to explain to this generation of critics what I mean. I never did have the analogy of the physical sciences in mind: the model was always social science, man studying himself. What I thought of was a merging of criticism with semiotics and linguistics. When critics keep saying that there can’t be a science of criticism, what they’re really saying is “I can’t and won’t write this kind of criticism,” and I can’t say they’re wrong because I can’t & won’t write it myself. People will write it some day, and I thought it might be a good thing to alert the critics of the 50’s to the ultimate end of what they were actually doing. But if it’s just a prophecy with no present practical use, the hell with it. (CW 5: 85) **Sci-Fi Trilogies and Kook Books.**There are two literary genres that have been interesting me lately. One is the science-fiction trilogy (that is, it’s usually the creation of a world, with a story that occupies three volumes). Examples are Asimov’s *Foundation*, Herbert’s *Dune*, Zelazny’s Amber world, Farmer’s “Riverrun” books (not up to the others, in my view), Ursula LeGuin’s *Earthsea*, and a number of others. They derive, of course, from the huge success of the Tolkien trilogy, and the blurbs routinely compare them to Tolkien. But the Eddison series was written before Tolkien, to say nothing of the Morris ends-of-the earth series.

These romances all feature adventure, which means conflict, which means fighting. What’s striking about them is that, no matter how much futuristic hardware they include, the fighting is archaic: duelling with at least the equivalent of swords. The “villainous saltpetre” [*Henry IV*, *pt. 1*, 1.3.60] complex is still at work in them: the governments also are archaic, emperors with plotters and bureaucrats, assassinations, sometimes magicians. All this is part of the “return” to romance, and eventually myth, that I predicted in the *Anatomy*. What puzzles me is its predominance over genuinely new treatments of parallel universes and the like. We’re in a sort of neo-Ariosto period.

The other genre is the one I call the kook book, the speculative survey of third-force psychology and the like. Those are often a fruitful source of *adagia*. One of them quotes

Schroedinger as saying that consciousness is a singular whose plural is unknown, a remark I used in a sermon. *Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati,* by Robert Anton Wilson, is a typical kook book. *Powers of Mind*, by Adam Smith, is a journalistic writeup of what he calls the “consciousness circuit,” and a very lively book it is. *The Morning of the Magicians*, by Pauwels and Bergier, is another. Such books shade off through Merejkowski’s *Atlantis* and Buckminster Fuller to Jung & Eliade, who of course aren’t kooks, but put together some of their patterns. (CW 13: 366–7)

**The Scotch.** A Scotchman blowing at a bag-pipe with great earnestness and concentration, and producing nothing but a dispirited sterile wailing squeal, like a hungry shoat or a sick banshee, seems to me the profoundest symbol of Scotland I know. All the red-faced humorless energy and superfluous wind that went into their forgotten and ferocious theologies, and no permanent result but their shrill squeaking poetry that sounds like a degenerate piccolo on top of the English orchestra. Now how much Scotch poetry have I read?Burns, of course. All that dog-trot verse about whisky and whores and preachers and democracy and mice and lice and the devil. What’s the rest of Scotch poetry about? Sheep, mostly, I think. Bleat. Baa. (CW 1: 466–7)

**Scott’s Novels as Counter-Delirium.** When I talked to the doctors at Mt. Sinai I found myself improvising a thesis I didn’t understand at the time [ref. to Frye’s “Literature as Therapy”]. I said the sympathies and antipathies in nature that underlay Galenic medicine don’t exist as that, but similar forces may exist in the mind. I thought of mother after a post-parturitional disease following Vera’s birth: she had what sounded (ironic for a woman who never touched a drop of alcohol in her life) just like delirium tremens. She said that reading Scott’s novels, dropped on her by my grandfather, brought her round. Scott in those days was the acme of serious secular reading. What I felt was that the plots of formulaic fiction conventions could act as a sort of counter-delirium. Similarly the Old Testament God may be a counter delirium to a nation trampled on by foreigners. I know how vague this sounds, but there’s something that may emerge. (CW 6: 673–4)

**Second-Phase Writing.**Just as poetry is a recreation of the first phase of language, so there’s a slight but significant body of writing, connected with what I’ve called the anatomy, which recreates the second. This is the writing that explores the metaphorical and diagrammatic bases of secondphase writing, and so turns its constructs into a kind of metaphorical game. The word game is linked to the fact that its centre of gravity is that mysterious area I’ve talked so much about, where the oracular and witty seem different aspects of the same thing. Boehme is one of the greatest writers in this tradition, and the one that impinges most closely on the response to the Bible. Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* is a very typical example; others are Poe’s *Eureka*, Butler’s *Life and Habit*, Lawrence’s *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. It’s really allied to the oratorical tradition, I suppose; it clearly has links with occultism, which is essentially a schematic way of thinking about nature, and so is closer to a linguistic basis. (CW 13: 301)

**Second-Rate Literature.** Recently I had to read *Lord Jim*, *The Caine Mutiny*&*The Ship of Fools*, to advise an audiovisual company. As always, my approach was through *anagnorisis*. With the Wouk & Porter this meant simply recognition, seeing certain things done. With the Conrad, which of course I had often read before, it also meant discovery. In other words I do have a value-system, whatever my critics say. The Wouk & Porter are second-rate, which means they’re damn good but not quite first-rate. Second-rate literature is whatever I can’t *learn* from. At the same time I have a curious compulsion to read detective stories. I don’t know why: it may have something to do with organizing my dreams. (CW 9: 325)

**Second Self.** I’ve often said that a man’s religion is defined by what he wants to identify himself with. I was speaking in social terms, but what I most *want* to identify myself with is my own second self, the kind of person I wish I could be, desiring this man’s art & that man’s scope. There are two levels of this. One is the straight reincarnation one—what would I do differently if I could do it over again, the same situation but with the present perspective? This is the bull-in-the-ring-for-thesecond-time situation, where the bull could kill any toreador. (Note that this isn’t exactly reincarnation, because the shadow of the dial would move back to 1912 again. (CW 9: 293)

**Secular Monastery.**Joachim of Floris has a hint of an order of things in which the monastery takes over the church & the world. That is the expanded secular monastery I want: I want the grace of Castiglione as well as the grace of Luther, a graceful as well as a gracious God, and I want all men & women to enter the Abbey of Theleme where instead of poverty, chastity and obedience they will find richness, love and *fay ce que vouldras*; for what the Bodhisattva wills to do is good. (CW 13: 17)

**Secularism.** My reason for spending all that space on so foolish a book [William Buckley’s *God and Man at Yale*]is that it’s an example of the fact that Christianity has been alien to American culture since the Revolution, in the sense that the roots of American secularism are in the Constitution. This bird, like all of his stripe, deals not in lies, but in half-truths. It *is* true that the universities are full of fanatical secularist bigotswho have projected their childhood resentments on established religion, and who, under the pretext of “waking up the student,” “shaking him out of his complacency,” and the like, do their best to convert him to the same kind of dogmatism. Christians have little defence against this demonic zeal for souls, because they are committed to charity, and cannot smear & caricature their opponents in the way that their opponents smear and caricature them. The real objection to such people is not that they do not say they believe what some people want them to believe, but simply that they are badly educated and intellectually dishonest. And their effectiveness is in their immaturity, because students are immature. (CW 8: 578)

**Seeds.** Myths are seeds: the kerygmatic ones are the ones that grow out of imaginative possibilities and become part of one’s post-genetic code. This is what Jesus meant by his faith & grain of mustard seed. I think even Paul’s dying seed sprouts into kerygma, or in response to it. (CW 5: 301) **Self-Knowledge and Illusion.** The eiron role, or making oneself small, is the foundation of all existence, not merely social courtesy. I am a much better person to others than I am to myself: to myself I am a rather poor creature. What I am to myself tends in the direction of what in an omniscient mind would be the vision of justice. Ultimately I am nothing at all, which is what Buddhists mean by saying that things have no ego-substance. Immediately, I am a certain capacity for being remade, which is what I really want as distinct from what I think I want. As the latter, selfknowledge soaked in illusion, I would survive death only as a neurotic, whimpering, craving ghost, wanting to be “understood.” The vision of others is also of course full of illusion, but it tends in the direction of what in an omniscient mind would be a vision of mercy. One remakes oneself, or tries to, for God’s eyes alone: my social reputation is pure accident, like birth in the aristocracy. Still, here as elsewhere reality & illusion are turned inside out: the soul I am trying to save is more clearly revealed by what I seem to be to others than by what I wake up with in the morning. The instinct to make an obituary eulogistic is a sound one. (CW 9: 59)

**Seminars.** The sunshine encouraged me to stay down for a semi-official staff “colloquium,” as it was called; “cackloquium,” as I called it in my date pad. Joe Fisher’s idea. I honestly don’t know what the hell gets into Joe some times. All that high-priced help kept down till late in the afternoon spending over an hour to talk about—what do you suppose? The “seminar method” of teaching as opposed to lectures! Of course I’ve always known that Joe was the kind of man who would stop you on the street to tell you that he’d just discovered a wonderful little magazine called the *Reader’s Digest* that gives you the cream of current periodical reading. But really! Well, we slugged through it, everybody speaking in turn. We demonstrated the fact that every lecture was as much a seminar as the number of students, the ignorance and immaturity of students, the curriculum, the examination, and the physical shape of the room permitted. Only towards the end did the fact that students hate seminars because they can’t take notes except when the professor speaks even emerge, much less any appreciation of the fact that students have a right to the lecture, & the lecturer similarly has a right to talk. Jessie Macpherson said that. John Irving mentioned the great expense of the “preceptorial” system introduced by Woodrow Wilson into Princeton, & Archie Hare neatly punctured what point there would have been to that by saying that when *he* was in Princeton he heard preceptorials over a partition, and there was the lecturer yacking away the whole time just as he does in a classroom. (CW 8: 538–9)

**Serenity.** Ken MacLean took us into one of the most beautiful modern churches I’ve even seen. A little Catholic parish church dedicated to St. Thomas More, with clear glass windows & designs etched on them. All the furnishings (I especially noted the chandeliers) showed an extraordinarily imaginative use of copper & aluminum & chromium, but there was nothing freakish or selfconscious about it—the whole effect was completely serene. I suppose the great appeal of

Catholicism in the States today has a lot to do with the sense that the degenerate pseudo-Protestants who ought to be leading the country’s culture are shaking their nerves to pieces with indiscriminate drinking and fucking and chattering. (CW 8: 442)

**Sex Symbolism**. The town is masculine, the country feminine. The constant copulation of agriculture with industry makes for fertility. But masculinity is cut off by the root upon the advent of the metropolis, and the fertilizing male disappears. Hence our contemporary economic system. It consists of hysterical and uncontrolled energy, saving time without saving it for anything, saving money like a miser and spending it like a nabob, of wild Utopian dreams about eternal prosperity, and, arriving at the breaking point, comes collapse, a point of exhaustion and disillusionment. In other words, it is the purest masturbation. Our wars are conducted on exactly the same organic principle, and are hence very difficult to shake off. Pacifists, like the better nature of an auto eroticist, are listened to with respect in peace times and silenced furiously in war. This sex suicide manifests itself in many other fields as well, and this phallic vision of modern war is probably the reason for its rhythmic fifty year recurrence.(“1932 Notebook,” 15 May)

**Shadow.** To be born is to acquire a shadow: this may be the mortal part of oneself, the Narcissus reflection of what one really is. Or it may be projected as the enemy, a personal fate, with whomone is identified because he’s my death or I’m his. Enemy or opponent within: crude in Jekyll & Hyde; subtler in Henry James’s *The Jolly Corner*. At death one enters a ship: either one is saved by, and as, the ship (ark), or one sinks into the sea & identifies with the watery reflection. (CW 9: 115)

**Shakespeare.** One would have thought he’d know how good he was, but he seems never to have read a Quarto proof, and left two of his associates to go through a long, tedious, complex process of clearing copyrights and the like for all his plays (except *Pericles* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*).Nor does he seem to have complained when plays like *A Yorkshire Tragedy* were ascribed to him. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects”)

I think Shakespeare dreamed his plays: I find no evidence that he did anything but hold the nozzle of the hose, so to speak. I picture him as vaguely bewildered & irritated by his own genius, perhaps frightened by it into comporting his conscious life in a deliberately trivial manner. He just didn’t give a damn: all speculation about his personality breaks down on that central point, and his inscrutability is a major source of his eternal fascination. But he leaves the critic absolutely free to do as he likes, & the editor too. (CW 8: 59)

Another waste of time is the search for Shakespeare “the Man”: the attempt to get around the obvious fact that Shakespeare was not a personality but a series of personae, & never drops the mask the Baconians say covers his face in the Droeshout engraving. Hence imaginary biographies which postulate a period of depression & gloom during the tragedies & “problem” comedies. Personally, if I had just finished a play as good as *Lear* or *Macbeth*, my mood would be one of buoyant exhilaration combined with an exquisite sense of relaxed fatigue, & while I can hardly project this on Shakespeare, I think it safer criticism to regard the tragic period in terms of what the requirements of his dramatic explorations then forced on him, instead of in terms of how he felt, which we can’t demonstrate as we can the other. (CW 20: 135–6)

**Shakespeare and Aristophanes.** In Shakespeare the drama is a completely objective form, & Shakespeare’s personality, as I shall insist on showing, has no spillover into linear sequence. In contrast, Aristophanes is the least objective of writers, puts his personal opinions on every subject into every line of his plays, halts the action to deliver a parabasis-harangue, generally presents himself as his play. Yet the contrast is too complete not to be illusory: still, I’m glad Shakespeare didn’t know Aristophanes. (CW 20: 119)

**Shape of Autos.** When automobiles began, their shape was that of the old buggy, & it’s taken them some time to evolve away from it. They aren’t yet at their proper shape, but are getting there. (CW 8: 154)

**Shaw.** The family here has all of Shaw’s plays in one volume and I have read six since Wednesday.

I read all of Shaw at fifteen and he turned me from a precocious child into an adolescent fool.

Therefore he has had far more influence on me than any other writer. Re-read in the light of Spengler he is more illuminating, of course. (CW 1: 98)

**Shaw and Butler.** Shaw was right about the prophetic power of Samuel Butler as a writer, though I think he vulgarized Butler’s evolutionary views. If there’s anything to be said for my distinction between irony and satire, Shaw was a satirist with too little sense of irony, and Butler an ironist with too little sense of satire. Irony is the consciousness of another aspect to what is said, including what one is saying oneself; satire is the consciousness of the monstrous or the grotesque, or, more simply, of the absurd. (CW 15: 341)

**Showing Forth vs. Talking.** A desire on the part of the artist to say something instead of showing forth something means that the main current of energy in the age is critical. The primary aim of the novelist is to tell a story, a creatively autonomous impulse; if he starts by wanting to demonstrate a point that says something, he is a masquerading critic. Truth is beauty comes as a shock: Keats is talking. Hence Mill’s distinction in his fine essay between the heard & the overheard. My job is to disentangle posterior criticism from a mass of other things, including lower criticism, & give it some shape & point. (CW 23: 54)

**Sidney and Shelley.** I did a public lecture for Cornell [Spring 1968] that came off fairly well, but (it’s really a because, not a but) it restated a lot of things I’ve already thought about. It turned on the two defences by Sidney & Shelley. Both tell us that it isn’t what poetry says but what it illustrates or shows forth that’s its real meaning. Sidney’s conception of this real meaning is based on allegory (i.e. it’s representational) and Shelley’s is based on archetypal framework. In the latter mythical & logical confront, but myth doesn’t reflect logic, as in Sidney: it swallows or absorbs it. (CW 9: 147)

**Signified and Signifier.** God: the transcendental signified of the old model is actually the universal signifier, the giver of names through Adam. Created beings (Seiendes in

Heidegger) are the signifieds of ordinary languages, but the signifiers of their own creation. Creation is the awakening into a world of meanings, as Keats’ famous statement about Adam’s dream in fact implies. (CW 5: 231)

**Simplicity.** When art becomes obscure it has forgotten the fact that the reason for avoiding the commonplace is to discover the obvious. There can be no such thing as the revelation of a mystery, and everyone knows that perfect simplicity is the only way of expressing complex and original ideas. (CW 13: 7)

**Sin.**Sin is one aspect of a general life-situation of which ignorance, impotence, vulgarity, stupidity, false judgement, etc. are other aspects, quite inseparable from it. The sins of the “indifferent honest” [*Hamlet*, 3.1.125] man are the results as a rule of simply being in moral dilemmas. If Jesus were sinless he must have kept out of moral dilemmas with extraordinary agility, & if this agility were not purely the result of omniscience and/or omnipotence, which would take away the credit of his incarnation, it must have come from a continuous ability to make the most of every situation he was in from childhood up. Hence he would never have fallen into that state which paradoxically is both fate and chance, & which affects all of us. Things happen unpredictably & involuntarily to us which involves us in moral dilemmas, & more or less sin enters into, not getting out of them, but simply through them. Perhaps the origin of such unpredictable events is always some deficiency in our previous handling of a previous situation. Believers in reincarnation say “man is born into the world he has made”—we believe that only of Christ. Of course for anyone to dodge sin in early childhood not only the family training but the heredity must have been carefully taken care of, which is why so much hullabaloo is made about the Virgin & her immaculate conception, in spite of Jesus’ irony on the subject. All this is most irreverent, & I mean to make something of irreverence, to carry the attitude of, say, Shaw into the citadel of faith itself. If I keep my nerve I may encourage & put heart in all those queasy intellectuals who can’t resist cutting the throats of their critical reason on the altar of an introverted acceptance of tradition. (CW 8: 202–3)

**Sin and Folly.**  A hard intellectual ruthlessness, arising from a disciplined grasp of reality and an anything but enthusiastic view of the human race, is the hallmark not only of Calvin in theology but of Machiavelli in politics, of Montaigne and Cervantes, perhaps even Shakespeare, in literature, of Galileo in science, of the devotees of form and imitation of classical models in the arts. (Machiavelli, of course, has suffered far more even than Calvin from misrepresentation and confusion with the prince of darkness, the main influence at work there being Elizabethan drama.) In spite of much scepticism and even cynicism about these men, their extraordinary clarity of perception, their completely controlled knowledge of the sin and folly of mankind, makes it difficult for the most sentimental of us to ignore them. Calvin’s intellectual environment was one of profound contempt for cloudy or prejudiced thinking and for any form of naive optimism in regard to a human society boiling over with cruelty and selfishness. (CW 3: 405–6)

**Sir James Frazer.** I’ve started to read the *Golden Bough* for my Old Testament course, which is all about magic in religion, the development of vegetation rites, the symbolic killing and eating of the god, bewailing the death of the god of fertility in the winter and his resurrection in the spring—the Adonis, Osiris, Dionysus and Demeter cults which all synthesise and coalesce in the Passion from Palm Sunday to Easter. It’s a whole new world opening out, particularly as that sort of thing is the very lifeblood of art, and the historical basis of art. My ideas are expanding and taking shape so quickly that they frighten me; I get seized with terror sometimes that somebody else will think them out before I do, or that I shan’t live long enough to complete anything. I shan’t live very long in any case, of course; but that doesn’t matter if I make the contribution I seem destined to make.But, having been dragged this far along the straight and narrow path of intellectual development, I don’t think I’ll be thrown away just yet. (CW 1: 354–5)

**Sitwell, Osbert.** Lunch with Osbert Sitwell at the University Club—Lionel Massey gave the party, & Doug LePan & Paul Arthur & a man I didn’t know were there. Sitwell was a high-coloured solidlooking aristocrat with iron-grey hair, who until he opened his mouth could have been either a cultivated man or a barbarian. Wonderful lunch—oysters & a fine dry red Portuguese wine. The conversation was commonplaces, though highly cultivated commonplaces. He is deeply impressed by my book—says he’s recommended it to a lot of people including the painter John Piper. Edith Sitwel is at the St. Regis on East 50th St, New York. He’s Jung’s sensation type, not a thinker primarily. (CW 8: 62)

**Sleep.** I have discovered that the stability of my whole day depends on getting up early. I seem to feel that I need eight hour’s sleep—I hope this is untrue, as that’s a terrible waste of time. I have recently taken to examining my dreams, as a kind of field work in anagogic interpretation, & that could be, if not overdone, a legitimate diary source. (CW 8: 52)

**Social and Symbolic Form.** The thing that fascinates me about Blake is that Nature “to make a third she joyned the former two,” who are Spenser & Milton. I can clarify absolutely the social & political form of the Bible in Milton, & I think I can clarify the rhetorical or symbolic form of it in Spenser. Blake does both, & my epic book is beginning to split. Not that Milton hasn’t got the rhetorical form: he has, but not the elaborations. (CW 23: 16)

**Social Good.** The social good is greater than the individual good, but it is only in the individual that any awareness of what the social good is can be achieved. (CW 13: 104)

**Social Influence of the Poet.** I think it’s often a help for a writer not to have any social influence at all and not to be able to get any. That’s one reason why Blake came through to me with such a blinding clarity because everybody just assumed he was a nut. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Social Reference of Criticism.**As some of those who write about me are still asserting that I ignore the social reference of literary criticism, the sub-title [“Essays on Criticism and Society”] calls the attention of those who read me to the fact that I have written about practically nothing else. (“Preface” to *The Stubborn Structure*)

**Song of Songs.** I recently glanced at a book on the Song of Songs, put out by a reputable publisher, which said it was probably by Solomon, because it resembled other compositions by Solomon. True, there were things like Persian loan-words in it, but that, he said sagely, only affected the version we have. Well, yes. There is no more reason for tracing the Song of Songs back to Solomon than for tracing it back to the Witch of Endor. There are symbolic reasons for associating it with Solomon, & we don’t know anything about the origins. (CW 13: 170)

**The Sopping Handkerchief.** The primitivistic ideas developed from the movement that marked the collapse of the old order in the first place—the cult of sensibility. The strength of the great baroque tradition breaks down into a decadence of femininity. The fussy intricacies of the later architecture, the powerful influence of the economic factor of the woman reader—which helped to develop the Richardson novel—the outpouring of sentiment in the form of confessions, diaries, and letters, all mark the female character of the period. Poets like Klopstock, Mackenzie’s men of feeling, and many other instances of the vague emotionalism of thought, apparent alike in the deism and the scepticism of the time, testify that the sopping handkerchief was the order of the day. This tendency produced Rousseau’s *Confessions*—it is hardly necessary to condemn it in stronger terms— and Rousseau was the immediate ancestor of primitivism. (CW 3: 7)

**Soul and Spirit.** However inconsistently used, soul & spirit do seem to point in different directions. Despite Aristotle, soul seems usually to be the *telos* of mind, the consciousness or awareness that feels itself “in,” but not of, the body. Because the mind is the nothingness at the heart of existence, it negates itself and thereby “survives” death. Note the close parallel to being in but not of the world. Spirit, on the other hand, seems to be a transformation of the body itself. It starts with quasi-magical notions of mana & orenda, & ends with the wind that blows where it pleases. Bodily disciplines like yoga are aimed at subordinating the mind-soul and liberating the spirit. (CW 13: 3430)

**Sparshott, Francis.** Ihave naturally found Sparshott’s violent critique of *The Great Code* very disheartening reading, and have wondered ever since if I should simply abandon the idea of a second volume as something that perhaps always was a mirage. But that would be weak. The cliché about such things is not to take it personally, but it depends on what one has to take. The remarks about an old man’s book, where the word “senile” is being suppressed with so much difficulty, remind me of how little time I have to accomplish anything at all now, and surely one hardly needs such reminders. The main line of what he says is already in my own introduction, of course, as Peter Richardson, who liked the book quite as little, remarked. One reason for writing the book I did that isn’t in the introduction is that the legend of the book was becoming intolerable: publishing *The Great Code* might disappoint people who were looking for something definitive, but that was better than being crippled for life. (CW 6: 556–7)

**Spatial Figures of Speech.** The controlling figures of the three phases of language are, respectively, the metaphor, the metonymy, and the (suppressed or implicit) simile. Metaphor is identity seen as a static pattern; metonymy assumes a Kantian basis of manifestation and reality behind it; simile assumes a comparative parallelism of subject and object, word and thing. All three are fundamentally spatial relationships. So far as I can see, only typology, A anticipates B and consequently B recalls A, is a figure with a time relationship, and that’s connected with the Bible’s uniquely historical dimension. (CW 13: 308)

**Speed.** In allegro music you’re not aware of the vibrations of the individual notes; in driving a car you’re not aware of the individual revolutions of the engine. All narrative maintains a certain *speed*: the speed conceals our awareness of the individual metaphors. *That’s* why we need criticism, rather than the analogy of the definitive response (except that that’s another aspect of the same thing). (CW 5: 310)

**Spengler.** What fascinated me about Spengler when I read him was the vision of every historical phenomenon being a symbol of all the other phenomena contemporary with it. Every age presents a symbolically interlocking group of phenomena: I suppose that’s what the word “culture” means. I reacted against that, because of the over-dominance of that dimension of history, but it really means that the narrative of history can be halted at any moment and looked at as a thematic stasis. (CW 5: 401)

Spengler: I never did buy his “decline” thesis, which I realized from the beginning was Teutonic horseshit, closely related to the Nazi hatred for all forms of human culture. (Well, not just Nazi: Stalin had just as much of it.) No, as I’ve said, what struck me was, first, the sense of the interpenetration of historical phenomena, a conception of history in which every phenomenon symbolizes every other phenomenon. (CW 6:649)

**Spirit.** Look, there just has to be a third chapter on symbol and spirit: I *can’t* get along without it. At this point one has to ask the Spirit to suggest a theme for the chapter on him. (CW 5: 181)

God is a spirit: man is a mixture of spirit and shit. Whatever isn’t spirit gets shat, including I think his soul–I still feel that soul is something to get lost, not saved. (CW 5: 309)

Re spirit: the overtones of “spirited” and “sprightly,” like many of the overtones of *esprit* and *Geist*, suggest the exalting of consciousness. It’s true that phrases like “in good spirits” have their origin in proto-medical theory, but even those spirits climb ladders. Nietzsche’s *gaya scienza*. (CW 5: 342–3)

I wish I knew what a spirit was. The youth stuff [student protest movement] that bothers me so much bothers me because it’s spirits out of control. Poltergeists, in short. The totalitarian state is diabolic possession. A genuine aristocracy is better than that, because it does represent an ordering of spirits, even if it’s the wrong kind. Anyway, there’s a formidable body of opinion, including Jesus & Buddha, which seems to maintain that there’s no substantial ego, & that what we call the ego is an ecclesia, an *assembly* of spirits. (CW 13: 153–4)

**Spiritual Authority.** Spiritual authority is the only kind that enhances the dignity of those who accept it. All personal authority comes from teachers who want to stop being teachers. After his Ascension Jesus stopped being a teacher, and his authority then became simply the authority of the Word. The Spirit, we are expressly told, has no authority of his own: he’s the subject entering into the authority. (CW 5: 356)

**Spiritual Body.** What is immortal is a spiritual body, & that includes both the ego & its own. . . . The natural abstraction of the ego or body has nothing to do with the soul or spirit, the first act of which is to reach beyond the body into other relations. A man’s social life, for instance, is clearly a part of himself, & it’s impossible to think of life after death as a mere survival of the ego-abstraction. Everything I have loved—my emanation, Blake would call it—is as much a part of me as anything else in my character, & must survive if anything else in my character does. Helen is eternally part of my life as I am of hers, & so we are all members of one body & yet not married, for the Helen in my life is mine, & not the ego-abstraction people refer to when they name her. I attach my love to that abstraction, but love it only approximately. Your spiritual body is the invisible house you build of which the ego-abstraction is the doorkeeper or covering cherub. The person is the incarnation or visible mask of the real Self or Atman. (CW 8: 164)

**Spiritual Christianity.** The Joachim of Floris notion, that there’s a coming age of purely spiritual Christianity, an everlasting gospel, has always been central to my own thinking. I don’t look for it in the future of time, but ideally it’s always there. I should quite cheerfully write off Protestantism as a transitional phase to it. But Catholic converts who turn back from the wilderness to Egyptian civilized life will never see the Promised Land. The road to Jesus’ spiritual kingdom runs through Luther, perhaps Calvin: it gets pretty dry and narrow there, as Jesus said it would, but the selfsufficient Church just won’t do. The same thing is true of Christianity itself: it’s superstitious compared to Judaism and intolerably inhumane compared to the greatest of the Greeks—but it’s higher in human scale. I don’t know what I mean by “human” here: certainly not that Christians are more human than Jews or Greeks—I’m following Paul’s phrasing. (CW 5: 202)

**Spiritual World.** I only wish I knew how much direct experience of this spiritual world is necessary or desirable to get. I suppose the approach is reading Blake for new emphases, reading Swedenborg, & beginning to think of one’s mental life in spiritual terms. The trouble is I’m as goddam gullible as the most silly & ignorant old hen getting her teacup read, & partly for that reason I’ve tended to try to insulate myself. Also my nerves are bad & I’m a great coward. Perhaps the cowardice doesn’t matter, but the gullibility does. However, I don’t want any truck with those lunar double-gyre creatures & I’m leery of surrendering myself. But I wish I knew more about mechanics, as I’m certain that there are many analogies among them—radio, for instance. I think I am slowly moving from learning about what vision is about to learning about vision, & needn’t be in too great a hurry to enter the vision. At present I can trace the pattern, but literally don’t know what I am talking about, & I can’t fly out of a nest & hold my mouth open waiting for food at the same time. (CW 15: 98)

**Squalid Meanness.** Then we went into New Jersey, which was dreadful, as New Jersey always is. I can’t put my finger on the impression of squalid meanness that a highway in flat country surrounded by service stations, hot dog stands, second-hand car lots (one a bright mauve), telephone poles and billboards always manages to give. The elements of it are the elements of what with all its faults is a wonderful civilization—what makes it so unspeakably dreary? I suppose it’s just its presence: in retrospect it would take on quaintness, as nineteenth-century dreariness begins to do now. (CW 8: 569)

**Stampede.** Previously I had thought that a rugby game was the stupidest, slowest, dreariest possibility in the way of an amusement, but a stampede has it licked literally to a standstill. You sit in a car for fifteen or twenty minutes and finally see a horse run across the field like this: , with a man on him. Then you wait another twenty minutes and see another horse, or possibly the same horse, run across the field like this: . After several hours of this, you get variety by seeing a steer run across in the same way; viz. . After several hours of that, there is an exhibition of roping cows. A number of peaceful old bossies stroll out into the corral and start grazing, minding their own business and trying to keep out of the way. Behind them a cowboy on a prancing horse winds up a rope furiously and throws it in their direction, missing every time. Then there is a wild horse race, but at that point I marched off down to the canteen to get a chocolate bar, so I don’t know what a wild horse race is like. Then one of the employees grabs the manager by his coat and starts an argument with him, demanding his salary. A crowd gathers, and the show is held up for at least half an hour while that is discussed from every angle. The show lasted, I should say, about three-quarters of an hour. Counting the intermissions, it lasted exactly seven hours and a half. (CW 1: 301–2)



**Standing Back.**My technique of distance criticism keeps banging things out as I move further back.

For instance, close up the *Mutability Cantos* are a mass of impressionistic brushwork derived from Ovid & Irish geography, but as you go back from it, all you see is a great dark mass in the lower centre foreground rising up in defiance of a surrounding background of light—in other words the archetype of the Book of Job. (CW 8: 377)

**Stereotypical Thinking.** I often wonder about intuitive racial-stereotype thinking: a lot of it’s balls. For instance, there’s a big good-natured German in Moncton called Lichtenberg who had been a peaceful, thrifty, industrious contractor there for thirty years. For two wars the local Gestapo have cut their teeth on him: when the news is bad or they get tired of reading spy stories they’d go up and practise on him. Recently the Gestapo combed his whole house over, in response to some silly anonymous “tip,” & one of them found two large knobs in a dark closet. “Aha!” he said, stepped into the closet & gave one a twist, thinking of course it was a private transmitter set. It was an extra shower he’d installed. Incidentally, he’s a naturalized Canadian citizen, but married before that, so his wife, who belongs to one of the oldest Maritime families, is an enemy alien. Well, Dad’s friendship for Lichtenberg has come in for much unfavorable comment in that stinking little kraal Moncton, & the stinkers point out gleefully that “Frye” is really a German name, & that I look just like a German. It’s a beautiful theory, only it just happens to be wrong. (CW 8: 42)

**Still, Colin.** I was first attracted to archetypal criticism by Colin Still’s book on *The Tempest*, with its central conception of the ladder of elements, a conception going back to the pre-Socratics. Heraclitus says there’s an exchange of “fire” and of “all things,” as there is of “gold” for “wares.” That’s something to chew on. (CW 5: 46–7)

Something *else* is involved in the Bible of hell that begins with Blake. So far I’ve thought of it as a straight Heraclitean reversal: the undifferentiated alienating Absolute at the top, under it the two estrangements of ascendant object & ascendant subject, & under that the identity. The book that started me on all this was Colin Still’s book on *The Tempest* [*Shakespeare’s Mystery Play*], which I found by “accident” in the Public Library (Toronto) in 1930. Its influence is earlier than Blake’s. Eventually I picked up both it & its successor, *The Timeless Theme*& put them on my shelves, where they sat for years uncracked. Now I’m reading the second book for the first time & it’s a bit disconcerting to see how much of it is already part of my makeup. *And* my diagram. (CW 9: 296)

**Story and History.** History & story are from the same root, & the history of the Bible is there only as story. There may be many pendulum swings: the historicity of the Iliad, for example, became more seriously regarded after Schliemann. But it doesn’t follow that Achilles’ fight with the rivergod is any less mythical or more historical, or the opening scene in Olympus. Even if there was a Trojan war, everything Homer says about it is legend, not history. (CW 13: 208–9)

**Stratospheric Divinity.**Philosophers, mystics, Gnostics, all set out by describing God as a something so super-duper that no words can possibly describe him. He’s above Deity (Gnostic John), above Being (or its ground, as in Tillich), above anything you can possibly put into words.

O.K. But how could so stratospheric a conception be a character in a human story, which is what he consistently is in the Bible? I think one has to universalize the conception of epiphany, manifestation (*Vorstellung, Schein*). That led a lot of people to think of Jesus Docetically: that won’t work; he was a physical reality and therefore an illusion. So are we. (CW 5: 276)

**Street.**In the development of the city, the aggregating of dwellings is inevitable: the real imaginative revolution connected with the city is the street, the *way through* the city. Why didn’t houses just grow up higgledy-piggledy? I suppose they often did, and that there are quarters in old cities, at least from Morocco to Japan, which are pure labyrinths, where everyone who doesn’t live there gets lost & where postmen go insane. But the street represents the Logos domination of city-dwellers, & I notice its prominence in the Bible (also Isaiah’s “highway in the desert,” the desert being *all* highway, in contrast to the forest).(CW 9: 238)

**Structural Principles of Literature.** The two great structural principles of literature are the cycle and the dialectical polarization of opposites. But I shouldn’t forget the two kinds of polarity, the kind that goes outside the cycle and separates into heaven and hell, and the kind that is inside the cycle and forms the *coincidentia oppositorum*. This latter is the struggle-of-brothers theme in *Finnegans Wake* and elsewhere, and seems to be much the same kind of thing as the forza-and-froda circle (Esau and Jacob). (CW 15: 261)

**Structure.** Don’t show any tolerance for the pearl-in-oyster crap, that poetry is only profitable when it’s pried loose from its metaphorical structure. That structure is an absolutely essential part of its poetry, except that there’s a metamorphosis (agon > pathos > sparagmos > anagnorisis) between text and reader at the myth > kerygma stage. (CW 5: 377)

A structure, by definition and initial conception, implies something “outside” it. There are no totally inclusive structures: the notion is a contradiction in terms. The medieval Ptolemaic universe had an outside, and all the philosophers tried to pretend it was God: it turned out to be Nature after all.(CW 15: 251–2)

**Structure and Texture.** I understand the new critics’ insistence on texture as against structure because they’re haunted by the evaluation spectre. Dussek & Beethoven both wrote in the sonata form, & their structures are much alike: Beethoven’s superiority is in his texture, which a critic by explicating can “demonstrate.” (CW 9: 280)

**Stuck “e.”** I finished my damn paper [on symbolism], all but the typing, and I was even going to start on that, but the letter “e” stuck. I can make do with a stuck “a” and a lot of profanity, but when it comes to a stuck “e” I can’t do the subject justice. However, that beat-up old pile of arthritic levers has typed out some of the world’s best criticism. (CW 8: 469–70)

**The Stuff Gets Better.** The Shakespearean canon is a little more symmetrical than it looks: one wouldn’t want to push this too far, & squeeze all his work into a prefabricated scheme, but still his choice of subjects isn’t purely at random. First, Shakespeare’s plays were not so much written as written out. What the hell was the greatest creative mind of modern times doing with the first 20odd years of his life? If he’d been a saint instead of a genius we’d have had all sorts of stories about how he refused his mother’s breast the day he was born and sucked a bottle of ink instead. He was obviously thinking of what he would write. It is hardly possible that such well-carpentered wood as the *Henry VI* plays are apprentice work. The structure of the Shakespeare play remains the same all through, more or less: it’s the stuff in it that gets better. So what Shakespeare does is to write a tragedy in the Senecan form (*Titus Andronicus*), then a comedy in the Plauten form (*Comedy of Errors*), and a tetralogy dealing with what was to the Elizabethan audience what the 1917 revolution is to modern Russia. So the sense of Greene’s remark is, here is a young upstart who has flung this great noisy tetralogy into the public’s face as though he alone were empowered to be the spokesman of his nation. Then he wrote another tetralogy to stick on to it, & John & H8 could conceivably be a prologue & epilogue. (CW 20: 198)

**Stupid Categories.**Time, space, and matter are *stupid* categories. The residual theism that’s in all of us instantly says “Well, we’re stuck with them,” and gets an orgy of masochistic satisfaction out of feeling realistic. The impulse to chuckle approvingly over Carlyle’s answer to Margaret Fuller is an example of how fat-headed and brainwashed we are on such points. [Fuller:“I accept the

Universe.”Carlyle:”“By Gad, she’d better!”]They’re stupid. Any God who created them was an ass; no God did: we did, and we damn well should have done better. No point in that: I don’t even feel better. (CW 9: 154)

**Subject-Object Parable.** Travelling on a train in Canada one looks out the window at a passing landscape. As it gets darker, more & more of the window reflects the inside of the carriage. Eventually there’s nothing but reflection: one could assume that there was no world out there at all. A few lights appear that are difficult to reconcile with this thesis, but they could be ignored or explained away, like flying saucers. But when the train stops, & you have to get out at a station, it’s probably a help to believe it’s there. That’s a parable of the dilemma of trying to keep the subjectobject split between a visible & an invisible world. (CW 9: 33)

**Subject of Lit. Crit.** The total subject of which literary criticism forms part is not literature, there being no such subject apart from criticism. Its total subject expands from the theory of literature into the theory of myth, myth being the language of concern. As such it’s really the theory of verbal information. If the world is divided into secondary and primary qualities, the latter is mathematical in language: attempts of words to inform this world give us the imaginary, or spiritual-substance, world, the higher potentially visible world as distinct from the imaginative or created world. I wonder if “science” is really the criticism of mathematics? (CW 9: 64–5)

**Substance.** Modern thinkers respond to the touchstone of how they wriggle out of the notion of substance. This notion was dumped on them by priests trying to twist the metaphor of divine presence into a compulsory dogma. Some try to keep it objective, part of what God hands to man, like Spinoza; some try to subjectivize it, namely revolutionaries in the Hegel-Marx tradition. But there’s a very interesting tertium quid group that try to make the substantial experience, or something representing the subject–object identity. There’s something American about the hunger for experience. William James is one such person: Bradley, in a very different context, attracted T.S. Eliot: even Pater has a qualitative formula: “as many pulsations as possible.” (CW 13: 241–2)

**Sumerians.** Reading Leonard Wooley’s book on Ur [*Ur Excavations*]last night. The Sumerians mystify me. There’s nothing archaic about them. Their art is blocky, unrhythmical, realistic, oversophisticated. Their government is typical monarchy and their royal sacrifices seem to be less barbaric than the Charge of the Light Brigade. They must have had millennia of development behind them wherever they came from. (CW 8: 49–50)

**Sunday Crystallization.** One of my present master keys seems to be a recapturing of something that suddenly crystallized one Sunday morning & was written down in one of the brown notebooks. It puzzled me at the time, because it seemed inconsistent with or peripheral to my main line of thought. It’s turned up again as the three forms of awareness. (CW 9: 39)

**Sunday in Moncton**.Mother has just dragged me out to church. Our church has gone in with a Baptist one for the summer and it’s their choir and organist. The anguish I suffered listening to the latter is not easy to imagine. Four trebles, three altos, three tenors and eight basses. None of them mattered except a very fat and red-faced soprano who was about half the choir. The organist was nothing. They plunged into a fairly difficult*durchkomponiert* setting of “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind” and when they finished—or at least when they stopped—I was leaving grooves in the pew. I think it a well-grounded belief that anyone who goes to heaven will have to become a musician but if that mob ever gets past the pearly gates they will have to join the awkward squad for sure. The minister was apparently not a Baptist, as he made a reference to his University career. He told us that the Bible was historically quite accurate. I forget his text—so did he, for that matter. (CW 1: 42)

**Superior Power.** I’ve also got Ruth Wallerstein’s book[*Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic*], but have only read bits of it. I ought to be very excited about it, because so far as I know it’s the first real attempt to incorporate the anagogic tradition of biblical scholarship into English literary criticism, and of course I want to read it very carefully. But she seems bemused by the apparatus of scholarship, & as I read the text it seems to keep going out of focus in a curious way. One of the great mysteries to me is the way people can move nimbly & sensitively over an area of ideas like a blind man, aware of every nuance of texture and fibre & yet unable to see what is there. I am almost the only critic I know who can really see criticism, and, like the man in H.G. Wells’s very profound story about the seeing man in the blind community, I find myself isolated with my superior power instead of being able to benefit others directly with it. (CW 8: 422–3)

**Surface Perception.** If I were to say to an orange what a beautiful orange you are, and if the orange could talk, it would say: orange is the one thing I’m not, the one color I totally reject. That’s why you see me as orange: it’s the color I banish from myself. If you could see me as I really am I’d be more like blue. Now *there’s* a color . . . I wonder how far this principle could be extended to, say, how we see other people’s characters. (CW 13: 304)

**Surtees, Robert Smith.** I have just finished reading Surtees’ *HandleyCross*, & it was quite a lesson in humility. I know nothing about fox-hunting, but thought I could make a fair guess at its symbolism. Surtees knew all about fox-hunting, & I therefore assumed he would know nothing about the symbolism. I never made a bigger mistake in my life. Fox hunting is, of course, primarily a symbol of revolt against society, like war, in which the red coat also appears, but is specifically an upperclass revolt against a middle-class society. The latter includes both culture & civilization, that is, the farmer & the citizen. A latent dislike of the farmer & his “dog” & his crop-land runs through the rite—Jorrocks has a litany beginning “Confound all farmers.” (CW 15: 87)

**Swift, Jonathan.** Swift is another one of that Irish group overshadowing Yeats, of course, but I’ve only just realized why. Swift is an extrovert, so you have to figure out what he believes in by implication, more or less, but I think he has a vision of simplicity at the centre of society. Simple writing, simple living (hence cleanliness) simple thinking. Human beings can’t make this kind of society, the natural man favoring affectation, private enterprise (Whiggish *laissez-faire*) and esoteric professional techniques, especially in religion, law and science. Hence the Yahoo-Houyhnhnm deadlock, the inability of achieving Houyhnhnm ideals with Yahoo material. Hence Swift is thrown back on the church, which has got its standards of simplicity (which includes also all the liberty, equality & fraternity possible to man) from God. Sure it can get corrupt, but still it’s responsible to God for those standards, & so isn’t quite the world. So Swift also has that governor-principle I found all through the Religious Knowledge course, and with him it’s the Church, as, in different contexts, it is too for Milton & Coleridge. Perhaps it is the Church. (CW 8: 383)

**Symbolic Forms.** The general assumption of mysticism is an analogy between the relation of soul to mind & of mind to body. The mind is distinctively human, & the “humane” man rises from animal levelsby rebuilding & inverting his natural organization, in which body is primary & mind an accidental sport. He does not deny the essential unity of body & mind by doing this, but centres that unity in the mind instead of the body. As soon as he does this, he leaves nature & enters a world of mental form. Perception of functional patterns or symbolic forms then becomes his reality, in contrast to the animal’s unaware entry into them. (CW 15: 146)

**Symbolic Sheep.**Bach’s“Sheep May Safely Graze: regarded as religious music, the sheep being

Christians.It easily could be, though actually this is from a secular cantata in honour of some count,

& the sheep are the count’s taxpayers.These are allegories.You never get just the sheep that nibble the grass: they have to be poetic sheep, with some poetic reason for being there.Symbols, in short. (Notebook 9)

**Symbols.** The central symbol, the golden bowl, the white horses of Rosmersholm, the tin drum, is metonomy, or perhaps almost synecdoche. It *stands for* the whole metaphorical complex, and makes it clear that there *is* such a complex. As writers get older & more concentrated, they tend increasingly to use such a “symbol” to represent the thematic stasis of what they’re saying. (CW 5: 128–9)

Symbols like flags or slogans have a tremendous condensing power, like a burning glass focussing a lot of concerns. Yet they’re displacements of those concerns, not the concerns themselves. Note condense and displace, Freud’s words for what dreams do. Like dreams, it’s a mirror of our identity: it speaks to us from a context of silence, and bypasses all mental conflict, again like the dream. Their normal function is to stop debate and initiate action, but the uncritical element in them makes them dangerous. Secular loyalties have a built-in safeguard: they can’t be believed to have an ideal form, vs. religious symbols, which can. The church in Onward Christian Soldiers. (CW 6: 601)

**Symbols and Blake.** Symbols are not static things, to be identified & separated. It would be absurd to say that the serpent or the rose could be legitimately used for only one thing. Symbols are dynamic & fluid, metamorphosing into one another like leitmotifs, & defining them is like defining a common word like “stick” or “part” or the French *coup*. To get the full range of its meaning one simply has to know the language. This is my second attempt to explain it. In the first, I was criticized for not separating myself from Blake. I started with the assumption that I was addressing people who would be interested in Blake & not in me, & that if I undertook to explain Blake my primary duty was to get the hell out of the way so that the reader could see Blake. I do not understand why the statement that the reader cannot see me for Blake is intended as a complaint instead of a compliment. What do I matter? The important thing is what is in Blake, not *who finds* it there. I know that criticism is full of self-congratulatory Little Jack Horners, but I have no desire to be one of them.

(CW 23: 13–14)

**Symbolism.** Art symbolizes religion, and, therefore, the symbol is the unit of art. A symbol is something which stands for something else, and symbolism in art means the bringing together of two or more ideas into one object. The symbolic units are words in literature, and images in the graphic arts. In music, though music is so highly concentrated and abstract an art that this point is rather difficult to establish, the fact that every note has a melodic, harmonic, contrapuntal, rhythmic, timbric, and tonal context makes it a symbolic point of reference. The meanings of all words are similarly complex: they contain a large number of associations which are both historical, relating to their etymology, and syntactical, relating to their place in a given passage. The symbolic nature of imagery is more obvious. The aim of symbolism may be generally stated as an attempt to relate something in the outer environment to the inner experience by giving it a mental significance and reference which inner experience can grasp. We may see a tiger, and simply add it to the list of things we have seen; we may experience strength, beauty, terror, the splendor of sheer physical power even when destructive, or the effects of these emotions, without organizing them. But when the artist relates these factors of experience to the tiger:

Tyger! tyger! burning brightee In the forest of the night.

he has given the tiger a mental significance for us, on the one hand, and has given our chaotic and disordered sensations and emotions a concrete point of reference we can associate them with, on the other. (CW 3:325–6)

**Symposia.** The Book ofJob is a symposium ending in an epiphany of the creation presented by God. The Gospels are a symposium of Jesus and disciples ending in a Godman risen from death and hell. In poetry there is no direct address: in rhetoric there is nothing else. (CW 5: 229–30)

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**Talk.** I talk very well; it would be nice to know what I was talking about, but if I did I might stop writing, as St. Thomas Aquinas did when he died. If it’s necessary for me to know I’ll be given the knowledge. (CW 5: 270)

**Tantrism.** I don’t see why I couldn’t present the Biblical tradition in an “objective” context. When I read Blofeld or Evans-Wentzon Tantrism I read almost uncritically, because I want to be as responsive as possible. Yet what do these immensely long & laborious efforts aim at? At the Bodhisattva. And what does the Bodhissatva do? Perform charitable acts. And how does this differ from what the Christian, accepting Christ as the definitive Bodhisattva, does or is enjoined to do? Perhaps the Chinese conquest of Tibet will diffuse the Tantric light over the world, as the Turkish conquests of the Roman Empire spread Greek over Europe. But the knowledge of Greek was essentially new light on Europe’s own past, & we might get an “objective” Christianity in the same way. (CW 9: 323)

**Tate Gallery.** I have been to the Tate Gallery. Just a cursory look around—more to see what I would go to the next time and what I would avoid. It’s the most grotesque place I’ve ever been in in my life— the very good and the very bad so close together. Rousseau and Braque still hold me—in painting I’m still in a state of complete acceptance with regard to certain paintings, a thing I never am in literature or music. That makes me vaguely uneasy—is it possible that my admiration for Rousseau and Braque is owing to their clever exploitation of certain formulae I’m not sophisticated enough to grasp? Frenchmen admire Poe’s poetry more than Englishmen do, because Poe’s tricks are obvious to Englishmen and therefore fascinating to someone less familiar with the language. It may be something like that with me. The Blakes were marvellous, though I was a little disappointed not to see any unfamiliar ones. I made one mistake—I went on students’ day, and paid sixpence for the privilege of seeing old ladies copying the pre-Raphaelites, and some bitch befouling one corner with a bastard spawned from Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* and her own mind, covering up three pictures I wanted to see with her fat backside, and holding forth on the most reactionary political opinions to anyone who would listen to her. Her voice filled the room so completely there wasn’t room for me. (CW 2: 572–3)

**Teaching.** At lunch Bill Fennell & JoeFisher & I discussed the priesthood of the lecturer. It was a figure Joe raised. I said that the priest was under no temptation to pretend that he was God—that’s true in this context—if I lecture on Newman I’m under no *direct* temptation to present myself as someone better & more attractive than Newman. But the audience is under a constant temptation to see the priest instead of God, to discuss Norrie Frye’s lectures instead of the subject, & substitute a passive entertainment for active participation in eating the body and drinking the blood of Newman. That’s due to the accident of their ignorance—the university being ideally a community participating in learning, not a community of learned teaching unlearned. There isn’t a damned thing you can do about it: as long as the job *is* teaching there’ll always be a paradox. Students consist of a majority of just kids & a few seekers, & the university exists because the seeker’s need is real enough to be worth collecting money from the others. Lecturers train themselves to greater & greater efficiency, & the more efficient they become the more they stamp the students’ minds, so that the seekers after truth become followers of them. (CW 8: 75–6)

**Teaching Four Quartets.**  Well: in teaching my graduate course I always felt a bit self-conscious in spending so much time on the Eliot Quartets: they sounded so *damn* Christian, and I wasn’t trying to convert anybody. But if they’re on the direct line from Narcissus to the escape from Narcissus, alias the Bible, they make more sense. (CW 6: 527)

**Telling the Truth.** In the arts the philosopher’s passionate desire to tell the truth becomes a passionate desire to construct the poetic pattern. Hence, when discriminated, poetry & philosophy are mutually exclusive. Shakespeare’s *Henry V* gives the poetic pattern of war: had he started by trying to tell the truth about war he’d have buggered the whole scheme like a modern war novelist. The philosopher has to be banished from the poet’s republic: perhaps the Symposium says so. Yet there’s a point at which they merge, & that point is prose fiction. (CW 13: 50)

**Telos.** For anything with a history that history is part of the context which determines meaning.

Hence the descent of a literary work from a mythical structure is part of its critical interpretation. For anything with a *telos* or direction of development that *telos* is similarly part of the context and the meaning. Many people have written on comparative mythology, fascinated by the resemblances in patterns, & most of the results are pretty unconvincing, because their *telos* was either part of their own myth of concern (i.e. they “believed the Bible,” or were certain that Christianity as they understood it was the *telos* of myth) or the particular ideas or doctrines or moral lessons they most admired. The real *telos* of mythology is literature. (CW 9: 271–2)

**The Tempest.** Gods include all the potentially numinous powers of nature, angels, devils, elemental spirits, ghosts, the lot. Magic is the effort to control them. Why does Prospero renounce magic? Maybe because his quest is still aggressive & antithetical, revolutionizing but not altering the structure of the Court Party hierarchy. I have always felt that there was a shadow-Prospero, husband of Sycorax & father of Caliban (“this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine” [*The Tempest*, 5.1.275–6]). Caliban is the Esau elder brother of Ferdinand, who succeeds him as the piler of logs, & his attempted rape of Miranda is incestuous. (CW 13: 249)

**Temporal Structure.** Dramatic forms, including music, have a positive temporal factor in their structure. By that I mean only that a play has to be staged in two hours or whatever. The time factor in reading a novel is there all right, but it’s a relaxed personal-time factor: you can take up *War & Peace* and put it down again, taking six months to read it if you like. Poe’s short stories & poems to be read at a “sitting” stresses the positive time factor, and heralds the approach of the electronic media. (CW 5: 222)

**Tepid Amusement.** Helen pushed me out into the garden to help prune, but in temper she was more like Eve after the fall than before. I didn’t blame her, but it was a bit tough getting through the morning. I’d gone over yesterday to get her a detective story to read to take some of her mind off her house-renting troubles, but she still couldn’t read, so I read it myself. It was *Stop Press*, by Michael Innes, and I found it tepidly amusing. It’s a very gabby story, full of high-flown literary allusions, which he deprecates but keeps right on making, and is obviously constructed on the “all this and a murder story too” principle. (CW 8: 376)

**Texts and Meaning.** The “publish or perish” syndrome created a variety of prefabricated formulas for enabling sterile scholars to become productive: they were aided by a recrudescence of the old myth-as-lie syndrome. I don’t want to attack or dismiss any genuine development, but there is certainly going to be a text in my class, however enormously flexible and approximate the “establishing” of that text is to be. Texts, starting with the Bible, expand in meaning because they mean first of all what they say, & because they mean that they can mean infinitely more. We’ve never believed that poets really do mean (start with meaning) what they say. (CW 5: 383)

**Theism.** “Thou art That.” Who says so? Whoever it is, he begins with “Thou,” & so implies a communication of particulars as well as identity. I’m a theist because I think the human is divisible, part of it being “all too human” & only a part divine. Man is a twofold being, Blake says. But I don’t want an unseen likeness-link, whether it’s God or being or what the hell. It’s partly a question of context: it can’t ultimately be true that the divine is *part* of anything, whether human or not. We’re all pantheists in the resurrection, when God is all in all. (CW 13: 93)

**Theory and Facts.** I suppose I should try to read that ass Frederick Crews & see if I can understand what he thinks he wants. But *a priori* objections to whether I have a right to do what I’m doing don’t interest me. A theory that explains a lot of facts is a good theory, & theory & facts have to be in the same plane. A psychological theory can only explain psychological facts; literary facts can only be explained by a literary theory. This is so obvious & elementary that I simply can’t communicate with anybody who questions it, or thinks he’s questioning it. (CW 13: 129)

**Things that Matter.** There are so surprisingly few things that really matter. Music matters, and babies matter—so do poetry, sunsets over marshes, plain food, and people’s flea-bitten souls. But that’s about all. So why bother about anything else? People who laugh at dreamers and star-gazers merely can’t distinguish what’s necessary from what’s important. A wash-basin is necessary, but it isn’t important and should be minimized. Practical-minded people are also necessary but not important, which is why they hate to feel slighted. (CW 1: 80)

**Thinking.** In the *ironic* confession, represented by the *NotesfromUnderground*, Kafka & others, the point is the absence of personality—individuality, that is, and a consequent preoccupation with the ego. As I’ve said already, the point is important to me personally because I think in aphoristic sequences. Also because I have a theory of thought, so to speak. It seems to me that thinking is like piano-playing: it’s a habitual skill, not a natural process like excretion. You can’t just think: in the first place, how well you will think will depend on how much of it you’ve already done; in the second place, what you do is complicate & ramify a structure already there. All thought evolves like dogma in Newman and law in Burke. (CW 15: 77–8)

**The Third Book.** For the next book I want to examine the relation of literature to conceptual thought, which implies that for the third the relation to history is involved. The book should, I think, begin with a development of the study of prose fiction I’ve already made, & then go on through Plato & others. So I start by reading or re-reading all the novels & related works of fiction in English, enlarging the scope to France & Germany, & of course America. Meanwhile I can be picking up hints for my own creative magnum opus. (“Notes on Miscellaneous Subjects’)

I wish to make my third large book a study of the symbolic universe, a kind of Divine Comedy in criticism. Its tentative title, based on the coincidence of a common business term publicized by Expo and the last paragraph of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, is “The Critical Path.” Its theme, like Dante’s, is that of the passage through and out of the labyrinth (another Expo echo). (CW 9: 127)

If this book shows the least sign of becoming just a rewritten *Anatomy of Criticism*, out it goes into the ash-can. (CW 9: 130)

**Thoughts of Chairman Mao.** I know this sounds like an obsession, but for anyone living in 1967, the thought of millions of Chinese yelling their guts loose & waving the little red books of Chairman Mao’s thoughts in the air ought to be pretty central. Anything can happen, but one thing that certainly can happen is that China will unify itself around the “thought” of Mao, & become strong enough to wipe us out with the back of its hand in a very few years. An old & sophisticated bourgeois civilization like ours thinks in terms of the variety of its ideas, of the intensity of criticism, and above all, of the fact that to be intellectually weak & open to criticism is to be ineffectual. Great is truth & will prevail. For any bourgeois intellectual it would be a miserable impoverishment to confine oneself to the thoughts of Chairman Mao. Nobody’s thoughts can be all that good: words can only do so much. But China is very probably enjoying a more intensive & widespread intellectual activity than we are. It doesn’t matter whether the thoughts are vulnerable to criticism or not if you suppress the criticism, including the criticism in your own mind. It doesn’t matter how true they are if a powerful social will is determined to make them principles. Eventually, of course, the Chinese myth of concern will complicate itself & become critical too, but that’s much later. (CW 9: 92–3)

**Three-Volume Novels.** For Frazer it appears that history moves through three stages. First, the magical era, when man tries to control nature by forces of attraction and sympathetic response. Second, the religious, when he gives this up and throws himself on the mercy of an imaginary supernatural deity. . . . Third, the scientific, when man advancesfrom superstition and tyranny to fashion for himself, through his knowledge of what natural forces actually are, a Utopia or Golden Age, to start approximately from the time of writing. This scheme reminds one of Chesterton’s remark about the Victorians who turned all human records into one of their own three-volume novels, sure that it would end happily because it was ending with the Victorians. (CW 3: 140)

**Thriller.**The thriller is quite a suggestive form: it’s the opposite of the detective story, where we get the smug primitive identification with the group & see the individual marked down by a process of hocus-pocus. In the thriller we’re identified rather with the fugitive from society. The archetype of all thrillers is *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, where the refugee from the city of destruction is hounded on by a nameless fear, & has to do battle with various members of its police force like Apollyon. (CW 8: 343)

**Thunderstorms in a Hell-World.** The age of gods culminates in the poetry of the gods—Virgil and Ovid. They are the real counterpart to Christ, not Augustus. Augustus is Antichrist, whatever he may have been as a person, because the demonic parody of recreating humanity is manipulating people with power. In that process all ends turn into the means adopted for them, and so get perverted. Carlyle said that what Napoleon did will ultimately become what he did justly: people like Napoleon never really do anything, certainly not justly. They’re thunderstorms in the hell-world. (CW 6: 672)

**Thurber, James.**Thurber’s parties go on all night—this one broke up at five—and after midnight, when we left, the conversation turns bawdy & often abusive. Both Ken & Sara MacLean have been insulted by Thurber in the most pointless way—it’s not supposed to mean anything, of course, and it certainly doesn’t alter their very considerable affection for him. It’s just the pattern of life it forms

part of that bewilders them. But as far as I saw Thurber, he was completely charming and appealing—almost entirely blind, as I realized with a slight shock. (CW 8: 441)

**Tillich.** I cleared out & went to Tillich’s lecture—a huge crowd in Wycliffe. He talked on the “theology of despair”: the attempt to start with despair as a “limit-situation.” It disappointed me a little, as I’d read enough Kierkegaard to figure it out myself. Even the feeling it gave me of being on top of Tillich was hollow: I didn’t want to feel on top of Tillich: I wanted to feel a contact with something fresh. (CW 8: 248)

**Time.** The traditional view of time and the creation is that before the creation there wasn’t any time. The same conception is being applied now to the big bang theory: nothing happened before that. What I’ve been saying is that, in our ordinary experience of time, it is impossible to realize the conception of a beginning of time: we can *always* say “yes, but before that?” (CW 6: 512)

There appear to be *two* forms of experiencing time. One is the entropy clock, the sense of an irreversible movement toward the increasingly predictable. The other is teleological time, in which the effect always *precedes* the cause, the cause being final. Here is also the evolutionary rhythm, consciousness following on & eventually mastering existence, “mind” doing the same to “matter,” and human work, the building of the city & the garden, demonstrating the real form of human life. Hence Norbert Wiener’s notion that communication, the use in short of the word, overcomes entropy. (CW 23: 261)

**Time and Space Travel.** It seems to me that the notion of “travel” in either time or space, the central assumption of science fiction, is a false metaphor derived from the quest-theme of literature. I first began to grasp this point when I was reading that anti-Gnostic science fiction story of Mike Joseph’s. He said that the notion of travelling in time was like crossing the Atlantic with a motorcycle: you can travel on motorcycles and you can cross the Atlantic, but you can’t do the one to accomplish the other. He said we could travel only through the mind, and this seems to be the general science-fiction assumption now. But I wonder if the notion of “travelling” isn’t equally fallacious for space, an attempt to put the natural body where only the spiritual body can go. (CW 6: 607)

**To Be Is To Be Perceived.** Esse est percipi; but we know the world keeps on existing whether we see it or not: hence, for Berkeley, we trust that God keeps on watching it, as, to be consistent, the world must be an idea in God’s mind. It’s a good thing that, as the Psalmist says, God neither slumbers nor sleeps [Psalm 121:4]. (“Notes for *The Double Vision*”)

**Tolkien, J.R.R.**I started attending lectures the first week . . . . All pretty awful. Nichol Smith wouldn’t be bad for my sort of job: getting one point per lecture hammered home, but to me he’s prolix & dull.

Then there’s Tolkien on *Beowulf*, dealing with a most insanely complicated problem which involves

Anglo-Saxon genealogies, early Danish histories, monkish chronicles in Latin, Icelandic Eddas and Swedish folk-lore. Imagine my delivery at its very worst: top speed, unintelligible burble, great complexity of ideas and endless references to things unknown, mixed in with a lot of Latin and Anglo-Saxon and a lot of difficult proper names which aren’t spelled, and you have Tolkien on Beowulf. (CW 2: 794–5)

In reading Tolkien, which I did with great & almost uncritical pleasure, it nevertheless struck me, somewhere around Appendix VI, that there was a point at which the imaginative turns into the imaginary. (CW 23: 284)

When Tolkien first came out a lot of people would say “I can’t read fantasy,” with an air of conscious virtue. But when he became popular it became evident that a tradition was behind him. The basis of this tradition was George MacDonald and William Morris, and while my enthusiasm for Tolkien himself was never white-hot, Morris was the man after Blake who most interested me, just as Spenser was the man before. But gradually it became clear that the whole tradition of what I call sentimental romance, Scott, Wilkie Collins, Sheridan LeFanu, even Rider Haggard, was involved. Now there’s a flourishing industry in reprinting works of “adult fantasy,” of which I’m availing myself. It’s also clear that the whole development of science fiction, and the kind of writing on the periphery of that (e.g. [Kurt] Vonnegut) attaches itself to sentimental romance, not to realism, and makes the tradition of the former important to grasp. (CW 15: 191)

**Total Power of Expression.**I said to the graduate group is words come to us atomically, little hard pellets of significance. In our minds they become digested just as food does, and eventually build up one’s real language, which is not dictionary language but one’s total power of expressing oneself. This total power is waste & void, a milky chaos of rumbles & rumors & chance associations. Then the verbal spirit broods on it & brings it to its real life, the structure of the creative word. Naturally, I think more is involved here than a figure of speech. (CW 8: 314)

**Total Simultaneous Apprehension.** Literature moves in time.The words are heard, if you are listening to somebody read them.They are heard silently in your own mind if you are reading them.But, then,we start using metaphors of seeing when it comes to total understanding, and that is because it all pulls together in a single structure, which is there in a way that a painting is there. Music is the same. You listen to the music when it is performed, but if you have a score of the music, you spread it out in front of you and see it all there at once. And these metaphors get incorporated into things like the experience of God in the Bible, where after the Fall we hear the voice of God from the burning bush on. But we hear it because the voice which is heard is the starting point for a human action, whereas what is seen brings you to a halting place, to a stopping point. You are there. That is one reason why there is a bit of recurrent suspicion in the three religions based on the biblical tradition––Judaism, Christianity, Islam––about representation of the Godhead. The visibility of such things seems to imply a total understanding, which, of course, they don’t get. But as metaphors they do refer to the power that the moving arts and the stationary arts play respectively in our experience. The visibility of the Book of Revelation at the end of the Bible, where the author is continually saying what he saw in a vision, is designed to express the fact that the narrative of the Bible is moving up towards the suggestion of this total simultaneous apprehension. (“Seeing, Hearing, Praying, Loving”)

**The Tradition.** Contemporary thought expends a good deal of its energy in predicting the philosophy just around the corner in terms of the swing of a Hegelian pendulum. We have gone too far in this or that direction: there is bound to be a reaction in that or this direction: such is the monotonous argument of innumerable books written today. In making this reaction we will “go back to” some thinker we have neglected, or we will move further away from him and view with alarm, as a symptom of decadence, what he stood for. All this seems to me to be bosh. Whether the future be inevitable or not, there can be no doubt the past is, and the past extends to the present and conditions it at every point. We are not at liberty to free ourselves from the rhythm of history as it sweeps us along the moving dot we call the present: if we are born in a tradition, we have to do the best we can with that tradition. (CW 3: 410)

**Transformations.** Freud was a conservative pessimist transformed by disciples into a revolutionary optimist; Marx was a Utopian transcender of history transformed into a determinist of “historicity.” (CW 5: 220)

**Translatable and Untranslatable Doctrines.**Note the difference between translatable & nontranslatable doctrines. The theory of contract is foolish as long as it’s a fairy tale, passing a fiction off as a fact, as Mill says. Yet we don’t seem to shelve Hobbes or Rousseau, because, translated from fairy tale in past to analysis in present, their contract theories make sense. So do some theological arguments. Perhaps the whole point is really here: whatever can be translated from past to present terms, like the argument of the Bible, is canonical; whatever cannot be is dead, or at any rate not yet brought to life. I think a translation of the Ptolemaic universe, which is finite but unbounded, is just around the corner, & translations of humor & planetary temperament theories are to come later. The nine orders of angels & other astrological stuff would be still later. The translation of alchemy has already begun. (CW 23: 49)

**Translations of the Bible.** Now in the translating of the Bible there are three elements. One is that of sound, the associative-dissociative element. I have notes on this: it’s what corresponds to voices. Next come the sown dragon’s teeth, the voices of concepts, the fighting voices. Then follows the mandala of peaceful deities, the hieroglyphs, tree, mountain, city, garden, river. Here the root word is translatable; the symbolic overtones may not be. (CW 13: 197)

In a state of complete nervous exhaustion—partly too much priestcraft & cure of souls. I seem however to have to go on with theological speculations. One involves the translation of the Bible. I keep telling my kids that you can’t just translate the Bible, but have to make up your mind on the basis of your own theology about ecclesia, metanoia, arton epiousion, presbyteros & episcope. I say that there are consistent Catholic & Protestant translations of the Bible, but no consistent impartial ones. Now I know what the Catholic consistency is: it’s a belief in the priority of the Church to the Bible, so from that point of view you can translate the Bible only into the language of Church doctrine. That for me is a circular but very efficient paradox. But what is Protestant consistency?

Doesn’t it stake its case on the possibility of an absolutely impartial translation, so as to keep the Word over the Church’s head? If not, isn’t a Protestant translation just as sacerdotal, & if so what’s the shape of its Church? To me the Catholic case is overthrown by the mere possibility of an alternative translation, but what Protestantism implies I don’t know, except that it certainly is not private judgement or reason or conscience or archaeological evidence that takes priority. In every case the Catholic church-consistency must be polarized by something with an open top. (CW 8: 163–4)

**Transubstantiating Moment.** Dylan Thomas in the *Winter’s Tale* puts the crisis in the line “And the bird descended.” The descent of the bird-spirit at the moment of birth *and* consummation *and* death is the transubstantiating moment, as in the Eastern mass, where Epiphany replaces Christmas. (CW 5: 176)

**Triforma Genitalia.** Dante is in the final canto of *Paradiso* really looking into the secrets of God, as per I Cor. ii, 10. Three circles with Christ in the middle, but Christ elongates into a cruciform shape in which Dante recognizes the source & seed of his own life. That’s the three-formed genital organ of creation, of which the mystic rose of the creature is the feminine counterpart. I daresay that would shock a lot of people, including Dante himself, but only because we’re afraid of the other sterile prick of the mountain of purgatory, aimed at paradise but not quite getting there. Dante was misled by the false doctrine of purgatory, I think, & couldn’t see that the mountain was the Tower of Babel, ejaculating a seed that never fertilizes but, like Onan’s [Genesis 38:8–9], falls back to the earth. (CW 8: 142)

**Trilogies.** I notice that in science fiction there’s a frequently repeated form of a trilogy (usually) in which a new world is created: Frank Herbert’s Dune books, Isaac Asimov’s Foundation, Ursula LeGuin’s Earthsea or something, Roger Zelazny’s Amber books, and a set by Philip Jose Farmer called “Riverrun,” hardly up to the others. These trilogies owe a great deal to the prestige of Tolkien, and are rather routinely and drearily compared to Tolkien in the blurbs. But the Eddison Memison books were in the field earlier, and William Morris, though he wrote no trilogy as such, certainly wrote a lot of damn long books about some world at the end of ours. (CW 15: 319)

**Trouble at Alberta.** John Irving told me a curious story about Reymes-King, whose thesis he saw in my study. Reymes-King used to be at Alberta, which means he was under not only Newton, who is a bastard, but Mrs. Newton, who is one of the great bitches of all time. I’ve heard a lot of stories about her before, from people like Mary Winspear who know the place, & was prepared to hear that the way she abuses her position is, in that most inaccurate phrase, out of this world. She’s clearly a lunatic, but unfortunately a malignant lunatic, & one of her little tricks is to sit in on professor’s classes & take over the discussion. Usually the poor jerk who is the victim of this royal favor has to stand there with a glassy smile & pretend to like it, because it’s his job, but Reymes-King didn’t: he told her to get the hell out. So she went raging back to Newton & told him to fire Reymes-King, and, as she’s never a woman to do things by halves, added that he’d tried to seduce her. That, I gather, would take a man who was blind, deaf, a sexual pervert & a total stranger to her. Newton brought the case to the Board of Governors, most of whom are, like himself, machine-tooled Social Credit politicians. But one of the old guard brought in a motion that Reymes-King should not be fired & that Newton should be, & it almost carried. That’s why Hunter lasted two years longer: Newton was trying to fire him when he was interrupted by the screams of his wife clutching her pants. So Reymes-King went to Western Reserve, where he has to get a Ph.D to hold the chairmanship of the Department. (CW 8: 357)

**Truth-Telling and Lying.** What mainly emerged from my radio talk on *1984* was: truth is less a virtue than a sign of a healthy functioning mind. Lying weakens the will & makes one like a machine, with no will of one’s own, and instrumental to another’s will. The link with the machine is of course modern, but the association of truth & liberty is of very long standing: links with the oratorical tradition. The Houyhnhnms abhor lying because they are free: in the aristocratic code the lie direct is the deadliest of insults because the deadliest threat to social domination. The noble, unlike the base, can afford to tell the truth. (CW 9: 48)

**The Two Worlds.** The average Victoria College student in the nineteenth century, coming from a Methodist background, found himself in a world that was split imaginatively rather than intellectually.In front of him was a tough, gritty, competitive world of nineteenth century Upper Canada. Tucked away in a corner of his mind, and given an airing on devotional occasions, was a world of magic, wonder and mystery, in which Jonah could spend three days in a fish’s belly and Elijah could go up to heaven in a chariot of fire. The split between the two worlds enabled most students to deal with the contemporary world before them very effectively on its own terms. But having the other world on their minds helped to keep a cultural balance**.**(“Victoria’s Contribution to the Development of Canadian Culture”)

Man lives in two real worlds, one spiritual, the other natural, physical, or psychic. In the spiritual world God exists in us and we in him: a paradox that only metaphorical language can begin to express. In this world nature exists in us and we in it, but here the centralizing principle, or ego, is constantly trying to isolate itself. The spirit interpenetrates with its world but never violates: our interpenetration makes war, as Heraclitus said, the centre of all activity, because it’s always withdrawing to objectify. (CW 5: 416)

**Typology.** Typology, which differs from allegory in that both elements are equally real, implies a theory of historical process: there has to be something concealed within history that works toward an epiphany in history. External views of history, like the cyclical view, won’t fit it. (CW 13: 349)

**Tyrannical Mythology.** Rousseau may wonder why man is born free & yet is everywhere in chains, but it was Blake who realized that as long as man lives within a hierarchical or tyrannical mythology, all his social institutions will be of the same shape. (CW 5: 309)

**Tyranny of the Circle.** I’ve got sound intuitions, but I wish I could get away from the tyranny of the circle: it won’t all go on it, & I badly need another lead. (CW 9: 157)

U

**Ultimate Concern.** One can’t live a day without being concerned about food, but one can live all one’s life without being concerned about God: hence the religious concern, even if “ultimate,” as Tillich says, isn’t primary. (CW 6: 543)

**Ulysses and Linear Rhythm.** It is difficult to say anything about Ulysses: it is so universal a book, tackles so many problems, and is buttressed on so many sides that it is like a universal philosophy, like Christianity or communism, which we must either criticize exhaustively and sympathetically or make inane remarks and later flapping gestures. Certainly it restored a rhythm to the novel which had not been in it since *Tristram Shandy*: it summed up and finished the analysis of character & started prose fiction toward the interpretation of symbolism and cohering of consciousness. Prose should have developed through the *Anatomy of Melancholy* and the great 17th c. writers and not been deflected by Bunyan and Defoe as poetry was deflected by Milton. The Bible is the archetype of the kind of writing I mean. But *Ulysses* seems to me to be too self-conscious an attack. It is paralyzed by a self-conscious intellect, and I’m not sure that the entire book “comes off” rhythmically as a whole. It is this consistent linear rhythm that makes Rabelais immortal.Joyce’s medium I think is a shorter one: the separate units of *Dubliners* or the simpler linear scheme of the *Portrait* give a clearer effect; and while there is no finer writing in literature than the brothel scene or Marion Bloom’s monologue there seems no sense of integration into a larger unit. The *Odyssey* has a climax. *Ulysses* wanders interminably and the crisis comes when he comes home. This crisis is marked by a terrific impact: the slaughter of the suitors. . . . the brothel scene is a little off centre and the monologue is a coda. Again, some of the symbols like the Hely’s walking sign and so on are arbitrarily chosen and I feel like that a symbol should respond to an inherent requirement into the whole design. The metamorphosis symbol is better chosen but doesn’t quite come off––I may be making a fool of myself of course.(“1932 Notebook,” 5 November)

**Unconscious Symbolism and Linguistic Echoes.**One of my favorite themes is the extent & ramifications of unconscious symbolism in life. I know, for instance, that the hammer & sickle in the Russian flag is symbolism; I have no doubt that the swastika was not adopted by chance; I therefore suspect a less conscious but still latent symbolism in the predominance of the red white & blue in flags of plutocracies. I don’t know what it is, but I think it’s there. I believe that the left– radical and right (recht)–reactionary associations are not chance. Kay Coburn tells me she knows a left-handed man who talks in terms of a left-handers’ revolution. The tribe of Benjamin in Judges. People don’t select such awkward & inconvenient images (even real left-wingers think of themselves as left instead of in front) at random. Also the echoes in history. Ripley collected the Taillefer– Eisenhower point. If the name of the Titanic is so obviously symbolic, why not the Lusitania, with its Atlantean overtones? Also name-groupings: Shelley–Schelling–Schlegel and others in romanticism, Whitman–Whistler–Whittier in 19th c. America, Manet & Monet, Hitler–Himmler– Hirohito, the Samuel Butlers, Jo(h)nsons and Bacons in England. Also geography: the parallelism in shape between South America & Africa; Europe–Asia with the three southern peninsulas & the big island power. If you don’t occasionally give way to uncontrolled speculation of this sort you’ll miss big things when they come along. Spengler notes a Goethe–Gothic one—he would. These coincidences attract a part of our minds, & a poetic, synthesizing, punning part; so it’s part of the mental patterns we impose on experience. (CW 15: 31)

**Unifable.** There’s not much doubt that myths do stick together and that there are monomyths, if it’s possible to pluralize the word. In Christian stories like Barlaam and Josaphat, once a preacher gets started, it’s almost impossible to get him to stop until he’s summarized the whole damn Bible, plus the doctrine of the Trinity and plugs for anything currently fashionable, like images or asceticism. Apollodorus and, of course, Ovid show the same kind of thing true in Greek myth, in a more relaxed form. The question I want to look at is, is there such a thing as a unifable, in my sense of the term fabulous? (CW 15: 199)

**Uniqueness.** First, uniqueness is not in itself worth studying, the world’s worst poem being as unique as the best; second, uniqueness is unknowable. We cannot know the literary work except in terms of what is typical. (CW 13: 129)

**Unity and Multiplicity.** I know that the theory of metaphor is very complex, or has been made so by exuberant philosopher-critics, but I want to explain its basic principle very simply. A statement of identity like A is B introduces us to a universe in which unity and multiplicity are alternating aspects of the same phenomena. Paul’s Christ in me and I in Christ is the obvious introduction. Again, Whitehead surrounds his principle of interpenetration by talking about the prehension of an event and its relation to other events: particularity and totality make nonsense without each other. (CW 6: 619)

**Unity of the Bible.** It is historically impossible that the Bible could have achieved such a unity of structure and imagery, over such a variety of periods and authors. But as the unity is there, so much the worse for history. (CW 5: 212)

**Universe.** The etymology of “universe” suggests that everything turns around a centre, that centre being the personal centre that calls it a universe. (CW 5: 273)

**Upper and Lower Epiphanies**. I suppose there are once again two points of epiphany, an upper one of the symposium; the group drinking wine & becoming one body, and a lower one of the of the dead—Lucian & the black-comic people from Strindberg to Beckett. . . . The upper may qualify Buber’s insistence that he & she are ultimately part of the It-world. The angel, the messenger speaking for someone else, is what’s involved. (CW 5: 606)

**USA/USSR.** Cold War & concern: U.S.S.R.: food shortages, sexual prudery, abolition of property, rigid restrictions on freedom of movement. U.S.A.: excessive food, including junk food, indiscriminate copulation, reduced to fear of disease to rutting in rubber; anarchic grabbing of money & power, restless, incessant nomadic movement. More tolerant but still hard on creation. (CW 6: 719)

**Useful and Fine Arts.** The difference between useful-minor & fine-major arts is the difference between work & the vision of work. The latter is liberal, disinterested, speculative, released. It’s above, e.g. theology, which is never disinterested. Theology is not part of culture or liberal education: here Newman is wrong &Arnold right. Well, anyway, the artist is the *producer* of culture, so he doesn’t necessarily possess it. The possessor is the consumer—the critic in the broadest sense. (CW 23: 234)

**Usefulness.** Legend says Faraday was asked what was the use of what he was doing and said what’s the use of a newborn baby? Legend amplifies the asker (it always amplifies) into Queen Victoria. The correct answer is: “Madam, who the hell are you that anything should be useful to you?” (CW 6: 624)

**Utopias.** I don’t think that one can assume that all Utopian vision is satiric, except negatively a by implication. That is, a writer may be setting up a social model that he actually believes will work, and is quite serious about it. There would be no satire except in the contrast with the state of affairs around him. At the same time few people would want to live in anyone else’s Utopia. Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* was a vision of Boston in 2000 published in 1889, and many people hailed it as the book that started them thinking seriously about social problems. On the other hand, many people would regard it as a quite intolerable social vision including William Morris, whose *News from Nowhere* was written as a counterblast to it. I think there are very few women writers of Utopias because until quite recently women were more preoccupied with the discriminations and unfair treatment of them in 0065isting society. Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Rights of Women* would be an example. (Letter to Ryan Stern, 8 May 1987)

**Utopia and Social Contract.** There are two political ideas that can only be expressed mythologically, the Utopia & the social contract. One is the myth of *telos*, the secular apocalypse (millennium), the other the myth of origin, the secular creation-fall. Both are based on an analysis of the *present* facts of society. (CW 9: 7)

V

**Vade Mecum.** I would hope to be able to contribute a vade mecum to the present journey through the valley of the shadow. *The Critical Path* (the significance of title is greater than I realized) may be such a vade mecum, a small unpretentious book of some sanity and sequence. The present book, if I bring it off, may be much larger in scope than that—it will certainly be larger—and it may even become prophetic, a sacred book like the ones it studies. (CW 9: 270)

**Value-Judgments.** Value-judgements are working assumptions, but nothing can be built on them. They buttress experience but not knowledge, & lead to no discoveries. (CW 13: 321)

I do not think that contemporary criticism is highly enough organized to know what all the factors of goodness, value, or worth in poetry are. I am trying to contribute one of these neglected factors, that of integrity of symbolism or intensity of poetic thought (the former being the manifestation of the latter). Once accepted for Milton, my suggestions make many judgements of value now in existence completely irrelevant. Until some objective standards are established in criticism, judgements of values will be primarily hunches, based on intuitive tastes which go out of focus as soon as the critic moves from taste to prejudice, as he must do sooner or later. I believe that, within limits, flexible & liberal objective standards of criticism are possible. (CW 23: 25–6)

**Vanity.** The resistance of the autonomy of consciousness to becoming a natural object leads to the principle of “vanity,” the futility of trying to create a paradisal environment. We do this by trying to possess something in the fog world, & whatever we try to possess we get taken over by (Jesus on treasure & heart [Luke 6:45]). When a master owns a slave he gets taken over by the psychology of slavery & becomes the slave of his slaves. Whatever you have sooner or later has you. (CW 13: 237)

**Ventilating Jesus.** Stained glass windows with panes in them that can be tipped sideways strike me as a bit of an anachronism. In ventilating the church one might incidentally ventilate Jesus.(“1932 Notebook,” 18 April)

**Verbal Coincidences.** From the historical point of view most verbal coincidences are accidents:

Kunst nach Gunst; Der Mensch ist, was er isst?; God is good; the Italian version of “a translator is a betrayer,” and so on. From my point of view I am not so sure. The whole crisis in Christian doctrine over whether Christ was an allegory or a reality, of like or of the same substance, was fought over literally one jot of difference: *homousios* vs. *homoiousios*that seems to me the historical crisis of the whole argument. Again, cabbalism based on YHWH may have been foolish, but is not the sound identical with Iove, which does not seem to be etymologically related? And what about Christ & Krishna? In English there is one “l” of a difference between the Creator & the Creature, the Word & the World. Dante’s whole allegory, political & moral, rests on a palindrome: Amor– Roma, just as Parmenides’ philosophy of being rests on the ambiguity of “is” as copula & verb of existence. That sort of thing. (CW 15: 57)

**Verbal Perception.** The aphorism is a verbal *perception*: that is, it’s a verbal analogy of a *Gestalt* perception. We often speak of it as a perception. And the quality I so admire in Burton and struggle for myself is verbal *outline*, a verbal analogy of powerful sketching that contains a great mass of facts. (CW 9: 25)

**Verbal Structures as Organisms.** It is difficult to avoid the analogy of the organism when talking about verbal structures. An organism assimilates part of its environment—i.e., it eats it—and adapts to the rest. Its relation to what it eats is metaphorical & its relation to what it merely lives with is metonymic. (CW 5: 64)

**Verbal Universe.**The verbal universe transcends history, & so it presents all writers as contemporaneous. It transcends philosophy, & so far as I can see at present it is only in the verbal universe that all religions are one. (CW 23: 134)

**Verse Libre.** The great religious mystics, like Blake and Bunyan, write in a *vers libre* form because art is subordinate to religion with them.*Vers libre* means equating the line with the idea; modern prose equates the sentence with the idea and the two forms approach. The best *vers libre* written today is the “prose” of Bernard Shaw, whose long sentences are rhetorical, to be spoken in a breath, like a line of Whitman’s. Similarly the antiphonal chant of Chesterton’s prose is *vers libre*. The attempts of Wilde and Pater to pull prose over into poetry are a romantic back-looking perversion of this tendency. The two movements are seldom carefully distinguished. Opponents of *vers libre* say it means the degradation of poetry into prose. In both prose and poetry, however, a steadily increasing

colloquialism is obvious with which will merge the two provinces into the diatribe.(“1932 Notebook,” 26 June)

**Vertical Vision.** Vico’s ricorso, Spengler’s organic culture, Yeats’s double gyre, Wells’s onward and upward from primeval slime to cocksure cockney, the Marxist historical process, Tolstoy’s chaos view: all these are metahistorical constructs. . . . Nietzsche’s identical recurrence, derived partly from Virgil and echoed by Shelley. God, what a lot of horseshit. The panhistorical fantasies of Hegel, Marx, and Newman. The horizontal vision alone is never enough, and the statement “I believe only in history” is as asinine a pronouncement as any conscious mind can get past its teeth. Only the vertical vision, even if it’s some impossible apocalyptic dream of the end of history as we know it, gives any dignity or integrity to human life. (CW 6: 662)

**Verum Factum.** *Verum factum*: we understand only what we make, and have to look for reality in what we make and not in what we stare at. When a work of literature confronts us, as a royal metaphor that’s a focus of a community, it compels us to see it in a dimension of time beyond that of mere sequence. (CW 6: 540)

**Victoria College.** Bernard Shaw had knocked the wind out of me at fifteen, and I started my sophomore year fascinated by dramatic patterns (a repertory company was doing comedies in Toronto at the time) and with an interest in Blake that got going my third year. My next summer (even at the time I was using my summers academically) saw an embryonic anatomy theory begin to shape itself in my notes, and of course it was that summer that I found myself reading Spengler in the Edmonton YMCA—one of the great nights of my life, & one that unknown to me had converted me into a critic of my own distinctive kind. My fourth year brought me to a fascinated study of Romanticism, and theology, besides shaking up an interest in Biblical typology that had been in my mind as long as I can remember, brought Frazer, & with Frazer the key to drama. At that point the logical evolution of my ideas was interrupted by having to flounder through two years at Oxford, get myself established as a lecturer, and try to pound my Blake ideas into a thesis shape. The years 1936-40, during which I married, were my awkward age. In 1941 I began to revive, wrote “Music & Poetry”& my first anatomy article, & the next year started Blake in earnest. By 1944 the vast abstraction had finally become transparent, and I began to think of further books. (CW 25: 28– 9)

**Virgin.** The virgin symbolizes a descent into a lower world: she’s so divinely beautiful because she carries the beauty of a higher kind of existence into that world. The other side of this is the fatality of such beauty: everybody who looks at her gets an erection like the Tower of Babel. Providence prevents her from getting raped, which would destroy the archetype of the higher world; and while she’s normally a sacrificial victim, the same providence prevents the consummation of the sacrifice. The virgin’s marriage & first fuck, as aforesaid, symbolizes her entering the cycle to go with it. Two Helens, a virginal one and an abducted one. (CW 15: 206)

**Virgin Birth.** Now the Church of England’s in a tizzy because one of its bishops says he “doesn’t believe in” the Virgin Birth. The time will come when such a statement will be greeted by hoots of derision, as illiterate nonsense. But we don’t yet have a post-literary theory of belief. I’d like to help formulate one, and I think I could on the basis of the *hypostasis* and *elenchos* of the Hebrews definition

[Hebrews 11:1]. What have substance & proof of unseen things hoped for got to do with

“believing” that in 4 B.C. an unpopped virgin gave birth? Everybody *really* knows that trying to “believe in” such things is hysteria. I’ve got the “literal meaning” point fairly clear, but not this. One accepts the totality of the symbolic picture, but doesn’t refer the details to history. But I’ve got to work harder than that. (CW 5: 69)

Somebody asked me about the Virgin Birth on Tuesday & I was afraid to say I thought it was nonsense, not because of the repercussions, but because of the nature of my influence. I may return to the point & say something like this: the Virgin Birth is in the Gospels because of Isaiah’s prophecy where the word translated in the Septuagint as παρθενος [*parthenos*] means simply young woman. Hence, though the Virgin Birth is scriptural, there is another sense in which it is apocryphal, & so, while Protestantism accepts it, it tends, in striking contrast to the Catholic doctrine, to become unfunctional. This business of the larger basis of dogma is a difficult point of dialectic. It’s easy for the idiot questioner to grin at a failure to fit his so-called logical patterns, such as, for instance, the question of canon. The basis of admitting only Hebrew texts to the O.T. is absurdly arbitrary, & while there’s no logical way of rebuilding the canon, it is none the less true that it does you far more good to read the Book of Wisdom than Chronicles. It is of course possible that a complete symbolic pattern would define the true canon. (CW 8: 155–6)

**Virgin Mary.** The Virgin Mary represents the expansion from sex into spiritual love: she’s the mother of the Word but the bride of the Spirit. (CW 5: 382)

**Vision.** We tend to think in threes, & have always felt that there was a Third Age just on the way. If there is, it would be an Age in which faith was subordinate, not to action as in the age of the Mother Goddess, but to vision. Vision is love, of course; not love as emotion but charity. Christianity has always really talked of faith in these terms, but we keep missing it. (Notebook 13)

I got tired of Ruskin, for obvious reasons, but I think I should go back to him again, because I think he’s fundamentally right in his feeling that a knowledge of anagogy is based on a knowledge of nature. I’ve said that, after writing the Blake to learn what vision is about, my next job is to find out about vision, and I think the direct line of development is through Blake’s iconography to the universal language, in which I see one outlet of artistic expression gradually foreshortening & shrivelling up into the blocks of new buildings. Now that I see the direct line from Blake to the mystics, & have an idea of the differences along the other fork taken by the occultists, I shouldn’t be very easy to derail. (CW 15: 36–7)

In vision there is focussed vision & peripheral vision, visual awareness which is not really seeing, but which expresses itself in a kinesthetic sense of orientation. Much in the rational tradition is based on the analogy of vision: there is truth or reality on which we focus, a peripheral “posse.” I’ve just been reading a book in the yogi tradition: Ouspensky’s *In Search of the Miraculous*—which carries this analogy to the limit of completely eliminating the peripheral vision. (CW 23: 268)

**Visionary.** The term “visionary” began in the writing of my early book on Blake where, first of all, I had to get rid of all the stuff that had been written on Blake, which was almost entirely trash. There was only one book that was at all useful at the time when I was starting on Blake’sProphecies, and that was Foster Damon’s. And so many of these books said that Blake was a mystic and mystics do this, that, and the other thing. And I wondered why Blake wasn’t doing any of these things, and why he talked so insistently about his being a poet, an artist, a painter. I arrived therefore at a distinction, in fact, almost a contrast between a mystic like, say, John of the Cross, who eventually moves in the direction of getting rid of images, and the visionary who goes after images. And that is what I mean by “visionary.” It’s rather like the visions of plenitude and vacancy in Eliot’s *Quartets*. (“Romance as Secular Scripture”)

**Vision of Community.** Regarding the subject of resurrection, I’d like to think more about the nature of mandala vision. I’ve got it clear now that the privacy of prayer & spiritual communion is not introspection, but the discovery of a community, and charity is action in the light of such a discovery. Things like Jesus’ apocalypses, Paul’s conversion & his third heaven passage], Stephen’s vision, Pentecos, Revelation, all show that vision of this community is a physical possibility, & that the veil of nature was getting pretty thin around the first century. This seems to me the real form of the “eschatological” nonsense, which is a perversion of it. (CW 8: 315)

**Vision of Form.** Masterpiece and classic don’t mean inherent formal qualities but a locus of social acceptance. Perhaps they emerge when acceptance becomes recognition, a vision of form irradiating it. (CW 15: 253)

**Voice of God.** Just as in the Bible we cannot distinguish the voice of God from the voice of the Deteronomic redactor, so in the Koran we cannot distinguish the voice of the angel Gabriel from the voice of Mohammed in a bad temper. (CW 13: 205)

**W**

**Wagering on Faith.** Consider the nonconformist distinction between assent and conviction, and Newman’s parallel distinction between notional & real assent. There is an ambiguity in the conception of faith that Newman dodges. The myth, down to Romanticism, had two aspects, theoretical & practical. Theoretically, it was a structure of coherence, addressed to the reason or imagination; but accepted “on faith,” because (a) it had no sense experience check (b) its major premises were simply given. This myth of coherence (theoria) was also a praxis, a programme of action. As such it’s Pascal’s wager, Vaihinger’s conception of assumed fictions being the Kantian form of it. Even *Grace Abounding* has a passage saying that Bunyan will wager on his structure of coherence even if it’s horseshit. Now, this program of action is the faith one is justified by: a man’s real beliefs are what his actions show he believes. What he says he believes, or inwardly believes he believes, that is, his profession, is a symbol of belonging, a statement about the social institution he’s attached to. (CW 9: 66–7)

**Wartime Travel and Touring.** I wonder how far-reaching the stopping of travel & touring will be: an enormous amount of our economy was tied up with it: in the Maritimes, for instance, the roads were a solid line of piss-and-postcard places between villages, where they thickened. Unsound economy, certainly, but wiping it out is a revolution of no small proportions. The effect will be healthiest in Quebec, I think, which was freezing into a Maria Chapdelaine pose of ye olde picturesque rutting & rooting queynte paysan, with of course the Fascist Catholic twist—the Vichious circle of church, pub, field & kitchen. (CW 8: 40–1)

**Wasted Time and Energy.** Myths that become purely ideological freeze into pseudo-history and become events that “really happened.” Think of all the time and energy that could have gone into the development of science wasted on trying to prove the historicity of the Fall or the Flood. Similarly with the Gospels, natch. Realizing that all spiritual truths have a literally imaginative basis could have saved all that. (CW 6: 654)

**The Way.** Francis Huxley says the ideogram for Tao means, or includes, both “step” and “stop,” both a “way” of movement and of thought. He compares Latin *sentis*, path, &*sentire*. In the Bible the image of way or pilgrimage runs into a full stop with Jesus’ “I am the way.” (CW 5: 155)

**Way of Ignorance.** The tentative working title of the [second Bible] book is “The Way of Ignorance,” a phrase from the Quartets, I think *East Coker*, where Eliot is paraphrasing St. John of the Cross and saying to arrive at what you do not know you must go by the way of ignorance. (CW 6: 524)

**Wedgwoods.** I had dinner with Veronica Wedgwood and her father [Sir Ralph] last night. It was quite thrilling to have a chauffeur call for you in the family car, a maid to announce you by name, a butler to say that dinner was served and then serve it—I had read all about that, but never saw the process in operation before. Wedgwood has a fine library, is very interested in Shakespeare, and has some etchings, including two Rembrandts and two Whistlers. Veronica is going to Edinburgh, but we’ve more or less arranged to meet again at Christmas, unless she happens to come to Oxford during term. She does work on seventeenth-century history, I understand—I’ve promised to lend her my copy of Spengler when it arrives. (CW 2: 578)

**Wellek, René.** René Wellek sends me his review of the Blake in *Modern Language Notes*. A stupid and ignorant review by a stuffed shirt. (CW 8: 74)

**The White Guard**. A woman in Kiev said, “I am going to take you to the house that Bulgakov was living in when he wrote *The White Guard*,” because a scene in the novel is laid in that house. So she took me there, and before telling me anything about the house she went out with a bouquet of flowers she had brought along and put it beside the door. In other words, it wasn’t a matter of admiring a novelist; it was a visit to a shrine to somebody who had become for her a saint and a hero, because he had spent his life in resisting the tyranny in his own country.That is a measure, I think, of the degree to which the general cultural attitudes have changed. It’s not so much a matter of changing, perhaps, as a release of things which are always there but which were never allowed to emerge. (“Soviet Union and Russia”)

**Why.** It isn’t *that* the 1920s poets were all fascinated by staircases and ladders and towers and spiralling mountains: it’s *why* they were. It isn’t *that* the French symbolistes were fascinated by John the Baptist’s severed head and descents to nothingness: it’s *why* they were. (CW 5: 280)

**Why Write?** The object of my essays is to provide a theory of literature which will be as primary a humanistic & liberal pursuit as its practice. (CW 23: 245)

**Will-Worship.** The theory of democracy about the will of the people being the source of government is, in that form, just will-worship like Calvin’s. (CW 8: 46)

**Wisdom.** Inexhaustible riches of wisdom in great philosophy & poetry, yet it is possible to be a great thinker or a great writer, an infinite source of wisdom, yet be not a wise man, even a positively foolish man. Wisdom in writing arises from the shaping of verbal patterns, the joy of realizing a shapeless potency of words. Wisdom in life arises from putting a shapeless potency of *experience* into proposed or hypothetical activity. (CW 9: 58)

**Wish.** The yogis claim that the most childish thing you can say is “I wish.” If you want something, either go after it or get past the stage where you think you want it. Bullshit. The minute you say “I wish” you’re starting to construct a model. It may be only a Land-of-Cockaigne model, but it’s the beginning of imaginative life. The thing is that when it leaves the imaginative and enters the practical sphere (which is what the yogis are talking about) it becomes the “I want it all and I want it now” motto of yuppie-puppies. And that is childish. (CW 5: 236)

**Woman.** Woman is the *best* work of creation. (CW 9: 224)

**Women.**I sometimes feel that women are bad for morale: they go in for catastrophe, funerals & oracles. They’re the sex of Cassandra, and they’re extremely short on humor. They hate obscenity, an essential part of humor, and the female magazines never go in for it. Cartoons, jokes, breezy comic stories, have little place in the *Ladies Home Journal*. It isn’t just mediocrity: the male magazines for mediocrities always have humor: but what the average woman wants is something maudlin to attach her complex of self-pity and I-get-left-at-home and my-work-is-never-done and nobodyappreciates-it-anyway to. There’s something morbid about the domestic mind which weeps at weddings & gets ecstatic over calamities. During the war they keep making woo-woo noises prophesying large drafts & taxes with no we’ll-get-along-somehow reserve. Partly of course because they’re not in it. If people only believed in immortality & a world of spiritual values! But it might only make the war more ferocious. (CW 8: 35)

**Women and War.** It is curious how wars are immortalized by the women they bring into prominence. I suppose that men who fight in wars cannot help being a little ashamed of them, and they seize eagerly at whatever has seemed pure and holy by way of justification. The Hundred Years’ War is as extinct as the dodo to all but a few pedants, but Joan of Arc lives on. The Crimean War, in spite of the Charge of the Light Brigade, has disappeared from contemporary consciousness, but Florence Nightingale has not. The War of 1812, brought on by a howling mob of savages on the western frontier of the United States through a time-serving politician who wanted their votes, has been forgotten by Canadians except for the legend of Laura Secord. So it seems fairly reasonable to infer that in the world of tomorrow Edith Cavell will be the only coherent memory of the “Great” war. (“1932 Notebook,” 2 September)

**Woolf and Forster.**I’ve just reread *To the Lighthouse* and am now rereading *A Passage to India*. The first has three sections: an exposition, an analytical or sparagmos development, and a recapitulation. Two themes: getting to the Lighthouse and the painter Lily Briscoe’s vision. Neither comes off in Part One: in Part Three they come off simultaneously: Mrs. Ramsay holds a society of 15 people, including a husband and eight children, together in Part One: she has nothing to do with the failure to get to the lighthouse, but does seem to have something to do with frustrating Lily’s vision. In the middle section she and two of her children die. I’m not sure I’ve got it, but the theme of descent in the middle is essential. In *Passage to India* there are three parts, the middle one again a descent. Christian-Moslem axis in One; Christian]-Hindu in Three: in between, the descent to caves (which contain mirrors) disintegrates the society and takes them down to the bedrock of pure ego (I compared it once to the voice in Dostoievsky’s *Notes from Underground*) that turns Mrs. Moore from a Hindu goddess into a tired & crabby old. (CW 5: 347)

**Word.** Just as physics leads to one unmoved mover, so literature leads to one Word, never spoken & yet containing all words. The opening of the Chandogya Upanishad symbolizes him as “Aum.” It’s Jesus & whatever the Hebrew (memra [“word” in Aramaic]) is, & the Tetragrammaton [YHWH]. (CW 23: 47)

**Word and Spirit See-Saw.** The colossal masterpiece associated with the name of Luke contains a gospel and the “Acts” of the apostles. The gospel begins with the Incarnation, the Word coming down and the Spirit, presumably, having accomplished his mission, going up. The words up and down could not make it clearer that this is the language of metaphor. Acts begins with the Ascension, followed by Pentecost: in other words the Word goes up and the Spirit comes down.

What the Spirit comes down with is the gift of tongues, the creative descent of which the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis is a parody, Babel being the effort of the natural man to create a unified social enterprise that leads to the confusion of tongues. If we listen to the speech around us, we learn what the natural man’s language is like: it is mostly “babble,” a word marking its descent from the Babel story. (CW 6:645)

**Word of God.**The Word of God made man” is orthodox. “The Word of God was made man” is orthodox. So what’s wrong with saying “The Word of Man made man and was made man”? (CW 13: 319)

**Word vs. Deed.** Trotsky is said to have remarked, of the Russian formalists of his day, that they believed that in the beginning was the Word, whereas all good Marxists were committed to “in the beginning was the deed.”(CW 5: 6)

**Words of Power.** Wonder if the reason why gods are so anxious to punish boasts is that the boast could be or might become a word of power, and so genuinely threaten their supremacy? The implication would be that the Word is a power supreme over all divine wills in polytheism, the real form of the oath of power (swearing by the Styx). Warriors boast before battles, perhaps to strengthen themselves by what might be words of power. (CW 13: 273)

**World War II.**Anniversary of the war, so we’re told. It occurred to me a short while ago that I never really considered the possibility of our losing the war. I mean by that that I had never sat down and figured out how I could conscientiously go on living if we did. I’m beginning to understand how paralyzed, hopeless, hag-ridden and stupefied the average intellectual anti-Nazi on the European continent must be—or rather have been. (CW 8: 37)

**Worldliness.** The church & the world both educate, but the world does a far better job, & in modern society the relevance & value of a religion is gauged by the quality of its worldliness (i.e. its urbanity). Matthew Arnold’s argument, put on a historical basis, would be something like this: originally all cultural activities were in a sense religious. To the extent that *a* religion separated itself from the rest of culture, it started heading for sectarianism. To the extent that it rejoins the total body of culture, it improves itself as well as the culture. (CW 5: 73)

**Wrath.** All embittered failures & envious people have in them a kernel of genuine vision. The clairvoyant perception of other people’s stupidity is right in the main. This is wrath, the feeling I define as the opposite of irritation. The human mind is incapable of persisting in wrath, as it has nothing better in its possession: it has to become what it beholds, & so is taken over by envy, jealousy, spite, & the rest. Jesus may be touching on this when he speaks of the house swept & garnished ready for more demons than ever. (CW 13: 66)

**Writing.** Aristotle’s comparison of discursive & poetic writing with syllogism & enthymeme is precisely the distinction Valéry makes between walking & dancing, instrumental & disinterested writing. Or rather, the first *is* writing, progressive & sequential movement; the second is the metaphorical leap. That’s how I can speak of philosophy as a conceptual displacement of poetry. (CW 9: 274)

I’m in that state of mind again—I don’t want to collect books or even read them. I want to write one. (CW 8: 303)

**Writing Group.**  I find having all that beauty & charm & health & youth in my office a bit overpowering: I find, not unnaturally, that I want to show off. I never worked that out of my system because, not being athletic, I couldn’t show off in the approved ways during the mating season. (CW 8: 274)

X

**X of the Double Gyre.** One of the things I find encouraging about this project is the way I’m being compelled to face things I’ve ducked in the AC: Poe’s *Eureka*, the epic circle, & the like. Browne’s quincunx, too. Because a lot of things seem to be converging on Yeats’ double gyre or hourglass figure, of which the X is one form: a conscious world where the mind is at the centre or top; a lower world where the mind is looking into itself below. “Poetic Cosmology”: it sounds like Vico. (CW 9: 190)

Y

**Yates, Frances.** Frances Yates is wonderful: the combination of sober documentation and the wildest guesswork is very exhilarating. Her book on Elizabethan occultism gives me another step: the descent to a world *below* hell, from which the creative ascent comes, is linked to the theme of creative melancholy. (CW 5: 51–2)

**Yea-Verily-and-ForsoothLingo.**Spell or charm, along with the total obliteration of the sense of a speaking personality, is the point of a style like Morris’ yea-verily-and-forsooth lingo. (CW 15: 285)

**Year of Writing.** 1951 was my year for wandering, relaxing, getting new perspectives, listening to gossip, picking up friends, and generally indulging myself in mildly extroverted pursuits. This year, my fortieth one, will, I hope, be a year of writing. My main ambition is to write a small, incisive book (eight chapters), to be called, for the public, *Essay on Poetics*. Its private name is *A First Essay on Poetics*. For a second essay, first attached to and then dropped from the one I’m immediately going to write, is also in my mind. I have also a number of articles to finish, including one on comedy that I have some hopes of. (CW 8: 462)

**Yeats, William Butler.**I must develop my ideas about Yeats. It’s just possible that Yeats can be explained as an extrovert who thought he must be an introvert because he was a poet, a shy man, and a diffident lover. His whole life is ridden by a passion for community: the group of courtiers in Castiglione would be heaven for him if he belonged to it. But it had to be a secure community: conspiratorial revolutionary work that was below instead of above the middle class he couldn’t stand. Hence he explores his mind with the clueless & desperate fascination that the introvert has for society. Organizing drama for him is “creation without toil”:he gets his secret society going first, and it’s only when he turns from people to a dogma & a set of ideas that he goes haywire. He didn’t want a religion; he wanted an aristocracy. (CW 8: 345)

**Yeats’s A Vision.** For most readers the only justification for studying *A Vision* is the fact that Yeats, in his own words, was fool enough to write a number of poems that are unintelligible without it. (Notebook 9)

**Yeats’s Demonic Instructors.** Yeats describes his instructors as being, or behaving like, disembodied intelligences, without caring much whether we take this metaphorically or descriptively. Accepting it as at least a metaphor, I should say, if the reader will detach the statement from moral disapproval or superstitious *frisson,* that Yeats’s instructors were obviously devils. That is, all they knew was the vision of life as hell, and hence, like other devils, they lacked a certain comprehensiveness of perspective. In Yeats himself their influence, though destructive, was not disastrous; but they were of the same family as those who have produced so much of the terror and hysteria of our time. (“Preface” to *Spiritus Mundi*)

**Yoga.** I feel that Yoga, like a golden age or great school in art, helps to develop and democratize the sort of development the mystics go through, instead of helplessly leaving it to the haphazard appearance of genius. I see nothing vulgar—quite the contrary—in adopting techniques for practising such developments. (CW 13: 15)

**Yowling.** The soul constantly yowls about being stuck with the body; the spirit is equally stuck with the soul, but it doesn’t yowl. (CW 6: 635)

Z

**Zagreb Epiphany.** Prelude-Impromptu: starts off with that loud flash I got at Zagreb: the ideal of spontaneity, where the moment of composition and the moment of performance are the same. I’ve written a fair amount about this, down to the *Tempest* as an imitation of an improvised knockedtogether commedia dell’arte. Writing brings a special dimension: in Mallarmé, one could almost say, the white paper sheet with “nothing” written on it comes first. The real point about *ars celare artum*[art lies in the concealment of art] is to present the product of a unified mind, the product being its own unity. (CW 5: 415)

**Zechariah and Mary.** In Luke 1 an angel comes to Zechariah & tells him Elizabeth will have a son. He says: “How shall this be? She’s too old.” The angel says: “All that will be taken care of, but you’ll be struck dumb for doubting.” In Luke 2 an angel comes to Mary and tells her she’ll have a son. She says “How shall this be? I’m a virgin.” Gabriel says only “All that will be taken care of.” Mary had Gabriel, who was a decent soul; poor Zechariah was stuck with a heavenly asshole. (CW 5: 406)

**Ziggurat.**  In Genesis, Jacob’s ladder (really a staircase) is the antitype of the Tower of Babel. The model for the latter is the Mesopotamian ziggurat (step pyramid in Egypt, perhaps), the temple in the middle of the city which is symbolically the connecting point between heaven and earth. The ziggurat usually has winding or spiral staircases, which were also in Solomon’s temple, even though it had only three stories. According to Herodotus, the ones in Babylon and Ecbatan had seven stories, coloured differently to represent the sequence of planets, with the chamber for the god’s bride on top. This last is the kernel of the next emblem, the garden or body of the bride. (CW 6: 583)