take it all back, and sure enough that's going to come but it will take time. First of all let us ask a rather simple question. How can we be sure, how can we tell, whether any utterance is to be classed as a performative or not? Surely, we feel, we ought to be able to do that. And we should obviously very much like to be able to say that there is a grammatical criterion for this, some grammatical means of deciding whether an utterance is performative. All the examples I have given hitherto do in fact have the same grammatical form; they all of them begin with the verb in the first person singular present indicative active—not just any kind of verb of course, but still they all are in fact of that form. Furthermore, with these verbs that I have used there is a typical asymmetry between the use of this person and tense of the verb and the use of the same verb in other persons and other tenses, and this asymmetry is rather an important clue.

For example, when we say 'I promise that . . . ', the case is very different from when we say 'He promises that . . . ', or in the past tense 'I promised that . . . '. For when we say 'I promise that . . . ' we do perform an act of promising—we give a promise. What we do *not* do is to report on somebody's performing an act of promising—in particular, we do not report on somebody's use of the expression 'I promise'. We actually do use it and do the promising. But if I say 'He promises', or in the past tense 'I promised', I precisely do report on an act of promising, that is to say an act of using this formula 'I promise'—I report on a present act of promising by him, or on a past act of my own. There is thus a clear difference between our first person singular present indicative active, and other persons and tenses. This is brought out by the typical incident of little Willie whose uncle says he'll give him half-a-crown[5] if he promises never to smoke till he's 55. Little Willie's anxious parent will say 'Of course he promises, don't you, Willie?' giving him a nudge, and little Willie just doesn't vouchsafe. The point here is that he must do the promising himself by saying 'I promise', and his parent is going too fast in saying he promises.

That, then, is a bit of a test for whether an utterance is performative or not, but it would not do to suppose that every performative utterance has to take this standard form. There is at least one other standard form, every bit as common as this one, where the verb is in the passive voice and in the second or third person, not in the first. The sort of case I mean is that of a notice inscribed 'Passengers are warned to cross the line by the bridge only', or of a document reading 'You are hereby authorized' to do so-and-so. These are undoubtedly performative, and in fact a signature is often required in order to show who it is that is doing the act of warning, or authorizing, or whatever it may be. Very typical of this kind of performative—especially liable to occur in written documents of course—is that the little word 'hereby' either actually occurs or might naturally be inserted.

Unfortunately, however, we still can't possibly suggest that every utterance which is to be classed as a performative has to take one or another of these two, as we might call them, standard forms. After all it would be a very typical performative utterance to say 'I order you to shut the door'. This satisfies all the criteria. It is performing the act of ordering you to shut the door, and it

5. Under the old U.K. system of money, a crown was worth 5 shillings; little Willie is given the equivalent of about a half-dollar.

is not true or false. But in the appropriate circumstances surely we could perform exactly the same act by simply saying 'Shut the door', in the imperative. Or again, suppose that somebody sticks up a notice 'This bull is dangerous', or simply 'Dangerous bull', or simply 'Bull'. Does this necessarily differ from sticking up a notice, appropriately signed, saying 'You are hereby warned that this bull is dangerous'? It seems that the simple notice 'Bull' can do just the same job as the more elaborate formula. Of course the difference is that if we just stick up 'Bull' it would not be quite clear that it is a warning; it might be there just for interest or information, like 'Wallaby' on the cage at the zoo, or 'Ancient Monument'. No doubt we should know from the nature of the case that it was a warning, but it would not be explicit.

Well, in view of this break-down of grammatical criteria, what we should like to suppose—and there is a good deal in this—is that any utterance which is performative could be reduced or expanded or analysed into one of these two standard forms beginning 'I . . . ' so and so or beginning 'You (or he) hereby . . . ' so and so. If there was any justification for this hope, as to some extent there is, then we might hope to make a list of all the verbs which can appear in these standard forms, and then we might classify the kinds of acts that can be performed by performative utterances. We might do this with the aid of a dictionary, using such a test as that already mentioned—whether there is the characteristic asymmetry between the first person singular present indicative active and the other persons and tenses—in order to decide whether a verb is to go into our list or not. Now if we make such a list of verbs we do in fact find that they fall into certain fairly well-marked classes. There is the class of cases where we deliver verdicts and make estimates and appraisals of various kinds. There is the class where we give undertakings, commit ourselves in various ways by saying something. There is the class where by saying something we exercise various rights and powers, such as appointing and voting and so on. And there are one or two other fairly well-marked classes.

Suppose this task accomplished. Then we could call these verbs in our list explicit performative verbs, and any utterance that was reduced to one or the other of our standard forms we could call an explicit performative utterance. 'I order you to shut the door' would be an explicit performative utterance, whereas 'Shut the door' would not—that is simply a 'primary' performative utterance or whatever we like to call it. In using the imperative we may be ordering you to shut the door, but it just isn't made clear whether we are ordering you or entreating you or imploring you or beseeching you or inciting you or tempting you, or one or another of many other subtly different acts which, in an unsophisticated primitive language, are very likely not yet discriminated. But we need not over-estimate the unsophistication of primitive languages. There are a great many devices that can be used for making clear, even at the primitive level, what act it is we are performing when we say something—the tone of voice, cadence, gesture—and above all we can rely upon the nature of the circumstances, the context in which the utterance is issued. This very often makes it quite unmistakable whether it is an order that is being given or whether, say, I am simply urging you or entreating you. We may, for instance, say something like this: 'Coming from him I was bound to take it as an order'. Still, in spite of all these devices, there is an unfortunate amount of ambiguity and lack of discrimination in default of our

explicit performative verbs. If I say something like 'I shall be there', it may not be certain whether it is a promise, or an expression of intention, or perhaps even a forecast of my future behaviour, of what is going to happen to me; and it may matter a good deal, at least in developed societies, precisely which of these things it is. And that is why the explicit performative verb is evolved—to make clear exactly which it is, how far it commits me and in what way, and so forth.

This is just one way in which language develops in tune with the society of which it is the language. The social habits of the society may considerably affect the question of which performative verbs are evolved and which, sometimes for rather irrelevant reasons, are not. For example, if I say 'You are a poltroon', it might be that I am censuring you or it might be that I am insulting you. Now since apparently society approves of censuring or reprimanding, we have here evolved a formula 'I reprimand you', or 'I censure you', which enables us expeditiously to get this desirable business over. But on the other hand, since apparently we don't approve of insulting, we have not evolved a simple formula 'I insult you', which might have done just as well.

By means of these explicit performative verbs and some other devices, then, we make explicit what precise act it is that we are performing when we issue our utterance. But here I would like to put in a word of warning. We must distinguish between the function of making explicit what act it is we are performing, and the quite different matter of *stating* what act it is we are performing. In issuing an explicit performative utterance we are not stating what act it is, we are showing or making explicit what act it is. We can draw a helpful parallel here with another case in which the act, the conventional act that we perform, is not a speech-act but a physical performance. Suppose I appear before you one day and bow deeply from the waist. Well, this is ambiguous. I may be simply observing the local flora, tying my shoelace, something of that kind; on the other hand, conceivably I might be doing obeisance to you. Well, to clear up this ambiguity we have some device such as raising the hat, saying 'Salaam',[6] or something of that kind, to make it quite plain that the act being performed is the conventional one of doing obeisance rather than some other act. Now nobody would want to say that lifting your hat was stating that you were performing an act of obeisance; it certainly is not, but it does make it quite plain that you are. And so in the same way to say 'I warn you that . . . ' or 'I order you to . . . ' or 'I promise that . . . ' is not to state that you are doing something, but makes it plain that you are—it does constitute your verbal performance, a performance of a particular kind.

So far we have been going along as though there was a quite clear difference between our performative utterances and what we have contrasted them with, statements or reports or descriptions. But now we begin to find that this distinction is not as clear as it might be. It's now that we begin to sink in a little. In the first place, of course, we may feel doubts as to how widely our performatives extend. If we think up some odd kinds of expression we use in odd cases, we might very well wonder whether or not they satisfy our rather vague criteria for being performative utterances. Suppose, for

6. Literally, "peace" (Arabic); a greeting sometimes spoken while making a ceremonial bow.

example, somebody says 'Hurrah'. Well, not true or false; he is performing the act of cheering. Does that make it a performative utterance in our sense or not? Or suppose he says 'Damn'; he is performing the act of swearing, and it is not true or false. Does that make it performative? We feel that in a way it does and yet it's rather different. Again, consider cases of 'suiting the action to the words'; these too may make us wonder whether perhaps the utterance should be classed as performative. Or sometimes, if somebody says 'I am sorry', we wonder whether this is just the same as 'I apologize'—in which case of course we have said it's a performative utterance—or whether perhaps it's to be taken as a description, true or false, of the state of his feelings. If he had said 'I feel perfectly awful about it', then we should think it must be meant to be a description of the state of his feelings. If he had said 'I apologize', we should feel this was clearly a performative utterance, going through the ritual of apologizing. But if he says 'I am sorry' there is an unfortunate hovering between the two. This phenomenon is quite common. We often find cases in which there is an obvious pure performative utterance and obvious other utterances connected with it which are not performative but descriptive, but on the other hand a good many in between where we're not quite sure which they are. On some occasions of course they are obviously used the one way, on some occasions the other way, but on some occasions they seem positively to revel in ambiguity.

Again, consider the case of the umpire when he says 'Out' or 'Over',[7] or the jury's utterance when they say that they find the prisoner guilty. Of course, we say, these are cases of giving verdicts, performing the act of appraising and so forth, but still in a way they have some connexion with the facts. They seem to have something like the duty to be true or false, and seem not to be so very remote from statements. If the umpire says 'Over', this surely has at least something to do with six balls in fact having been delivered rather than seven, and so on. In fact in general we may remind ourselves that 'I state that . . . ' does not look so very different from 'I warn you that . . . ' or 'I promise to . . . '. It makes clear surely that the act that we are performing is an act of stating, and so functions just like 'I warn' or 'I order'. So isn't 'I state that . . . ' a performative utterance? But then one may feel that utterances beginning 'I state that . . . ' do have to be true or false, that they *are* statements.

Considerations of this sort, then, may well make us feel pretty unhappy. If we look back for a moment at our contrast between statements and performative utterances, we realize that we were taking statements very much on trust from, as we said, the traditional treatment. Statements, we had it, were to be true or false; performative utterances on the other hand were to be felicitous or infelicitous. They were the doing of something, whereas for all we said making statements was not doing something. Now this contrast surely, if we look back at it, is unsatisfactory. Of course statements are liable to be assessed in this matter of their correspondence or failure to correspond with the facts, that is, being true or false. But they are also liable to infelicity every bit as much as are performative utterances. In fact some troubles that have arisen in the study of statements recently can be shown to be simply troubles of infelicity. For example, it has been pointed out that there is some-

7. Umpire's calls in cricket.

thing very odd about saying something like this: 'The cat is on the mat but I don't believe it is'. Now this is an outrageous thing to say, but it is not self-contradictory. There is no reason why the cat shouldn't be on the mat without my believing that it is. So how are we to classify what's wrong with this peculiar statement? If we remember now the doctrine of infelicity we shall see that the person who makes this remark about the cat is in much the same position as somebody who says something like this: 'I promise that I shall be there, but I haven't the least intention of being there'. Once again you can of course perfectly well promise to be there without having the least intention of being there, but there is something outrageous about saying it, about actually avowing the insincerity of the promise you give. In the same way there is insincerity in the case of the person who says 'The cat is on the mat but I don't believe it is', and he is actually avowing that insincerity—which makes a peculiar kind of nonsense.

A second case that has come to light is the one about John's children—the case where somebody is supposed to say 'All John's children are bald but John hasn't got any children'.[8] Or perhaps somebody says 'All John's children are bald', when as a matter of fact—he doesn't say so—John has no children. Now those who study statements have worried about this; ought they to say that the statement 'All John's children are bald' is meaningless in this case? Well, if it is, it is not a bit like a great many other more standard kinds of meaninglessness; and we see, if we look back at our list of infelicities, that what is going wrong here is much the same as what goes wrong in, say, the case of a contract for the sale of a piece of land when the piece of land referred to does not exist. Now what we say in the case of this sale of land, which of course would be effected by a performative utterance, is that the sale is void—void for lack of reference or ambiguity of reference; and so we can see that the statement about all John's children is likewise void for lack of reference. And if the man actually says that John has no children in the same breath as saying they're all bald, he is making the same kind of outrageous utterance as the man who says 'The cat is on the mat and I don't believe it is', or the man who says 'I promise to but I don't intend to'.

In this way, then, ills that have been found to afflict statements can be precisely paralleled with ills that are characteristic of performative utterances. And after all when we state something or describe something or report something, we do perform an act which is every bit as much an act as an act of ordering or warning. There seems no good reason why stating should be given a specially unique position. Of course philosophers have been wont to talk as though you or I or anybody could just go round stating anything about anything and that would be perfectly in order, only there's just a little question: is it true or false? But besides the little question, is it true or false, there is surely the question: *is* it in order? Can you go round just making statements about anything? Suppose for example you say to me 'I'm feeling pretty mouldy this morning'. Well, I say to you 'You're not'; and you say 'What the devil do you mean, I'm not?' I say 'Oh nothing—I'm just stating you're not, is it true or false?' And you say 'Wait a bit about whether it's true or false, the question is what did you mean by making statements about somebody

8. A reference to a famous example in "On Denoting" (1905) by Bertrand Russell, one of the earliest of the logical positivists: "The present king of France is bald."

else's feelings? I told you I'm feeling pretty mouldy. You're just not in a position to say, to state that I'm not'. This brings out that you can't just make statements about other people's feelings (though you can make guesses if you like); and there are very many things which, having no knowledge of, not being in a position to pronounce about, you just can't state. What we need to do for the case of stating, and by the same token describing and reporting, is to take them a bit off their pedestal, to realize that they are speech-acts no less than all these other speech-acts that we have been mentioning and talking about as performative.

Then let us look for a moment at our original contrast between the performative and the statement from the other side. In handling performatives we have been putting it all the time as though the only thing that a performative utterance had to do was to be felicitous, to come off, not to be a misfire, not to be an abuse. Yes, but that's not the end of the matter. At least in the case of many utterances which, on what we have said, we should have to class as performative—cases where we say 'I warn you to . . . ', 'I advise you to . . . ' and so on—there will be other questions besides simply: was it in order, was it all right, as a piece of advice or a warning, did it come off? After that surely there will be the question: was it good or sound advice? Was it a justified warning? Or in the case, let us say, of a verdict or an estimate: was it a good estimate, or a sound verdict? And these are questions that can only be decided by considering how the content of the verdict or estimate is related in some way to fact, or to evidence available about the facts. This is to say that we do require to assess at least a great many performative utterances in a general dimension of correspondence with fact. It may still be said, of course, that this does not make them *very* like statements because still they are not true or false, and that's a little black and white speciality that distinguishes statements as a class apart. But actually—though it would take too long to go on about this—the more you think about truth and falsity the more you find that very few statements that we ever utter are just true or just false. Usually there is the question are they fair or are they not fair, are they adequate or not adequate, are they exaggerated or not exaggerated? Are they too rough, or are they perfectly precise, accurate, and so on? 'True' and 'false' are just general labels for a whole dimension of different appraisals which have something or other to do with the relation between what we say and the facts. If, then, we loosen up our ideas of truth and falsity we shall see that statements, when assessed in relation to the facts, are not so very different after all from pieces of advice, warnings, verdicts, and so on.

We see then that stating something is performing an act just as much as is giving an order or giving a warning; and we see, on the other hand, that, when we give an order or a warning or a piece of advice, there is a question about how this is related to fact which is not perhaps so very different from the kind of question that arises when we discuss how a statement is related to fact. Well, this seems to mean that in its original form our distinction between the performative and the statement is considerably weakened, and indeed breaks down. I will just make a suggestion as to how to handle this matter. We need to go very much farther back, to consider all the ways and senses in which saying anything at all is doing this or that—because of course it is always doing a good many different things. And one thing that emerges

when we do do this is that, besides the question that has been very much studied in the past as to what a certain utterance *means*, there is a further question distinct from this as to what was the *force*, as we may call it, of the utterance. We may be quite clear what 'Shut the door' means, but not yet at all clear on the further point as to whether as uttered at a certain time it was an order, an entreaty or whatnot. What we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances, towards the discovery of which our proposed list of explicit performative verbs would be a very great help; and then, going on from there, an investigation of the various terms of appraisal that we use in discussing speech-acts of this, that, or the other precise kind—orders, warnings, and the like.

The notions that we have considered then, are the performative, the infelicity, the explicit performative, and lastly, rather hurriedly, the notion of the forces of utterances. I dare say that all this seems a little unremunerative, a little complicated. Well, I suppose in some ways it is unremunerative, and I suppose it ought to be remunerative. At least, though, I think that if we pay attention to these matters we can clear up some mistakes in philosophy; and after all philosophy is used as a scapegoat, it parades mistakes which are really the mistakes of everybody. We might even clear up some mistakes in grammar, which perhaps is a little more respectable.

And is it complicated? Well, it is complicated a bit; but life and truth and things do tend to be complicated. It's not things, it's philosophers that are simple. You will have heard it said, I expect, that over-simplification is the occupational disease of philosophers, and in a way one might agree with that. But for a sneaking suspicion that it's their occupation.

1956 1961

NORTHROP FRYE
1912–1991

By the mid-1950s, the New Critical "close reading" of texts had become the dominant theory and practice of literary criticism in the North American academy. Its reign was not uncontested; some scholars argued that this critical approach (see JOHN CROWE RANSOM and CLEANTH BROOKS) failed to consider historical and biographical contexts, and the "Chicago School" led by R. S. Crane maintained that the New Criticism emphasized irony and metaphor in all texts at the expense of crucial distinctions among the literary genres. But it was not until the late 1950s, with the publication of Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), that the New Criticism was comprehensively challenged by a fully defined alternative.

In the *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye pointedly contrasted his archetypal or myth criticism with the "rhetorical analysis of the new critics":

> The further back we go, the more conscious we are of the organizing design. At a great distance from, say, a Madonna, we can see nothing but the archetype of the Madonna, a large centripetal blue mass with a contrasting point of interest at its center. In the criticism of literature, too, we often have to "stand back" from the poem to see its archetypal organization.

Frye thus took issue with the critical orthodoxy of his own day, even as his approach looked forward to the structuralist poetics and analysis of narrative that theorists such as TVEZTAN TODOROV, ROLAND BARTHES, and HAYDEN WHITE would articulate in the 1960s and 1970s.

A Canadian born in southern Quebec province, Frye attended the University of Toronto, studied theology at Emmanuel College in Toronto, was ordained in the United Church of Canada in 1936, and then did postgraduate work at Merton College, Oxford University. He began his academic career at Victoria College, University of Toronto, in 1939, and later held administrative positions both in the English department and in the college. He was keenly interested in Canadian literature, culture, and education, but his influence as a literary critic, theorist, and educator extended worldwide. He lectured and taught at many colleges and universities in the United States, England, and elsewhere, winning numerous awards and prizes for his scholarship and criticism.

Frye's first book was *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (1947), an influential examination of Blake's symbolism. Here, Frye describes the imagination as the "creative force in the mind" from which "everything that we call culture and civilization" derives: "it is the power of transforming a sub-human physical world into a world with a human shape and meaning." The next important work, *Anatomy of Criticism*, articulated the role of archetypal symbols, myths, and generic conventions in creating literary meaning.

The word "archetype" derives from the Greek *archetypon*, which means "beginning pattern"; as developed by Frye within the field of literary criticism, it refers to a recurrent image, character, plot, or pattern that, through its repetitions in many works across the centuries, takes on a universal quality. Frye drew from many sources, including the Bible, Blake's prophetic books, and (from the early twentieth century) the German historicist writer Oswald Spengler, SIGMUND FREUD, the Scottish folklorist and anthropologist J. G. Frazer, and the classical historian Gilbert Murray. But perhaps the main source for Frye was the psychologist CARL JUNG, particularly Jung's account of the "collective unconscious." Part of what makes us human, according to Jung, is an "unconscious" inhabited by shared memories, desires, impulses, images, ideas—in a word, archetypes—distinct from the personal unconscious that each of us acquires from our individual experiences.

But Frye objected to being called a "Jungian critic." As he explains in *Anatomy of Criticism*, the literary critic should be "concerned only with ritual or dream patterns which are actually in what he is studying, however they got there." Throughout his career, he continued to focus on and define the repeating images that are structural "building blocks" of literature. It was, he later observed, "a vision of literature as forming a total schematic order" (*Spiritus Mundi*, 1976).

This conception of literature as constituting a total order or universe explains why Frye's work has intrigued and inspired theorists interested in intertextuality—the ways in which one text leads to, evokes, is made from, and is intersected by others. The French feminist theorist JULIA KRISTEVA, for example, described reading *Fearful Symmetry* in the late 1960s as a "revelation" in its insertion of the poetic text into Western literary tradition. Through *Anatomy of Criticism*, she adds, we can begin to grasp the "extraordinary polysemy of literary art and take up the challenge it permanently poses."

Frye's work has been widely discussed and admired but also sharply criticized. Often, in reply, Frye embraces the charge made against him. For example, he cheerfully admits his refusal to judge differences between good and bad literary works, even though this position puts him at odds with many of the major critics of the English and American traditions, as well as more recent theorists such as BARBARA HERRNSTEIN SMITH (see "Contingencies of Value," 1988, below). Marxist and leftist critics have stated that Frye strips away the historical and political meanings from texts; in the words of TERRY EAGLETON, Frye's "formalism" is "even more full-blooded than

that of New Criticism. The New Critic allowed that literature was in some significant sense cognitive, yielding a sort of knowledge of the world; Frye insists that literature is an 'autonomous verbal structure' quite cut off from any reference beyond itself." But for Frye this is hardly a failing, for he is determined to understand literature in its own terms, "opposed to any construct—Marxist, Freudian, Thomist, or whatever—that is going to annex literature and simply explain literature in its own terminology" ("Freedom and Concern," 1985).

In our selection, "The Archetypes of Literature" (1951), Frye sketches an early version of his approach. He argues that literature teachers must not confuse literature with criticism: we cannot in our classrooms "teach literature"; rather, we teach the criticism of literature. If teachers aim as they should to make criticism a "systematic structure of knowledge," then they will need to shed their mistaken ideas and habitual practices. For Frye, a common mistake is assuming that criticism is the making of value judgments; these, he says, amount to no more than exercises in the history of taste. Other mistakes include the intensive analysis of specific texts (disconnected "close readings" do not lead us toward the goal of a unified and coherent field of scientific study) and a focus on conventional literary history (periods such as Gothic and baroque are cultural rather than truly literary categories).

In defining genuine criticism, Frye shows how it is connected to but different from philosophy, theology, history, and the social sciences, meriting autonomy as a rigorous and comprehensive professional university discipline. He finds the work of cultural anthropologists particularly valuable in his search for a "co-ordinating principle," and from Frazer, Jung, and others he develops his theory of "archetypes," such as the quest of the hero. Knowledge of the archetypes enables us to perceive the shared myths that literary works rely on and explore; through that awareness we can glimpse the underlying *structure* of the structures of all works.

Like Jung, Frye uses terms with a looseness that can make his writing both suggestive and exasperating. Sometimes he refers to the archetype; sometimes he states that the archetype is itself a myth, like the quest. And while his theory, supported by a rich and wide range of reading, allows him to make connections between many texts, he rarely if ever attends to the text's language. One could also point out that Frye's canon, while capacious, is not capacious enough: few women and minorities figure in it. In this respect Frye is no different from most other critics and theorists of his generation, and his theory could be said to have a built-in answer to the charge: the nature of archetypes ensures that they also structure the literature he himself fails to discuss, and thus in a sense he has included it after all.

Frye is an extraordinary synthesizer, whose system building is matched in twentieth-century literary criticism and theory only by the very different system building of I. A. Richards and KENNETH BURKE. At a certain point, however, the categories, patterns, classifications, lists, and charts in Frye's major theoretical works threaten to become formulaic, as perhaps happens at the close of the selection below. Many texts are briefly touched on and connections among them made, but none of them is really brought into sharp focus. Curiously enough, Frye now often seems most rewarding less for his bold vision of literature as a whole than for the essays on specific texts that he did produce. When he writes about Milton's elegy "Lycidas" (in *Fables of Identity*) or *Hamlet* (in *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*), he demonstrates a subtle, sensitive, compelling feeling for the text in its own right—the text as related to countless other texts but a discrete literary experience nonetheless. Frye's work as a practical critic sometimes departs from the tenets of his theory, and is arguably the better for it.

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Frye's major books include *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), *T. S. Eliot* (1963), *The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics* (1965), and *A*

Study of English Romanticism (1968). He also wrote a number of books on Shakespeare, including *Fools of Time: Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy* (1967) and *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* (1986). Among his collections of essays on diverse topics are *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (1963), *The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society* (1970), and *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society* (1976). See also *Reading the World: Selected Writings, 1935–1976*, edited by Robert D. Denham (1990). In addition, Frye has been a significant force in turning the attention of literary scholars to the narratives and structural patterns of the Bible; his books on this subject include *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (1982) and *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature* (1990).

The University of Toronto Press has begun publication of *The Collected Works of Northrop Frye*, under the general editorship of Alvin A. Lee. Along with new editions of Frye's books, it will include his diaries, letters, student essays, speeches, fiction, and notebooks and other unpublished material. Three volumes have appeared to date: *The Correspondence of Northrop Frye and Helen Kemp, 1932–1939* (2 vols., 1996) and *Northrop Frye's Student Essays, 1932–1938*, edited by Robert D. Denham (1997). Frye gave many interviews about his life, work, and career; see, for example, the collection *Northrop Frye in Conversation*, edited by David Cayley (1996). Also valuable is John Ayre's *Northrop Frye: A Biography* (1989).

Good brief overviews include Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye and Critical Method* (1974); David Cook, *Northrop Frye: A Vision of the New World* (1986); Ian Balfour, *Northrop Frye* (1988); and Joseph Adamson, *Northrop Frye: A Visionary Life* (1993). The most comprehensive studies are A. C. Hamilton, *Northrop Frye: An Anatomy of His Criticism* (1990), and Jonathan Locke Hart, *Northrop Frye: The Theoretical Imagination* (1994).

There are a number of helpful collections: *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism*, edited by Murray Krieger (1966), which includes essays by Krieger, Angus Fletcher, William K. Wimsatt Jr., and Geoffrey H. Hartman, comments by Frye, and a checklist of his writings; *Centre and Labyrinth: Essays in Honour of Northrop Frye*, edited by Eleanor Cook et al. (1983); *Northrop Frye and Eighteenth-Century Studies*, edited by Howard D. Weinbrot—a special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 24 (winter 1990–91); *Visionary Poetics: Essays on Northrop Frye's Criticism*, edited by Robert D. Denham and Thomas Willard (1991); *Northrop Frye*, edited by Harold Bloom (1992); and *The Legacy of Northrop Frye*, edited by Alvin A. Lee and Robert D. Denham (1994), which is especially useful in describing Frye's contributions to Canadian culture and his work on Romanticism, modernism, and religion. Another excellent collection is *Rereading Frye*, edited by David Boyd and Imre Salusinsky (1999).

See also Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* (1987), and the essays and bibliographies in the *Northrop Frye Newsletter*. The Northrop Frye Centre was established in 1988 at the University of Toronto.

The Archetypes of Literature[1]

Every organized body of knowledge can be learned progressively; and experience shows that there is also something progressive about the learning of literature. Our opening sentence has already got us into a semantic difficulty. Physics is an organized body of knowledge about nature, and a student of it says that he is learning physics, not that he is learning nature. Art, like

1. First published in the *Kenyon Review* series "My Credo."