UNDERSTANDING FREE
CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING FRYE

Northrop Frye enjoys a special place in the history of literary criticism. Widely acknowledged as one of the most influential critics in English since the 1950s, Frye stands at the "center of critical activity as one of the major critics of our age, whose work represents one of the most impressive achievements in the recent history of criticism".

Born on July 14, 1912 in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada, Northrop Frye grew up in Moncton, New Brunswick and graduated in the Honours Course in Philosophy and English in 1933 from Victoria College, University of Toronto.

After a three-year theology course, he was ordained in the United Church of Canada in 1936. His strict religious background and the influence of Christian tenets, particularly in the early days of his childhood, appear to have influenced him quite considerably as can be seen from his leanings towards the Bible which eventually seems to have culminated in the publication of The Great Code, a study based upon Bible as a unique masterpiece of mythic literature.

Frye joined the Department of English at Victoria College as
early as 1939 and even at this time he writes "I realized... that my vocation was for University teaching." He became a professor of English in 1948 and served a long term as Principal of the College in 1959. Since 1967, he had been a visiting Professor to several Universities, which include Indiana, Harward, British Columbia, Washington, Princeton, Cornwell, California and Oxford. He was considerably involved in the cultural life of Canada and served several cultural organisations in that country. He was a member of literary organisations like Modern Language Association of America, Royal Society of Canada, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, British Academy, American Philosophical Society, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Besides, he had been a winner of many awards, including the prestigious Lorne Piece Medal of the Royal Society of Canada in 1958, Canada Council Medal (1967), Pierre Chaveau Medal of the Royal Society of Canada and a Civic Honour from the City of Toronto (1974). He was awarded thirty honorary degrees from Colleges and Universities in Canada and United States which include Darmouth College, Harward University, Princeton University and University of Manitoba. He wrote a great number of scholarly studies on a wide range of literature from the renaissance to the present, but returning always to the literary adoptions of mythology as a force in all social life.

LITERARY CAREER OF FRYE

Northrop Frye began his literary career with a contribution to a magazine called Canadian Forum of which he later
became editor. A prolific writer from the beginning, Frye has to his credit over 22 books and 50 articles, namely: Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (1947); Fables of Identity (1963); The Well-Tempered Critic (1963); T.S.Eliot (1963); Romanticism Reconsidered (1963); A Natural Perspective; The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance (1965); Fools of Time (1967); The Modern Century (1967); A Study of English Romanticism (1968); The Morality of Scholarship (1967); The Stubborn Structure (1970); The Critical Path (1971); The Bush Garden (1971); Secular Scripture: A Study of The Structure of Romance (1976); Spiritus Mundii: Essays on Literature, Myth and Society (1976); Creation and Recreation (1980); Practical Imagination (1980); The Great Code: Bible and Literature (1981).

To collect, identify and name the material for his mythical theory of criticism, Frye put in hard labour for ten years, and in 1957 developed his poetics in Anatomy of Criticism, correlating the various genres of literature with different phases of mythology of the seasons, invoking in the process the techniques of anthropology and finding the appropriate culmination of all in the study of motifs of rebirth.

The Anatomy of Criticism has thus been an epoch-making book not only in the history of criticism but also in Frye's own career. Whatever he has written after this book tends to move around the central thesis of the Anatomy. His first notable book Fearful Symmetry (1947) offered an interpretation of the mythology and symbolism of Blake which helped him prepare a ground
for the systematic poetics established later in the Anatomy.

The Anatomy of Criticism aims at replacing the contemporary evaluative criticism by a scientific theory of literature. The poetics elaborated in the book constitutes the main plank of Frye’s theory of myth.

Anatomy’s importance can be gauged from the fact that Frye has quite successfully synthesised into one central theory all the contemporary critical approaches. The central theory of Anatomy relates to the discovery of myths as the central structural principles of literature... and the ‘quest myth’ is central to all such structural principles. In the conclusion of the Anatomy, Frye writes, "The book attacks no method of criticism once that subject has been defined; what it attacks are the barriers between the methods". Obviously, this becomes the ultimate focus of Frye’s broadly humanistic synoptic, synthesising strategy.

The Fables of Identity (1963) is the first book where the principles laid down in the Anatomy find their practical application. While the central thesis of the Anatomy dominate the essays in this book, the rest of the book constitutes the application of myth-criticism to various works and authors in terms of the central tradition of English mythopoeic poetry. The Winter’s Tale, The Fairie Queene and Lycidas are among the main works undertaken for study, while Blake, Byron, Hardy, Yeats, Emily Dickinson, Stevens and Joyce are among the authors studied in the Fables. Frye calls these essays "studies in poetic mythology", and his tendency is to see literature as an unified
imaginative system that can be studied as a whole by criticism. In his view, literature as a whole provides framework or context for every work of literature, just as a fully developed mythology provides framework or context for each of its myths.

The Well-Tempered Critic (1963) consists of three continuous lectures on themes in a region more or less suggested by the title and appears to have been written for the benefit of beginners. Here too, Frye repeats his theories of criticism enunciated earlier. The essays relate to the training of students in different critical approaches, the styles of literature and speech, and the implication of critical theory. Frye appears to be bent upon imposing some kind of discipline on the students of literature when he propounds that, in order to appreciate literature correctly the students should invariably equip themselves with knowledge of some set principles. The principles referred to are the ones enunciated for identifying archetypal patterns of literature. This identification, according to him, is possible only through a thorough awareness of cultural and literary conventions inherited by the writer and the reader. Indirectly, Frye wants to justify his conception of an archetype, that is, a literary and not a primordial symbol or image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognised as an element of one's literary experience as a whole.

In the last essay of the Well-Tempered Critic, Frye considers two principal ways by which literature can be viewed: The Aristotelian and the Longinian (or Platonic). According to
him, the difference between the two depends on a question whether art is seen fundamentally as a product or a process. In the Aristotelian tradition, nature has reference to the physical order, to its structure and system. In the Longinian tradition, it refers to the total creative process. What is intriguing for students of literary criticism is his argument that criticism, like literature, can also be discussed in terms of both, that is, either as product or process. In other words, though Frye’s view is inclusive enough it leaves no doubt in our mind that he believes in the Longinian theory of process, when he asserts that "The disinterested critical response is fundamental but never an end in itself, for the ultimate aim of literary education is an ethical and participating aim".

In the last chapters of the book, Frye also expounds his own view on culture and its relationship with literature. "Culture", Frye maintains, "is a total imaginative vision of life with literature at its centre... it is, in its totality a vision or model of what humanity is capable of achieving, the matrix of all utopias and social ideals". Extending this analogy further, Frye defines literature as a total imaginative form which is ... bigger than either nature or human life because it contains them, the actual being only a part of the possible.

T.S.Eliot (1963) is a study of Eliot as man, critic, satirist, devotional poet and dramatist. Eliot’s theory of tradition and individual talent has been analysed in the light of Frye’s own theory of the poetic process as an activity influenced
by convention. For example, "the word within the word, unable to speak a word", which is Eliot's symbolic meaning of the word has been quoted by Frye to show a kind of similarity to his own views at the anagogic level of symbol, that is, when symbol becomes a monad. Also, Eliot's theory of literature, as a result of cyclical movement of literary experiences shows the similarity between the demonic and apocalyptic epiphanies of Frye and the vision of experience and innocence by Eliot. Extending the analogy further, Frye has described the *Waste Land* as an example of the highest ironic vision. In the light of his own theory of archetypal criticism, Frye tried to elaborate on the archetypal patterns in *Ash Wednesday, The Family Reunion, Four Quartets, The Confidential Clerk, Murder in the Cathedral, The Cocktail Party* and other works of Eliot.

The *Educated Imagination* (1963) has a theme justifying its own title. It propounds that literature, like other arts, has a role in training the human imagination. The ever-advancing civilization is a manifestation of active human imagination. But at the same time, the literature available to an age also contributes, in turn, to shape the imagination. And one can see this better in poetry, which always attempts to create its own world of ideal situations and, at the same time, inspires human beings to create a similar world at the material level. For Frye, the material world, corresponding to the symbolic world of literature is that of cities, gardens, demons, animals, golden ornaments and others. The book sums up the relationship between the imagination on the one hand and the literature and culture on
the other.

The same year, Frye also edited *Romanticism Reconsidered*, a collection of essays concerning not so much with the characteristics of Romanticism such as wonder, Gothicism, or feeling for nature but with fundamental questions such as: What is the essential meaning of Romanticism? What radical differences in imagery might one expect to find in a comparison between Romantic and pre-Romantic poetry? What is the vision of man that one finds centrally present in the Romantic poetry? And exactly where do we and our contemporary literature stand in relation to the Romantics? The answers to these questions should naturally proceed from Frye's definition of Romanticism and his sense of the essential virtue of the Romantic poets: "that they preserve the feeling that at the heart of the best and fullest life is something anti-social or more accurately something beyond society which is still essential to human society."

In the same context, he also observes: "Romanticism has brought into modern consciousness the feeling that society can develop or progress only by individualizing itself, by being sufficiently tolerant and flexible to allow an individual to find his own identity within it, even though in doing so he comes to repudiate most of the conventional values of that society".

In the introductory essay, Frye discusses the revolutionary element in Romanticism — both in theme and in content — and shows how this feature of Romanticism underwent a change from ecstasy to ironic despair.

Between the years 1965 and 1969, Frye produced another set
of six valuable books, among them two on Shakespeare, one on Milton and one on Romanticism.

In Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Topics (1965), a compilation of his continental lectures on Milton, delivered at Huron College, Western Ontario, Frye chiefly concentrates on Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The central theme of all the five essays is the encyclopaedic nature of epic forms and the hierarchical structure of Renaissance imagery. Eden represents the central archetype of Milton's epics while the loss and regaining of it is identified as its central myth. Paradise Lost is seen in terms of a pattern of themes in the shape of continual epiphanies from Christ's birth to the last Judgement forms the cyclical mythos of Paradise Lost and the pattern of themes its dianoia. Frye makes a specific reference to Milton's cosmology in the book because the mythic structure of Paradise Lost is a part of this cosmology. The imagery is considered as part of the Renaissance imagery on the one hand, and is also seen as a result of Milton's dialectical vision based on his view of the demonic and human.

A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance (1965) conducts a careful survey of Shakespearean comedies and romances and concludes that Shakespeare has desparately departed from the conventions of reality. The book consists of four essays delivered at the annual Bampton Lectures in America at Columbia University in November 1963. The author intends them as a general introduction to Shakespearean comedy. It is his thesis that the poet's comedy is widely
misunderstood and underestimated. He writes that each play of Shakespeare is a world in itself, so complete and satisfying a world that it is easy, delightful, and profitable to get lost in it.... The study will help a reader to understand more clearly the relation of his experience of Shakespearean comedy to his experience of other literature and drama. In early comedy, Frye says, Shakespeare introduces an anti-romantic element, so much so that his comedies sometimes become incredible. The plots of Shakespearean comedies and romances, in Frye's view, frequently enact ritualistic scenes in his tragedies like the dramatically conceived crime of killing the lawful king. The mythos of Shakespeare's comedies and romances, says Frye, is a movement from conventional feudalistic society to the free society of the hero and the heroine, or from death to rebirth or renewal.

Fools of Time (1967) is complementary to A Natural Perspective. The chief recurrent patterns in Shakespearean comedies are defined in this book. Shakespearean tragedies, Frye assumes, are mythic in the vision they build up of life, in their mythos (narrative) and in the symbolism used by them.

The Modern Century (1967) touches upon the central aspects of modern myth-making, the dichotomy of progress and alienation, the effects of technology, growing anti-social attitudes in modern culture, and the role of art in shaping the contemporary imagination. It is basically a book on socio-cultural aspects of literature. The central burden of the book is the search for the identity of Canada. Not that Canada has lost its identity in any way, but Frye desires to look at it from a different angle and
place it in a perspective. Frye also expresses in this book some provocative thoughts on modern education and life. He wants to analyze the causes of anxiety and frustration in modern life and its direct effect upon literature. The second essay of the book "Improved Binoculars", tries to define what is 'modern' in modern art and literature. It is remarkable that the principles applied to literature in the book widely differ from Frye's theory of literature in the Anatomy.

A Study of English Romanticism (1968), is one of the more significant books of this period. The book mainly deals with the change in the mythological structure of poetry. The change is said to have resulted from various cultural and historical forces. According to Frye, Romanticism has given birth to a new myth of creation, a new myth of the fall and redemption. Frye adduces these myths to be the prime cause of fictional and metaphysical literature. Every myth, he says, should be understood in terms of its story and its patterns of imagery forming the dianoia of a fictional work. The rest of the book is devoted to the study of archetypal patterns in Beddoes's Death Jest Book, Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and Keats's Endymion.

The Morality of Scholarship (1967) has for its subject the relationship of society and scholarship. Frye believes that the scholar should have total detachment from politics. However, he should not loose his concern with it. The lack of concern for society and its politics, he avers, will result in indifference towards our own society.

The Stubborn Structure, published in 1970, is a compilation
of essays on theory and on application of myth criticism. In this book, Frye focuses mainly on the criticism of culture, more particularly on an analysis of the social, moral, and philosophical aspects of the products of culture. He discusses issues such as the role of literature, the kind of knowledge to be pursued and some aspects of practical criticism such as the connection between Frye's theory of criticism and his study of Blake, the application of Frye's conception of New Comedy to Dicken's novels and Yeat's imagery. In the last chapter he makes a conclusive summary of a book Literary History of Canada.

In The Critical Path: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism (1971), Frye attempts to answer the fundamental questions of literary criticism such as: What is the function of poetry? What is the aim of Criticism? What is the relationship of society to its art? Arguing on the relationship of criticism to other disciplines, he says: "I have always insisted that criticism cannot take presuppositions from elsewhere, which always means wrenching them out of their real context, and must work out its own."

The Bush Garden (1971) is a collection of Frye's critical essays and reviews on Canadian writers. Frye has attempted to analyse the works of Canadian writers in terms of their cultural background and has offered his observations on the mythic patterns discernible in their works.

The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (1976) deals with the various stories of romance. These stories, Frye observes, are characterized by typical archetypal motives
such as mysterious birth, foster-parents, mistaken identity, narrow escape from death, recognition of the true identity of the hero and the hero’s eventual marriage to the heroine. In this book, he cites the examples of archetypal patterns from *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Castle of Ostranto*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *Arcadia*. The second part of the book attempts to draw a kind of correspondence between the mythological universe and the cyclical movement of literature. The authors studied in the third part are Milton, Blake, Yeats and Stevens.


Frye was a prolific writer. His writings have left an indelible impact on the minds of the contemporary critics. For instance, commenting on the pervasive influence of his works Robert Denham observes: "Frye's ideas had far reaching consequences. An entire generation of literary critics has found his work to be useful and challenging. The practical effect of his criticisms, however, extends far beyond its application, to individual literary texts, having influenced the nature of curriculum and provided model for educational programs in the humanities".

II

Northrop Frye's career as a literary critic began at a time
when New Criticism had almost completed its historical function. Frye observed that New Criticism was a spent-force as it was unable to meet the literary challenges of the times. He was also impatient with confusions and contradictions in the available systems of criticism. He believed that literary criticism should acquire something of the methodological discipline and coherence of the sciences and this could be achieved only by assuming a total coherence in criticism based on a general hypothesis about literature itself. The primary source of this coherence, Frye believed, is the recurrence of certain archetypes in literature of all periods and cultures.

Frye’s position as one of the major archetypal critics would be understood better by referring to the background associated with the Formalism and New Criticism, particularly with reference to their limitations and shortcomings. Understanding Frye as an archetypal critic is justified on the ground that myth or archetypal criticism is seen as a reaction to New Criticism.

**New Criticism**

Until the 1930s, literature was mainly studied in relation to its background. The study of literature was restricted to areas like biography or history. Twentieth century, more particularly the last fifty years or so, saw the emergence of a new type of literary analysis. For the first time, a literary work was seen, not as an account of any background but as a separate entity, divorced from extrinsic considerations. The main proponents of this view were the critics belonging to the
school of New Criticism, who insisted that scholars should concentrate more on the work itself or the text itself and should examine it as an aesthetic creation. In other words, they should view it as a piece of fine art.

New Critics regarded all literary works as structures of language and were relatively indifferent to concepts like genre, character or plot. They insisted on regarding the literary work as an independent, self-existent work of art to be described, analyzed and evaluated without regard to its authors' intention or to any other extrinsic consideration. In this context, it is pertinent to note the four relevant observations made by M.H. Abrams:

In analyzing and evaluating a particular work, New Critics, usually eschew recourse to biography of the author, to the social conditions at the time of its production, or to its psychological and moral effects on the reader. They also tend to minimise recourse to the history of literary genres and subject matter.

The distinctive procedure of the New Critics is explication or close reading; the detailed and subtle analysis of the complex interrelations and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the component elements within a word.

The principles of New Criticism are basically verbal. That is, literature is conceived to be a social kind of language whose attributes are defined by systematic opposition to the language of science and of logical discourse, and the key concepts of the criticism deal with meaning and interaction of words, figures of speech and symbols.

The distinction between literary genres, is not essential in the New Criticism. The basic components of any work of literature, whether lyric, narrative, or dramatic, are conceived to be words, images and symbols rather than characters, thought and plot.
Harry Shaw also makes similar observations: New Criticism emphasizes concentrated study and subsequent interpretation of a selection as selection rather than as a biographical or historical study or as a statement of philosophy, ethics or sociology. A form of criticism that relies on close and detailed analysis of the language, imagery, and emotional or intellectual meanings of a literary work. In New Criticism, analysis of the text itself results in a repeated discovery of layers of meaning.

Both, Abrams and Shaw clearly point out that literary analysis is a text-centered activity and has hardly anything to do with the study of biography, psychology, history et al. Along the same lines, Imre Salusinszky articulates the view of New Criticism saying that for the New Critics "each poem is the realization of some sort of pre-poetic mood or emotion or experience; that the proper perspective for criticism is microscopic linguistic analysis that each poem is a self-contained unity; and that criticism and value judgements are inseparable". As against these beliefs, Frye argues that criticism should "stand back" far enough from the poem to be able to perceive its archetypal or mythic connections with other poems; that these patterns serve to unify literature as a whole and comprise a "literary universe" or "order of words" created by the poetic imagination. Frye thus in a way upsets "the whole basket of New Critical, Eliotic, "neo-classical" literary values that preceeded him". On Frye-New Criticism relationship it can be argued that he tried to devise a
different critical path of talking meaningfully about literature from New Criticism. New Criticism's over-emphasis on autonomy and self-sufficiency of literature virtually resulted in imposing limitations on its application and consequently by 1950 it lost much of its revolutionary thrust of the thirties. The predicament of New Criticism has been aptly summed up by Frank Lentricchia: "... by about 1957, the moribund condition of the New Criticism and the literary needs it left unfulfilled placed us in a critical void".

The late 1950s thus provided an important critical juncture and Fyre's Anatomy of Criticism emerged as an appropriate response to it. The significance and force of Anatomy of Criticism was so much that it led critics to call the book a "decisive coup". Louis Mackey was tempted to maintain that the proscriptive and austere formalism of the New Critics was taken over by Fyre's "rich and inclusive formalism that took the whole of literature as its primary object". He further argues that the critical hegemony which prior to the advent of Anatomy belonged to the New Critics was broken as Fyre "included in the form everything that they had excluded from form in what they took to be the interest of the form". He means that the New Criticism's idea of form was an inadequate idea and the notion of form was extended and made more comprehensive by Fyre by his extended idea of myth. Not surprisingly, the Anatomy came to be regarded as a highly original publication of the decade. Further attention was drawn to it by another factor: Fyre had also made
a systematic attempt to correlate various genres of literature with different phases of Nature. Besides, he had also attempted to discover mythological significance in the changes brought by different seasons of the year by Nature.

FRYE'S TYPOLOGY OF CRITICISM

Frye approached the entire problem of literary classification by devising an intricate scheme of modes, symbols, myths and genres by following Jung's theory of archetypes. He identified four main genres: comedy, romance, tragedy, and satire and maintained that these four genres correspond to the rhythm of nature manifested through its four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. It would be pertinent here to discuss briefly the important aspects of his theory as outlined in four essays of Anatomy.

The first, which can be considered his basic essay, 'Historical criticism', presents a theory of modes. Mode is defined as "a conventional power of action assumed about the chief characters in fictional literature, or the corresponding attitude assumed by the poet toward his audience in thematic literature". The modes, whether tragic fictional, comic fictional, or thematic, tend to move in historical sequence: thus myth, romance, high mimetic, low mimetic, and ironic generally succeed one another in time.

Frye's second essay 'Ethical Criticism' develops a theory of
symbols and underlines the necessity of polysemous meaning, of a sequence of contexts or relationships in which to place a literary work for consideration of its narrative and meaning. The essay attends to the nature of literary language, its organisation as symbol. By symbol Frye means "any unit of any literary structure that can be isolated for critical attention". Symbols function as signs, images, archetypes, and monads. Frye classifies five contexts or "phases" of meaning: literal, descriptive, formal, archetypal, and anagogic, and connects the phases to ironic, low mimetic, high mimetic, romantic and mythical modes respectively. In other words, each of the symbolic types is found to be paired with one of the modes in historical criticism.

The third critical method called 'Archetypal Criticism' demonstrates the usefulness of the above mentioned categories. This method employs myth as a fundamental type of narrative: comic, romantic, tragic, or ironic. In this essay, Frye imparts clarity to literary criticism by employing concepts such as 'myths', 'archetype', 'ritual'. The 'archetype' for Frye is literary, and not primordial. It is "a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole".

Frye divides his essay on archetypal criticism into two parts: theory of archetypal meaning and a theory of mythos. Mythos represent an archetypal narrative such as comic, romantic, tragic, or ironic. The archetypal meaning is explored by Frye in
terms of its imagery: apocalyptic, demonic, analogical. The structure of this imagery, its *dianoia*, is set forth largely in *Biblical* typology. Frye examines these structures in different movement in the mythoi in the cyclic succession of the Spring of Comedy, Summer of Romance, Autumn of Tragedy, Winter of Irony and Satire.

Frye's final essay, 'Rhetorical Criticism' presents a theory of Genres, basing the generic distinctions in literature upon what he terms "the radical of presentation", the conditions set up between the poet and his audience. In this theory, Frye has expounded four types of rhythms: i) a rhythm of recurrence defines *epos*, ii) a rhythm of continuity refers to prose; iii) a rhythm of decorum relates to drama; and iv) a rhythm of association is linked with lyric. The encyclopaedic forms, namely scripture, quest, epic and ironic literary forms are constituents of Frye's perception of literary categorization.

To have a broad and clear perspective of Frye's contribution to literary criticism, it would be useful to introduce his analytical framework in the form of five diagrams at this stage only.

Diagram 1.

Four types of criticism (corresponding to four basic categories of literary concepts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Historical criticism</th>
<th>2. Ethical criticism</th>
<th>3. Archetypal criticism</th>
<th>4. Rhetorical criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODES</td>
<td>SYMBOLS</td>
<td>MYTHS</td>
<td>GENRES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagram 2

1. Historical Criticism
   (Relating to theory of MODES)

   Thematic

   Two Tendencies

   Individual

   Social

   Lyric Essay Satire Occasional Epic Didactic Prose

   Plot-based

   Character-based
   (hero's power of action)

   Tragic Comic Myth Romance High Low Ironic

   Mock Comic Myth Romance High Low Ironic

   Mimesis

   Anagogic

Diagram 3

Ethical Criticism
   (Relating to theory of SYMBOLS)

   Literal and Descriptive Phases:
   Symbol as Motif and as a Sign

   Formal Phase:
   Symbol as Image

   Mythical Phase:
   Symbol as Archetype

   Anagogic Phase:
   Symbol as Monad.
Diagram 4

Archetypal Criticism
(Relating to theory of MYTHS)
(seasonal rhythms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Autumn</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Tragedy</td>
<td>Irony and Satire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram 5

Rhetorical Criticism
(Relating to theory of GENRES)
('radical of presentation')

| Words acted: Drama | Words recited: epos' | Words sung or chanted: lyric | Words written or printed: 'fiction' |
The diagramatic representation of Frye's design helps us understand the scope of his critical method. It becomes clear that he attempts to combine myth criticism with an all-embracing theory of literature. The diagrams give an impression that myth criticism amounts to an all-round theory of literature. The all-pervasive character of his critical scheme prompts him to make a rather spacious claim that "literature imitates the total dream of man; criticism will reforge the links between creation and knowledge; art and science, myth and concept; literature is not the piled aggregate of works but a total order of works." We get an impression that his encyclopaedic knowledge has established him as a scholar to contend with and an author of a profound and different kind. Frye's reputation based largely on his book *Anatomy of Criticism* makes Murray Krieger maintain that Frye "had an influence - indeed, an absolute hold - on a generation of developing literary critics greater and more exclusive than that of any one theorist in recent critical history."

Our study of 'Frye as a Literary Critic' is aimed at focusing on the following features of his works:

1. A study of the methodology of art - criticism used by Frye in his *Anatomy*.

2. A detailed analysis of the theoretical constructs developed by Frye in each of the four major essays of the *Anatomy* namely "Ethical", "Archetypal", "Historical", and "Rhetorical" Criticisms. It will also include a study of the
relationship that binds the four essays together into a pattern.

3. A critical study of the intricate scheme of myths, symbols, modes and genres devised by Frye in support of his critical method and a study of its application to actual literary works.

4. An attempt to perceive the harmonious relationship between Frye's applied and theoretical criticisms.

5. A detailed examination of the following four basic literary concepts in Frye's works: a) the notion of critical autonomy or literary autonomy; b) his argument that criticism is a science; c) Frye's critique of value judgments and d) Frye's view of imagination. The study would also consider his claims on the identity of criticism as an autonomous discipline.

6. A consideration of Frye's views on literary history and an assessment of his performance as a literary historian as well as a critic of the Bible.

The concluding part of the thesis would undertake a review of the entire work and bring together the different threads of arguments developed in the preceding chapters. A part of the discussion would cover an overview of the opinions expressed by Frye's critics. It will include references to his appreciative critics like Robert Denham, Murray Krieger, Harold Bloom, W.K. Wimsatt, Frank Lentricchia, Frank McConnel, Walter Allan Bates, Imre Salusinszky and also to his non-appreciative critics like Frederick Crews, Angus Fletcher, Walter A. Davis et cetera, and finally situate Frye in modern critical tradition as a literary critic of great standing.
Chapter Notes


5. Ibid. p.321.


7. Ibid. 97.


17. Ibid. p.466.
18. Ibid. p.466.
19. Ibid. p.466.
22. Ibid. p.365.