

New Directions In N. Frye Studies

弗莱研究：现状与展望

编著 Jean O'Grady

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上海外语教育出版社

0711.065-53 / 043

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江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

弗莱研究: 现状与展望: 英文 / (加) 奥格雷迪, (中) 王宁编.

上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2001

ISBN 7-81046-992-4

I. 弗… II. ①奥…②王… III. 弗莱-文学研究-文集-英文

IV. I711.065-53

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2001)第11657号

出版发行: **上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65422031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 王彤福

印 刷: 上海市崇明县晨光印刷厂

经 销: 新华书店上海发行所

开 本: 850×1168 1/32 印张 10.75 字数 254 千字

版 次: 2001 年 4 月第 1 版 2001 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

印 数: 2 200 册

书 号: ISBN 7-81046-992-4 / H · 730

定 价: 16.60 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题, 可向本社调换

出版前言

诺思洛普·弗莱(Northrop Frye 1912 - 1991)是加拿大著名的文学评论家和思想家,也是全球最有影响的文学评论家之一。弗莱终身任教于加拿大著名高等学府多伦多大学,并深受该校师生的爱戴。1983年,早在弗莱在世时,该校就成立了以研究弗莱的文学批评理论和思想为主的弗莱研究中心。加拿大政府也专门拨款出版《弗莱全集》。弗莱的文学批评思想在中国学者中也颇有影响。北京大学于1993年10月特邀加拿大弗莱研究专家,弗莱全集主编,麦克马斯特大学名誉校长,阿尔文·李(Alvin A. Lee)教授来校开设弗莱研究讲座。北京大学和内蒙古大学分别在1994年和1999年举行弗莱研究国际研讨会。在加拿大政府的帮助下,我国还翻译出版了数本弗莱的文学批评专著和弗莱研究丛书。

为了让更多的中国学者了解弗莱研究的现状和发展趋势,同时也为了纪念中国和加拿大建交40周年,上海外语教育出版社在多伦多大学弗莱研究中心的支持下,于2000年12月出版学术专著:《弗莱研究:现状与展望》。

该专题研究文集由多伦多大学弗莱研究中心奥格雷迪博士和北京清华大学人文学院博士生导师王

宁教授主编，全书由 15 篇精选的论文组成，分为以下 4 部分：“弗莱研究新探”、“批评家弗莱”、“弗莱与中国”、“弗莱理论的运用”。本论文集是为中国学者学习和研究弗莱而编写的导论性文集。

本书由加拿大弗莱研究专家，弗莱全集主编，麦克马斯特大学名誉校长，阿尔文·李教授作序。鉴于本书的学术价值，加拿大著名学府多伦多大学的大学出版社已决定在北美同时出版。

本书的读者对象为各高等院校外国文学与比较文学专业的学生与教师，英语专业的研究生以及加拿大研究的学者。

本社编辑部
2000 年 12 月

Preface

I first visited China in July 1976, two months before the end of the Cultural Revolution. The country's universities were in a state of almost complete disarray, with faculty members sent into "May 7 School" in the country or otherwise prevented from doing their academic work. For most students, sloganeering and rampaging had replaced study. The physical conditions of the campuses were squalid or worse. A generation of Chinese intellectual life had been largely squandered and an enormous task of reconstruction lay before those willing to take up the challenge. It had become clear to thoughtful people that it would be only after the obsessive ideological commitments of the Cultural Revolution were silenced that the possibility of a genuine cultural revolution could emerge, one in which individuals no longer had their critical consciousness so stunned by political propaganda that the expression of real thought and creative imagining would again be possible.

In the almost quarter century since the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, China has opened itself to the rest of the world. Again it is possible for those of us in other countries to know Chinese culture and society, even as China itself seeks to share in the parts of other cultures that it needs and

desires. Once more the universities of China are becoming centres of genuine learning, not only playing vital roles in the reconstruction of a great country but exercising positive cultural influences in the wider world. For perhaps understandable reasons, it was Western technology, capital investment, and business management expertise that China first looked for from the West. As president of McMaster University in Canada from 1980 to 1990, I was privileged to help facilitate part of that interchange. Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, my university was host to several hundred junior faculty members, each one selected to spend two years in intensive training in our laboratories and then return to build or strengthen key programmes in their home universities. Most of those visitors were involved in science and technology disciplines, especially matters like iron and steel making, but there were a handful in the health sciences and a few, a very few, in the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, our Faculty of Business was responding energetically to requests from China to establish in China programmes in business administration. As I write this preface a decade later, China is vigorously working toward membership in the World Trade Organization. In the 1980s, as a professor of English literature interacting with Chinese colleagues both in Canada and China, I often wished that China and the government of Canada would show a comparable zeal in helping the two countries know each other in the ways made possible only through the humanities and social sciences. That now appears to be happening, as students and faculty members in these disci-

plines, in significant numbers, move back and forth between China and other countries, partially hampered, of course, by linguistic, social, and financial obstacles, but persisting and making progress.

In October 1993, at the invitation of Peking University, I made my sixth trip to China, to lecture and give a graduate seminar about Northrop Frye. It was the first time as a visitor there that I was meant to function as a scholar and professor of the humanities rather than as a senior administrative officer of a university. Given the eminence and importance of Frye and the stature of Peking University, it was an honour, and a fascinating opportunity. I found the twenty-one graduate students admitted to the seminar keen and alert, delving deeply into the assigned text, *The Modern Century*. I learned that a growing number of faculty members in China were genuinely interested in Frye and his work. One of those individuals was Wang Ning, editor with Jean O'Grady of this extraordinary cross-cultural volume. Professor Wang was busy at the time helping organize the first international conference in China about Frye, held the following year. That conference has been succeeded by a second, organized by Wu Chizhe, in 1999, out of which have come Dr. O'Grady's paper and several of the other contributions to this volume. A third conference is in the early planning stages. These animated meetings of thinkers from several countries, all focused on the writings and life of Frye, are the internationally visible manifestations of an intense ongoing programme in China of reading, translating, teaching, publishing, and writing about this major thinker

and student of the human imagination. All of which poses the question, "Why is Frye the intellectual figure from the West who, perhaps after Marx, is attracting such attention?" Readers of the papers in this volume will probably find themselves formulating their own answers to the question. As a long-time Frye scholar and general editor of his collected works, I think, and hope, that his attractiveness in China arises, at least in part, from what he says about myth and concern, about the ways in which the imaginative or hypothetical possibilities articulated in the human arts and sciences can become the charter of our freedoms, even while making possible concerned, responsible citizenship in the world.

Alvin A. Lee

Professor and President Emeritus, McMaster University

General Editor, *Collected Works of Northrop Frye* (University of Toronto Press)

Abbreviations of Frye's Works

- AC *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957)
- BG *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971)
- CP *The Critical Path: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971)
- CW *The Collected Works of Northrop Frye* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996 –)
- DG *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture*, ed. James Polk (Toronto: Anansi, 1982)
- DV Northrop Frye, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1991)
- EI *The Educated Imagination* (Toronto: CBC, 1963)
- FI *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963)
- FS *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947)
- GC *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982)

- MC *The Modern Century* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967)
- MM *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974 - 1988*, ed. Robert D. Denham (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1990)
- NFC *Northrop Frye in Conversation*, ed. David Cayley (Concord, Ont.: Anansi, 1992)
- NFCL *Northrop Frye on Culture and Literature: A Collection of Review Essays*, ed. Robert D. Denham (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978)
- NFF Northrop Frye Fonds, Victoria University Library
- OE *On Education* (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1988)
- RW Northrop Frye, *Reading the World: Selected Writings, 1935 - 1976*, ed. Robert D. Denham (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990)
- SE *Northrop Frye's Student Essays, 1932 - 1938*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Vol. 3 of CW (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1997)
- SM *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1976)
- SR *A Study of English Romanticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968)
- StS *The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970)
- WGS *A World in a Grain of Sand: Twenty-two Interviews with Northrop Frye*, ed. Robert D. Denham (New York: Peter Lang, 1991)

WP *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of*
 "The Bible and Literature" (New York: Harcourt
 Brace Jovanovich, 1990)

Introduction

The International Symposium on Northrop Frye Studies was held from July 15 to July 17, 1999 at the Inner Mongolia University in Hoh-Hot, China. The other sponsors of this significant event, actually the second international conference on Northrop Frye held in China, were Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Beijing Language and Culture University, and Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. Without their generous financial support, the conference would not have been the success it was. Although the volume brings together some of the papers selected from the symposium presentations, it is not merely a volume of conference proceedings. The rest of the essays were solicited by Dr. Jean O'Grady and myself exclusively for the volume. Thus, the papers collected here would serve as an initiation to scholars of Frye Studies, as is envisioned by Prof. Wang Tong-fu, Editor-in-Chief of the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

The essays are divided into three parts, dealing with three separate topics.

In the first part, all the essays deal with Northrop Frye from new perspectives: his personality, and his critical theory, as well as his literary and cultural scholarship. Robert

Denham, a major scholar who has studied Frye for years, explores an unknown aspect of Frye by a close reading of his diaries on a personal and theoretical level, in such a way as to help the reader obtain a better understanding of this great thinker and Canadian scholar. To Denham, apart from other possible functions, Frye's diary serves as "a tool for recording 'everything of importance' ... ; a place for interpreting his dreams; a source for two novels that he plans to write ... ; and a means for passing judgment on whether or not he is maintaining his relations with his students, keeping up with scholarship, and completing more mundane tasks, such as ordering books for the library." In this sense, Frye's diaries are not only valuable to our scholarship, but themselves autonomous works of scholarship which will prove invaluable to future Frye scholars.

Jonathan Hart's long essay tries to re-locate Frye in a broader context of literature and culture as a step toward constructing a poetics of context. His detailed summary of Frye's ideas will serve as a useful introduction for Chinese students and scholars. He points out that Frye is not only a literary critic, but also a cultural and social critic, although he has been accused on a number of occasions of being "a formalist" and even "a-historical." His critical theory certainly goes far beyond the formalistic doctrine of the New Criticism. So aesthetics to Frye is "not something in a vacuum even if he did argue for the autonomy of literature." To Hart, "Frye's social criticism has at its core the university, a place of alternatives, of the critical and open spirit, an experience of authority that earns the right through knowledge

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and wisdom rather than through the imposition of external force. The university gives an alternative reality to the unreal reality of the phantasmagorical horror of the historical record of this century. Frye's view of learning is concrete." As a university professor working almost exclusively at Victoria College, Frye formed many of his insightful ideas through teaching and class discussion. Frye's contribution to linking literature and culture together lies in the fact that he has presented major ideas about language and literature in works of criticism that can be read and appreciated by a broad audience. In today's context of globalization where humanities are obviously marginalized, when we re-read Frye's works we will feel they are closely related to our academic environment. Hart reminds us that "Even as the humanities shrink and buckle and even as literature is traded and transformed into every other conceivable discipline and even as critical theory would displace the very literature of which it is a theory, there is hope that if theory can be taken seriously, partly as a result of the work of theorists like Frye, literature can make a comeback within the university and that the university can be a place of openness, hope and real alternatives. Literature and culture are, in Frye's theory and practice, intimately connected." His point of view is supported by many other essays in this volume.

Wang Ning's essay explores Frye's connection (conscious or unconscious) with, and potential significance to, the current debate on postmodernism and postcolonialism in the broader context of Cultural Studies. For many people, whereas Frye used to be popular in critical circles when the

so-called “linguistic turn” was at its height in North America, now that this “turn” is apparently out of fashion Frye himself has become “an old-fashioned humanist.” But they seem to have forgotten that Frye’s archetypal theory and his manner of doing research are more closely related to the anthropological approach, which finds particular embodiment in the critical shift from the “linguistic turn” to the “anthropological turn.” To Wang, Frye was a pioneering figure in cultural studies who addressed many issues which are currently heatedly discussed among contemporary practitioners of Cultural Studies — for instance in his research on Canadian literature as part of “Commonwealth” or “postcolonial” literature rather than as part of world literature. But “unlike such postcolonial critics as Edward Said — who was born and started his academic career in the United States — and Gayatri Spivak — who came to the imperial ‘centre’ from a postcolonial country and has been practising her postcolonial critique in the ‘other’ (imperial) country rather than her (postcolonial) motherland — Frye in his lifetime had never left his motherland, but always identified himself as a Canadian or North American critic speaking on behalf of Canadian scholarship.” As an Oriental scholar standing outside of Canada, Wang offers the reader ideas and a conclusion which will help push forward Frye studies on a global scale. For to us, scholars in China, the legacy of Northrop Frye does not belong only to the Canadian nation but should be appreciated by scholars in both the West and the East. That is probably why, since 1994, two international conferences on Frye studies have been held in a country to which Frye

had never been and about which he knew very little, and an ambitious series on Frye studies has been published by two leading Chinese publishers, including not only four of his own books but also a collection of essays about him.

Jean O'Grady deals with Frye's ideas on liberal education, which have not been adequately discussed by Frye scholars. These ideas will certainly be relevant to Chinese educators who want to popularize Chinese elementary education and allow higher education to flourish, working toward the building of a few world famous universities in China in a not distant future. No matter how greatly the trend of globalization might influence the humanities, liberal education is always necessary and should be appreciated. O'Grady's essay presents Frye as an upholder of the autonomy of the university: for him liberal education involves truth that is pursued for its own sake, as opposed to being "pressed into the service of an immediate social aim." The question then arises as to how the university does serve society — or, in more general terms, whether learning actually better the human condition. O'Grady discusses Frye's distrust of the idea that any perfect society can or should be constructed on earth, but nevertheless stresses the far-reaching social dimensions of his thought and the possibility he holds out of a "new mental era" inaugurated by culture.

In an essay which provides a concrete illustration of Wang Ning's contention regarding Frye's study of Canadian literature, Sandra Djwa reveals the role Frye played in the writing of the *Literary History of Canada* — certainly part of his strategy to decolonize Canadian literature and make it