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Typology and the Language of Concern in the Work of Northrop Frye

Throughout his career, Northrop Frye argued that criticism should not restrict itself to a negative hermeneutic. It should not remain content, that is, with processes of demystification; but should strive towards a methodology that re-creates the myth and literature of the past for the present moment. In his first full articulation of this forward looking view of criticism, what he refers to as an *ethical criticism*, Frye turns to Kierkegaard's notion of *repetition as becoming* in order to construct a vision of criticism based on the utopian or apocalyptic impulses that he sees at work in all myth and literature:

By [repetition Kierkegaard] apparently means, not the simple repeating of an experience, but the recreating of it which redeems or awakens it to life, the end of the process, he says, being the apocalyptic promise: "Behold, I make all things new." The preoccupation of the humanities with the past is sometimes made a reproach against them by those who forget that we face the past: it may be shadowy, but it is all that is there. . . . The culture of the past is not only the memory of mankind, but our own buried life, and study of it leads to a recognition scene, a discovery in which we see, not our past lives, but the total cultural form of our present life. . . . Without this sense of "repetition," historical criticism tends to remove the products of culture from our own sphere of interest. It must be counterpoised. . . by a sense of the contemporary relevance of past art. (AC 345-46)

Frye returns to Kierkegaard's conception of repetition as becoming in *The Great Code* where he connects it with Biblical typology. It is here, in *The Great Code* and subsequently in *Words With Power* and *The Double Vision*, that Frye develops a more complete vision of criticism and its relation to literary history in terms of typology. Yet, despite the centrality of the prefiguration-fulfillment model to Frye's overall vision, critics have been slow to fully appreciate both the importance of typology to his view of myth and literature as well as the important contribution he has made to theorizing

typology as a mode of consciousness, rather than simply an exegetical practice.¹ In this paper, then, I shall examine Frye's contribution to a theory of typology as it occurs in three inter-related areas of his thought. First, I shall discuss his view of typology as a type of rhetoric and mode of thinking that implies a forward looking, imaginative, and ethically informed view of history; second how it organizes the discontinuous and destabilizing experience of ex-static (or Heideggerian) metaphor, while also being important to the cultural and spiritual work performed by the synthesizing operations of royal metaphor; and thirdly I shall consider how it deepens the mythic and metaphoric expression of primary concerns² which I will demonstrate by examining the typological meaning of the Christian rite of baptism as a potential instance of — what Frye calls in *Words With Power* — kerygmatic consciousness. The aim of this inquiry is to demonstrate the absolute integrity of the prefiguration-fulfillment model in respect to Frye's views on the spiritual dimensions of Western literature; to better situate Frye within the history of typological thinking; and to briefly outline some of the key relationships that Frye's ideas on typology have with disciplines as disparate as Patristic exegesis, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and existential phenomenology.

Frye uses the term typology in a more flexible and less rigorous fashion than contemporary Biblical exegetes relying on the work of Erich Auerbach. According to Auerbach, figural interpretation

establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life. Only the understanding of the two persons or events is a spiritual act, but this spiritual act deals with concrete events whether past, present, or future, and not with concepts or abstractions; these are quite secondary, since promise and fulfillment are real historical events, which have either happened in the incarnation of the Word, or will happen in the second coming. (53)

Auerbach's definition of *figura* reflects a strict adherence to the Patristic and medieval tradition from which it arose. Although Auerbach suggests that the development of *figura* centres on the act of reading itself as the *spiritual* event, he still maintains that the

act is only "spiritual" insofar as it corresponds to actual events in Biblical history — be they events that have already happened or will happen. This tendency to locate *types* strictly in the *Old Testament* limits typology to its most pristine form, as it was developed by Paul and other *New Testament* authors, and thus it overlooks developments in early Christian exegesis that turned to the *New Testament* and even to non-biblical accounts for prefigurations of divine revelation (Emmerson 9). Auerbach does comment, however, that "at a very early date profane and pagan material was also interpreted figurally" (63). For example, "Gregory of Tours "uses the legend of the Seven Sleepers as a figure for the Resurrection; the waking of Lazarus from the dead and Jonah's rescue from the belly of the whale were also commonly interpreted in this sense" (64). Nonetheless, Auerbach passes over these examples due to the "need for distinguishing the figural structure from the other forms of imagery" (63).

This more restricted use of figural interpretation is best represented by the church Father Tertullian whom Auerbach cites as the first writer to employ the word "figura" in an explicitly typological context: "If Adam provided a *figura* of Christ, the sleep of Adam was the death of Christ who was to sleep in death, that precisely by the wound in his side should be figured the Church, the mother of all living" (Auerbach 30). "Being a staunch realist" Tertullian found it necessary to emphasize that "not all [figures] are shadows, but there are bodies also. . . . For it was not figuratively that the Virgin conceived in her womb; and not by a metaphor that she gave birth to Emanuel" (Auerbach 32). Although typology affirmed rather than denied the historical validity of *Old Testament* events for Tertullian, the force of typological analysis, armed as it was with the flexibility of the Latin "figura,"³ tended towards a more revolutionary and metaphoric vision of scripture. Typology, possessed, in other words, its own impetus towards metaphorical understanding. Thus, while Tertullian may have struggled against metaphorical spiritualism in favor of the existential reality of Biblical events, he inadvertently furthered other exegetes who manifested the counter-historical tendencies inherent in typological consciousness itself.

One such exegete is Frye, who — like Gregory of Tours — does not restrict his conception of typology to the perspective of the *Old Testament* and certainly not to the supposed reality of Biblical history. Unlike Auerbach, then, Frye opens the content of

3 Auerbach demonstrates that part of the early success of typological analysis stems from the flexibility of the term "figura." He notes that figura has peculiar etymological origins insofar as it is derived from the stem of words like *ingere*, *figulus*, *factor*, and *effigies*, rather than from the supine of closely related words like *natura*. "This peculiar formation," Auerbach observes, "expresses something living and dynamic, incomplete and playful" about the word" (11-12). This openness of meaning enabled writers and poets in particular to adapt its original concrete meaning to more abstract uses. To this extent, Frye's view of typology is not a break from tradition so much as it is an attempt to continue its inherently dynamic features.

1 One significant exception is Tibor Fabiny's *The Lion and the Lamb: Figurism and Fulfillment in the Bible, Art and Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Fabiny outlines Frye's understanding of typology in the introduction to his work in ways that clearly anticipate my concerns in this essay. Published in 1992, though, Fabiny did not have the benefit of *Words With Power* or *The Double Vision*.

2 Frye's four primary concerns are food and drink, sex, property, and liberty of movement; all of which possess spiritual counterparts: spiritual sustenance, love, artistic creation, freedom of expression (WPP 42).

typological analysis out onto the entire body of myth, rather than seeing it simply in terms of the *Old Testament*. He also places greater emphasis than Auerbach on the inherently metaphoric dimension of typology, focusing on it as a dynamic mode of rhetoric that expands along with an individual's or culture's growing response to a specific body of inherited myths.

In the *Great Code*, Frye is primarily concerned with typology as an organizing principle of biblical myth. Thus while *The Great Code* deals with multiple levels of literary meaning in the Bible, its focus on typology expands on Frye's re-reading of the medieval notion of "allegorical" interpretation in centripetal or formal terms as outlined in the second essay of the *Anatomy*. For Frye, each of the four levels of the medieval schematic remain referential and descriptive in the sense that even the three levels of traditional spiritual meaning (allegorical, tropological, and anagogic) derive their significance from an external or centrifugal authority. For instance, St. Thomas suggests that anagogic meaning occurs when "the things that lie ahead in eternal glory are signified" (40-41). In the *Anatomy*, Frye sought to re-configure this four-fold interpretive scheme so that each level — from the literal through to the anagogic — functions as a wholly immanent, metaphoric, and imaginative mode of signification. *The Great Code* sustains this project by focusing on how typology operates primarily in terms of its "allegorical" significance, the way that the metaphoric content of the Bible holds together typologically as a vast mythic unit. In *Words With Power*, however, Frye focuses on the existential aspects of typology and biblical imagery. This latter work, then, expands on the "tropological" mode of medieval exegesis, emphasizing the "more than literary" dimensions of the Bible alluded to in *The Great Code*. In this sense, *Words With Power* can be seen as the typological fulfillment of the *Great Code*,⁴ deepening, as it does the revelation of "tropological" meaning through its ultimate realization beyond the purely imaginative modes of the *Anatomy*, into the existentially focused mode of kerygma.

For Frye, the existential and ethically concerned dimensions of mythic thought generally coincide with myth's tendency to "dehistoricize whatever is historical in its structure" (WP 56), revealing, in the process, a series of irreducible physical concerns. Yet, typology remains a mode of mythic thought that is specifically attuned to the human/subjective concerns projected into history. Unlike forms of mythic thought which assume or strive towards an a-historical register of signification, typology has

a peculiar relevance for how we might comport ourselves towards the past and is thus explicitly concerned with history in a way that other forms of mythic thought are generally not. In "Typology I" of *The Great Code* Frye explicitly addresses how the prefiguration-fulfillment model implies a theory of historical process. In this chapter, Frye outlines the way that typology presents a specific rhetorical means of relating to history, a metaphorical way of conceptualizing temporality that remains highly conscious of the subjective investments which individuals and cultures inevitably have about their sense of the past:

Typology is a figure of speech that moves in time: the type exists in the past and the antitype in the present, or the type exists in the present and the antitype in the future. What typology really is as a mode of thought, what it both assumes and leads to, is a theory of history, or more accurately of historical process: an assumption that there is some meaning and point to history, and that sooner or later some event or events will occur which will indicate what that meaning or point is, and so become an antitype of what has happened previously. Our modern confidence in historical process, our belief that despite apparent confusion, even chaos, in human events, nevertheless those events are going somewhere and indicating something, is probably a legacy of Biblical typology. (GC 80-81)

Although it may appear that Frye is suggesting, along the lines of Tertullian and Augustine, that typology reveals a form of meaning inherent to history, such a view would fundamentally betray his theory of immanent signification by folding typology back into a descriptive or referential mode of language, rather than seeing it in metaphoric terms. Typology, as understood by Frye, does not reveal an external set of objective events or realities, providential or otherwise, but rather it retroactively endows the past with significance that solidifies the experience of the present while being closely focused on the future. Typology creates rather than locates meaning.

In the language of *The Double Vision*, typology is a means by which we might emancipate the past, comporting ourselves simultaneously toward it and the future in such a way as to creatively transform both, thereby deepening the reality of the present. It is a mode of consciousness, in other words, that transforms and sacramentalizes our ordinary and alienated experience of time which is based on a sense "of a past that is no longer, a future that is not yet, and a present that is never quite" (DV 41). Frye sees this spiritual mode of relating to history articulated in the typological form of the Bible insofar as prophetic-events are verbal, rather than objective historical events — articulations of human concerns that are continuously dramatized and re-lived through the language of myth. This typological vision of temporality, and the desire for renewal

4 More than one author has observed that the organization of *The Great Code* is itself typological, divided, as it is into two sections, the second of which "fulfills" or completes the first. The first section "The Order of Words" moves sequentially from Language through to Typology whereas the second section moves in the reverse pattern from Typology back to Language introducing a typological frame for the book itself. This pattern mirrors the pattern Frye sees in the Bible itself, concluding with an upward movement that situates the end as a renewed beginning.

that it reveals, is apparent in the basic structure of how the Bible begins and how it closes:

The metaphors of creation and apocalypse, at the beginning and end of the Bible, mean that in the presence of God the past is still here and the future already here. The coming of Christ from a human perspective is split between a first coming in the past and a second coming in the future. The existence of the New Testament, by making this historical-prophetic event a verbal event, transfers not only the pastness of the first coming into our own present, but the future-ness (there *has* to be such a word) of the second one. (DV 48-49)

When Frye speaks of the "presence of God," in *The Double Vision*, he is speaking of a spiritualized experience of time, a mode of being, not the incarnation of the Absolute understood as a substantive noun. Indeed, he suggests here that the typological structure of the Bible — the movement, for instance, from a first coming (type) to a second coming (anti-type) — implies an experience of the *present indicative* that incorporates into itself both the lived experience of the past and the fullness of hope about the future. To put this another way, Frye seeks to imagine an ideal form of spiritual grammar in which the *future conditional* and the *past perfect* are experienced as necessary parts of the *present indicative*. Whatever else this passage from *The Double Vision* is, it is an articulation of the ideally realized typological vision, a view of that apocalyptic moment when the self has awoken from "the nightmare of history" into the fullness of time. In this sense, typology is not only a means of organizing history, it is the medium through which one moves beyond history, overcoming time, as Eliot would have it, by means of time (DV 49).

Frye's typological view of history has found a highly sophisticated, if much more deeply secularized, proponent in Hayden White. White develops Frye's views of typology in the context of a non-spiritual view of history, arguing that the

prefiguration-fulfillment model[...] provides a notion of genealogical affiliation as an historically responsible alternative to the physical and biological conception of a genetic relationship [...] the most importantly realistic aspect of Frye's idea of a cultural history (as against its alleged "idealism"), the prefiguration-fulfillment model of cultural change, with its notion of retrospective expropriation of the products of past creative efforts, reminds us of the "fallen" nature of any exercise of power, that it is violent, and that it redeems itself only in the extent to which it "makes new" the cultural artifacts it used as the material cause of its own operation. (37)

White's characterization of Frye's typological view of history is particularly important insofar as it foregrounds the violent features of cultural appropriation. Importantly though, this recognition does not lead to a state of paralysis for White; instead it complements Frye's focus on the productively re-creative aspect of cultural transformation. Having said this, White does not acknowledge that, for Frye, the conditions of possibility for evaluating a creative rather than purely violent act of cultural appropriation result from the ethical impulses in myth itself, rather than through the vicissitudes of history alone. Frye's vision of typology is not restricted to principles of agon or struggle, as White's comments seem to imply⁵; it includes an inherently ethical, and as outlined above, apocalyptic perspective. Thus although White's comments are important insofar as they re-call us to the strictly historical and potentially violent dimensions of cultural expropriation, they overlook the most definitive aspect of Frye's prefiguration-fulfillment model of historical process: the view that a typological perspective of history deepens our response to primary concerns and that these concerns are translated through the various displacements of myth throughout history. A typological view of history incorporates the role of struggle and violence but is not restricted to it. Above and beyond the agonistic dimensions of the prefiguration-fulfillment perspective remains an existentially concerned, and finally utopian dimension.

Frye demonstrates the ethical and forward looking features of typological consciousness against the objective and nostalgically oriented tendency of causal thinking. "Causality and typology are rhetorically similar in form, and [thus] typology might in fact be thought of as an analogy of causality" (GC 81). The difference between them does not lie at the level of form so much as in their content, or more accurately, their direction of concern. Causality is "based on reason, observation, and knowledge" and thus it "relates to the past on the principle that the past is all we can systematically know" (GC 82). Typology on the other hand, "relates to the future, and is consequently related to hope, faith and vision" (82). Thus in typological thinking the existential, interested, and subjective dimension is manifest, whereas in causality it is latent — if present at all. Frye's formal analysis of typology as grounded within the existential dimension is given an even more explicit expression in the typology

5 White refutes Barbara Johnson's and Harold Bloom's criticism of Frye's vision of typology as based on a repugnant valorization of cultural expropriation on the following grounds: "Bloom's criticism of Frye's typological or figural model of historical change seems unduly harsh inasmuch as Bloom's own theories of the 'anxiety of influence' or 'misprision' and the necessarily 'agonistic' nature of all writing can legitimately be viewed . . . as another version of the prefiguration-fulfillment model. And far from leading to an 'idealized mode of interpretation' which promotes the notion of a 'homogenized literature' (or history, for that matter), the prefiguration-fulfillment model provides a way of construing the processes of cultural production which we alone wish to call 'historical'" (37).

informing Dante's *Commedia* as well as the typological history of the lives of the Saints which, as James W. Earl has shown, includes the moral or tropological sense of the medieval four-fold allegorical mode of interpretation. Here again we notice that the history as well as the structural principles of typology demand greater critical flexibility than that provided by Auerbach, who excludes the moral dimension from typology:

Gregory the Great, explaining why the miracles of St. Benedict happen to be identical to those described in the Bible, says of that saint, "this man was filled with the spirit of all the just." This phrase points to a typology of biblical history and of the life of the individual saint. But this use of the term "typology" clearly falls outside Auerbach's classic definition of the concept. Auerbach argues that of the four senses of the allegorical method, three are involved in the typological vision of history; the Old Testament prefigures the New, and both are figures of the end of time and of eternal life; the moral sense remains outside the realm of concrete historical events. The saint's Life, however, might actually be defined as an attempt to draw *moralia* into the typological structures of sacred history. The kind of typology involved in the *vita* [...] has perhaps been best explained by A. C. Charity, in his book on the typological structure of Dante's *Commedia*. His explanation rests upon what he calls "applied typology" — that is, an *ethical imperative which is implied in any typological statement*. The individual Christian's necessary involvement in the typological relation is in the form of a "subfulfillment" demanded by the nature of Scripture itself. (Earl 89-90, my emphasis)

Frye's emphasis on the metaphorical and dynamic features of figural history allow us to better appreciate the dialectic underlying Earl's observation that the lives of the Saints and Dante's *Commedia* present the emergence of an explicitly ethical dimension in typology based on a principle of identification with Christian personalities and their role in Biblical history. These developments in the application of figural thinking impress upon the individual the ethical dimension of relating to sacramental history as the continuing expression of the Word. Indeed, the Lives of the Saints and Dante's *Commedia* present examples of the point at which typology became an integral part of how the Western subject understood itself in relation to a mythic view of history. They are manifestations of the dialectical and dynamic features inherent in typological thinking which impress upon us a sense of continuity and ethical participation with the past:

This understanding of the individual's relation to history is illustrated, perhaps in its most extreme form, in the legend of St. Mary of Egypt, a saint whose Life, as Auerbach himself has noted, is no more than a "figure of the people of Israel going out of Egypt, hence to be interpreted exactly as the Psalm *In exitu Israel de Aegypto* was generally interpreted in the

Middle Ages." If the typology of the other three senses imposes a moral imperative upon the individual, which is manifested in historical action, and if [...] this imperative consists of the establishment of a right relationship with the whole sweep of salvation history as it is revealed in its typological patterns, it is pointless to deny that the moral life of the individual is typologically defined. (Earl 90)

Earl demonstrates that Medieval applications of typology are often based on a principle of identification with Biblical personalities and that this process of identification emerges through the metaphoric and analogic features of typological thinking, rather than being an explicit feature of figural interpretation as it appears in the *New Testament*. This application of figural interpretation, an application that is culturally ascendant at least as far as the seventeenth-century, and which still might be found in more displaced forms in contemporary literature, develops out of the latent linguistic resources of typology. Furthermore, alongside the flexible and dynamic dimensions of the term *figura* are other terms which have allowed typological thinking to develop throughout Western history, and which re-call us to the ethical features inherent in *typos* that are central to Frye's vision of the prefiguration-fulfillment model.

One such term is St. Paul's unprecedented application of the Greek word "omoioima" in Romans 6:5: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." This passage forms the scriptural basis of the *Imitatio Christi* theme and thus ushers in a peculiarly Christian mode of identification that is crucial to the development of typological themes in literature. Indeed, this term (and the *imitatio Christi* theme, in general) encourages a profound form of identification of self and Christ that leads, particularly in 17th century religious literature, towards a deepening of typological visions of the self through Christ. Julia Kristeva has noted the importance of *omoioima* in terms of Christly identification, pointing out that it carries the sense of "a like object, an image." She notices, moreover, that it has been used by Plato in discussions of love where he posits

that if the amorous soul sees an *omoioima*, an imitation, of things of the heavenly world that resemble earthly ones, the soul is beside itself (*Phaedrus*, 250a). Assimilation, transformation (*omoiosis*), or even that which represents [...] are thus, from the very beginning and in very pronounced fashion in Christianity, linked with love. It is the same *omoiosis* relationship that governs connections between God and created beings. (395)

Paul's use of the term *omoioima* in the Epistle to the Romans indicates that the individual's identification with God is an expression of Love or *Agape*. This usage of the word is typological itself insofar as it participates in transforming the predominant view of *The Old Testament* that "You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart"

into the more explicitly Christian context, that is nonetheless in *The Old Testament*, which declares "You must love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus. 19:18). Paul here introduces an integral connection between identification (*omoïoma*) with God and Christ's sacrifice as an expression of a new vision of Love (*Agape*) that fulfills what then becomes the old dispensation:

If sacrifice is a metaphor (obliteration of a concrete substance so that an abstract meaning might come to the sacrificers), passionate love is the experience of becoming *homologous*, a baptism. Paul comes out with the notion when he speaks of the immersion of the faithful in Christ, in his death as in his life. . . . God analogous — or more precisely homologous — to man has to be mortal for a time, in order for mortal man to become analogous to God. The *bond* that any religion establishes between the divinity and its believers becomes here an *identification*. (Kristeva 143)

Although Frye speaks only implicitly of the *Imitatio Christi* theme, and though he only links the issue of Love to the role of metaphor and identification in a theoretically loose way, it seems clear that both features of Paul's Epistle to the Romans underscore the very essence of the imaginative possibilities he sees in typological modes of consciousness and the ethical vision that emerges from them. In the first instance, the role of identification with God is expressed in relation to Frye's rather over-looked discussion of royal metaphor in *The Great Code*; and in the second Frye addresses the notion of metaphoric identification and its relation to Love in his discussion of ecstatic metaphor in *Words With Power*, a discussion implicitly indebted to Paul's application of the term *omoïoma* and its relation to the amorous, identificatory condition of the soul "being beside itself" in a state of passion for the Word.

To overlook Frye's vision of royal metaphor is to ignore his culminating insight regarding typological consciousness as he sees it unfolding in the course of the Bible. For Frye the ascending movement of the Biblical myth, the passage through the seven phases of revelation from Genesis to Revelations, concludes in a form of apocalyptic metaphor that condenses "the total meaning of the Scripture" and which "may break on anyone at any time" (GC 136). The basic form of this metaphor is not restricted to visionary experience but is, in fact, the very condition of categorical thinking: "when we identify A as A we make it an individual of the class to which it belongs" (87). This form of identification which achieves identity *with* and identity *as* is best represented by the function of kingship which is designed to symbolize the unity of a society in individual form. Primitive rituals based on the principle of *Sparagmos*, or the tearing of the king's or scapegoat's body, present an historically early example of metaphoric logic behind royal metaphor (AC 192). The principle behind such rituals being that by dividing the King's body into pieces, and sometimes devouring it, the social body is

symbolically united. For Frye the metaphoric power behind these early incarnations of royal metaphor, expressed in such stories as Orpheus and his Egyptian counterpart Osiris, is revealed through the typological structure of the Bible with its realization in the incarnation of Christ and its sacramental expression in the Eucharist. For Frye Christ's incarnation marks the most elaborate and powerful example of the principle behind royal metaphor — uniting as it does man and God in one personality. In this sense the incarnation can be read as fulfilling the earlier pre-Biblical instances of royal metaphor — the Christian form of the metaphor being the most radical instance of an identification between the divine and human.

The most important metaphoric transformation Frye sees in the future oriented impulse of typology involves decentralizing the traditional Christian vision of Christ's spiritual body — inverting, that is, the Bible's most central manifestation of royal metaphor. It is here that the ethical dimension of typology is fully realized, as Frye's view of typological consciousness leads, in its most ideal formulation, to the radical individualization and subsequent reversal of Christ's spiritual body as it is traditionally configured.⁶ In the traditional view each member of the Church forms a part of Christ's spiritual body. Frye, however, suggests that a genuinely spiritual, which is to say metaphorical, reading of the *New Testament* leads to an intense individualizing of the Law:

Instead of an individual finding his fulfillment within a social body, however sacrosanct, the metaphor is reversed from a metaphor of integration into a wholly decentralized one, in which the total body is complete within each individual. The individual acquires the internal authority of the unity of the Logos, and it is this unity that makes him an individual[. . .] Paul's conception of Jesus as the genuine individuality of the individual[. . .] indicates a reformulating of the central Christian metaphor in a way that unites without subordinating, that achieves identity *with* and identity *as* on equal terms. (GC 110-11)

Frye here suggests that the Western tradition has overlooked the most essential metaphor offered in the *New Testament* for the overcoming of the illusion of self as worldly ego. Indeed, at the heart of Frye's re-reading of Paul's vision of the Spiritual Body (*soma pneumatikon*) is the realization that the overcoming of self, the relinquishing of the ego in favor of a more profound sense of identity, does not arise out of rational investment or naked emotional fortitude but rather the fulfillment of a metaphoric

6 The centrality of typology and the decentralized vision of Christ's spiritual body to Frye's project is indicated in a notebook passage from the early 70s in which Frye plans three separate books, the second being on the "journey of the Logos through the seven creative phases" and the third on "the decentralized interpretation of the Spirit" (NB24, 44, cited in Denham 144).

vision one invests in: "Loyalty, [for example] though a very central and essential element of experience, has no 'rational basis' and is not an 'emotion' either. It is the result of basing one's life, or the essential part of it, on the realizing a metaphor, specifically some form of the royal metaphor" (99). In Frye's reading of the *New Testament* the central royal metaphor is that of the decentralized vision of the Christian body which emerges as the fulfillment of the process of internalizing the Law.

It is in the Wisdom phase of the Biblical myth, represented most explicitly by Ecclesiastes, that the world of the self as ego is presented as an illusion. This recognition, Frye implies, is a necessary step towards a genuine sense of what Paul's vision regarding Christ's spiritual body is articulating. Frye's reading of Ecclesiastes as demonstrating the need for a dissipation of the ego for the attainment of Wisdom is a powerful example of misprision insofar as it transforms what is generally taken to be a conservative part of scripture into a "program of continuous mental energy. . . determined to smash. . . through every locked door of repression in the mind" (123). Indeed, Frye manages to cut through much of the reactionary elements of Ecclesiastes in order to illuminate its revolutionary and creative centre. This revolutionary core of Ecclesiastes resides, not surprisingly, in the metaphorical kernel underlying the conceptual framework of the book's ethical vision, a kernel found in the Hebrew word *hebel*:

This word (*hebel*) has a metaphorical kernel of fog, mist, or vapor, a metaphor that recurs in the New Testament (James 4:14). It thus acquires a derived sense of "emptiness," the root meaning of the Vulgate's *vanitas*. To put [this] central intuition into the form of its essential paradox: all things are full of emptiness. (123)

Frye then warns that

We should not apply a ready-made disapproving moral ambience to this word "vanity" much less associate it with conceit. It is a conception more like the *shunyata* or "void" of Buddhist thought: the world as everything within nothingness. As nothing is certain or permanent in the world, nothing either real or unreal, the secret of wisdom is detachment without withdrawal. (123)

The ingeniousness of Frye's reading lies in his articulation of the paradox that one achieves a state of revolutionary consciousness by first attaining a condition of creative passivity. This state of detachment without withdrawal is achieved by recognizing the illusory nature of the self as it is formed by the contingencies of its historical, as opposed to spiritual, environment. Frye's reading of *hebel* surely validates Fabiny's situating of Riceour's paradoxical idea of *appropriation* within the context of Frye's

views on typology. For Riceour, interpretation as "appropriation [. . .] ceases to appear as a kind of possession, as a way of taking hold of things, instead it implies a moment of dispossession of the egoistic and narcissistic ego" (94, cited in Fabiny 42). Such is the state that Frye sees articulated in Ecclesiastes, and which he argues is necessary for any genuine program of self transformation, particularly as it occurs through one's textual experience.

Frye's notion that the ego is illusory not only has analogs in Buddhist traditions⁷ but is also born out by western disciplines such as psychoanalysis, particularly its Lacanian version: "[T]he ego is, in Lacan's view, the seat of fixation and narcissistic attachment. Moreover, it inevitably contains 'false images' in that mirror images are always inverted images[. . .]. The point of analysis is not to strive to give the analysand a 'true' or correct image of him or her self, for the ego is by its very nature a distortion, an error, a repository of misunderstanding" (Fink 37). Frye explicitly addresses Lacan's conception of the self in his essay "Lacan and The Full Word," when he suggests that the "life before and the life after the growth of wisdom in the mind marks a transition perhaps roughly comparable to Lacan's distinction between *connaissance* and *savoir*" (188). The distinction Frye has in mind here is in regards to the difference between knowledge that is primarily concerned with and even subordinated to the past (*connaissance*/*Kemtnis*) and knowledge that not only undoes the sense of subordination to the past, but which also deepens the reality of the present, while maintaining its relevance towards the future (*savoir*/*Wissen*).⁸ Frye's distinction implicitly asserts that a self without wisdom, in the biblical sense that he defines it, is more or less equivalent to the Lacanian *moi* self, the narcissistic, illusory ego who projects itself into the objects with which it interacts and which is only capable of self-knowledge as *connaissance*. Moreover, the narcissistic speech of the *moi* self is empty in the sense that it lacks metaphoricality while being defensive and stagnant. The self who attains such wisdom, however, is something like the Lacanian *je* self. The *je* self recognizes its constitutive lack, its fundamental emptiness, without pursuing pathological means of filling such emptiness, and which may thereby give rise to more genuinely future orientated modes of self-knowledge. Most importantly for Frye, the *je* self is capable of articulating the full Word, *la parole plein*. He/she is capable, in other words, of a mode of self-directed speech that is deeply metaphorical, transformative, and creative. Frye extends the possibilities of "full speech" far beyond anything Lacan ever intended, suggesting, as he does, that the constitutive lack or split in the ego "[. . .] is resolved, in the New

7 For a discussion of Frye's encounter with Eastern spiritual traditions see Robert D. Denham's "Interpenetration as a Key Concept in Frye's Critical Vision" (1999).

8 For Lacan this latter mode of knowledge is not absolute knowledge in the Hegelian sense, but is more radically temporal and thus contingent to particular circumstances.

Testament, by a 'second coming' of the Word, or Apocalypse, in which both the imaginary and the real disappear and only the symbolic world is left" (189). This is the kerygmatic moment *par excellence*. Despite the Lacanian terminology, though, Frye's sentiment is consistent with Hegel's vision in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of a self-transparent, fully autonomous ego and is thus deeply at odds with Lacan's emphasis on the structurally determined nature of consciousness as divided or split.

The connection between Lacan's *je* self and Frye's notion of genuine wisdom points towards one of the most arresting analogs between psychoanalysis and Frye, namely the function of typology in psychoanalytic experience. Tzvetan Todorov first identified the typological dimensions of psychoanalysis, pointing out in passing that "there are many 'typologies' within [...] psychoanalysis. The two events [necessary to a typology] are no longer situated within the history of humanity but within that of the individual; it remains the case that a recent event (neurotic symptoms, for example) is perceived as the fulfillment of a past event (the infantile trauma) which in turn announces the other" (134). This is most clear in Lacan's concept of the *futur anterior*, which, like Freud's idea of *nachträglichkeit* (deferred action) that Todorov has in mind, is essentially an analytic version of typology. What is realized through psychoanalysis, for Lacan, "is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming" (Lacan 63). Indeed, for Lacan, "[a]nalysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true Word and the bringing to realization of his history by the subject in his relation to a future" (65). This notion that the full Word is spoken in the *futur anterior* tense, referring not to what the subject has been, nor what he continues to be in relation to a traumatic past, but what he will have been in relation to a possible future moment, is the psychoanalytic equivalent to the specific tense of typological consciousness I spoke of in relation to *The Double Vision*. Indeed, it is as close as Lacan will come to Frye's definition of inspired kerygmatic speech, the point at which "the cleavage between active speech and the reception of speech merges into unity" (WP 118).

Given that the therapeutic dimensions of psychoanalysis are typological in structure, it should not be surprising that Freudian clinical designations are also understood as effects of unconscious or preconscious "typologies," acts of interpretation which the subject is more or less unaware of having made: "What is at stake in the anal stage, for example, is not excretion as such but how the child makes sense of it: as submission to the Other's demand, as a triumph of his control etc.) [...]. Freudian clinical designations (hysteria, perversion etc.) are not 'objective' classifications; instead, they aim at subjective attitudes, 'existential projects', which have grown out of the subject's concrete intersubjective situation and for which the subject, in his freedom, is ultimately responsible" (Žižek 29). This is only a brief outline of the

way that psychoanalysis bears out at the personal level, the transformative and creative dimensions of typology that Frye argues for at the broader cultural level. Moreover, the centrality of typology to psychoanalysis would seem to suggest that typology is, in fact, a necessary feature of the modern subject, an underlying and perhaps even inescapable rhetorical mechanism through which identity has come to be construed.

Returning to Frye's strong-reading of Ecclesiastes, we see that he moves from a discussion of *hebel* and the emptiness of the worldly ego, into a discussion of the term *metanoia*. His reading of *metanoia* is similar to that of *Hebel* inasmuch as he divests it of strictly moral connotations in favor of its epistemological significance:

The way of life [presented in the Gospel of Mark 4:11] is described as beginning in *metanoia*, a word translated "repentance" by the AV, which suggests a moralized inhibition of the "stop doing everything you want to do" variety. What the word primarily means, however, is change of outlook or spiritual metamorphosis, an enlarged vision of the dimensions of human life. Such a vision, among other things, detaches one from one's primary community and attaches him to another... As a form of vision, *metanoia* reverses our usual conceptions of time and space. The central points of time and space are now and here, neither of which exists in ordinary experience. (130)

Frye's view of *metanoia* as a recognition or revelation of the immediacy of the present — as a coming to awareness of the illusory nature of everyday temporality — is made possible by a form of ecstatic metaphor. Indeed, ecstatic metaphor is the imaginative basis of a form of identification that he sees as the cornerstone of love as a condensation of Greek *eros* and Christian *agape*.⁹ Thus where, in *The Great Code*, he is primarily concerned with the centripetally directed *content* of Biblical typology as it unfolds through the phases of revelation, in the first four chapters of *Words With Power* he is more explicitly concerned with the existential implications of a typological view of the Bible and of history.

This shift in focus is particularly discernible in the way that the emphasis on ecstatic or existential metaphor in *Words With Power* develops on the discussion of *metanoia* in *The Great Code*. In the same way that *metanoia* consists of a detachment from one's primary community and attachment to another aspect of experience, ecstatic or

9 Although Frye does not explicitly suggest that he is re-introducing *eros* into a New Testament vision of *agape* as identification between God and man, this is, nonetheless, what he seems to do in *The Garden* variation when he claims "spiritual love expands from the erotic and does not run away from it. Here the union symbolized by the one flesh of the married state (Genesis 2:24) has expanded into the interpenetration of spirit" (224). For the post-Freudian, post-Blakean Frye, spiritual love is inconceivable without an erotic underpinning and thus Christian *agape* as identification between God and man is only realizable through the erotic as an imaginative experience.

Longinian metaphor opens up a dimension of imitation separate from nature as it is understood in the Aristotelian sense of mimesis. According to Aristotle's notion of mimesis "what the poet imitates is usually assumed to fall within either the phenomena of human society or the order of nature. But in the Longinian conception of ecstatic response", Frye tells us, "*another dimension of imitation is suggested*" (WP 115). This other dimension involves a prophetic and oracular mode of language that does not "represent objects or events, or even the totality of them" but instead consists of a "direct transmutation of desires and emotions into presences and powers that become 'realities in themselves'" (109, 128). To this extent, ecstatic metaphor is the vehicle of *metanoia*. Indeed, it is through ecstatic metaphor that one approaches the unification of *mythos* and *logos* — the diachronic and synchronic aspects of poetic language. The most essential aspect of Frye's discussion of ex-static metaphor and the experience of standing outside oneself — what Plato describes as being "beside oneself" through identification with something divine in the other (*omoioima*) — is the experience of temporality it reveals. It is at this point that Frye's discussion of ecstatic metaphor and its relation to spiritual metamorphosis is essentially a translation of Heidegger's fundamental insight in *Being and Time* into the context of Biblical imagery and typology.

Frye not only draws on Heidegger's notion of the "ex-static" experience in order to complement the Longinian principle of sublimity as the experience of being taken outside one's self, he re-contextualizes Heidegger's insight into the relationship between a creative experience of temporality and the sense of *authentic care* (*Sorge*) that arises from it. For Heidegger, as for Frye, an authentic or spiritual comportment to the world consists of a full recognition of its temporalized nature. Indeed, Heidegger's emphasis on the essentially temporalized character of subjectivity

is the culminating insight of *Being and Time*. In its authenticity, Dasein is "anticipatory resoluteness." As such, authenticity is not so much a state of being as it is the submission to a process of becoming. The conclusion of Heidegger's existential analytic is that "*temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care*" (BT 374). In authenticity, Dasein takes over its ek-static being explicitly as having a past that is recovered and made its own, not as something static and inert, but as interpretable in terms of an open and undetermined future. Only when Dasein in its being-towards-Death confronts its possibility of being radically other than it has been does the full meaning of its temporal existence open up before it. (Boothby 211)

This synopsis of *Being and Time* illuminates the extent to which Frye's discussion of Biblical imagery and typology reveals much the same thing as Heidegger's existential analytic. Indeed, this summary illuminates each of the main points in Frye's discussion of typology, temporality, and ecstatic metaphor. Boothby begins by emphasizing

Heidegger's notion that an authentic existential comportment towards the world consists of a "submission to a process of becoming" rather than a recognition of a state of being in an inert sense. Such "becoming" would not be possible without the sort of relinquishment of the ego Frye speaks of in relation to Ecclesiastes. This submission to becoming, what I described above as "creative passivity," is the condition of possibility for Dasein to "take over its ek-static being as having a past that is recovered and made its own" (211). This is the essence of an individual expression of a typological disposition to the world: *the willingness to recover the past in an authentic and genuine manner in order to face the horizon of the future openly, such that Dasein is willing to confront the possibility of becoming radically other than what it has been*. Frye's discussion of the Mountain variation, in *Words With Power*, is essentially the symbolic representation of what Heidegger means by "Ek-static" being. Heidegger arrives at the conclusion that the intensification of consciousness, symbolically figured in Western literature through images of ascent, is fruitless without the ability to "take over" that mode of being on the way down from the ecstatic encounter. Frye's concern with addressing the experiential realm of ecstatic metaphor leads him into the fundamentally Heideggerian view that not only the subject speaks but "language itself speaks, so that in authentic speech human beings are called to respond to something spoken from out of the essence of language itself" (Boothby 212). What is revealed to Heidegger through his Daseinanalysis and to Frye through an encounter with Biblical typology and imagery, is that language itself possesses an ethical dimension. Heidegger speaks of this in terms of an authentic comportment towards others as it is revealed in the dwelling-place of language, and Frye in terms of the primary concerns expressed in the imagery and typology of myth.

It is at the point that Heidegger's and Frye's approaches to Being differ most clearly that we can begin to see more deeply the relationship between primary concern and typological modes of consciousness. For Heidegger Dasein finds its most authentic state of being-as-becoming in its recognition that it is conditioned by its being-towards-death. Without a genuine consciousness of death, Dasein exists in a state of bad-faith — a state of total estrangement from Being. In Frye's work, however, death plays a much less integral role. In its place Frye emphasizes the role of sexuality as it is experienced in imaginative terms: "Man's chief and most distinctive assets are his sense of sex as an imaginative experience and his [self] consciousness" (GC 110). The human condition, for Frye, is largely based on the opposition between these two fundamental aspects of its being. This opposition, this original identity crisis, as it were, finds its mythic origins in Genesis which expresses the institution of a "repressive morality founded on a sexual neurosis" (WP 194). Much of the Biblical myth, in its typological design and its proliferation of apocalyptic imagery, is designed to overcome this opposition between physical and symbolic/spiritual sexuality (191).

In its final articulation this sexual and physical opposition is represented as a type of the spiritual marriage between Christ and the Church — where each individual subject that forms a part of the Church is symbolically female. This symbolism indicates that just as the world fell by woman its redemption was made possible by a woman — a redemption that imaginatively unites the oppositions instituted in Genesis. Thus when Frye seeks, in the words of Michael Dolzani, “to get behind literary metaphor,” (99) he is attempting to locate that element in language that works to dissipate the ego which allows for the sort of full identification with others that St. Paul speaks of in terms of the spiritual body’s (*soma pneumatikon*) relationship to the Word.

What I wish to emphasize at this point is that the intense state of kerygmatic consciousness that Frye seeks to theorize is only sustainable through a recognition of the typological structure of mythic language — that form of metaphorical language which constructs an elaborate imaginative design around a basic human concern. Typology, as Frye presents it, is a process of mythic thinking that allows a single image, symbol, or event to take on an enormous weight of metaphorical significance while presenting, at its core, an existentially primitive concern. In other words, it is through the process of typological accretion that a symbol can become the direct transmutation of desire and emotion into a presence and power in itself. Rather than trying to re-theorize this kerygmatic dimension of language which, due to its subjective nature, will likely lead me to Zen-like statements of paradox,¹⁰ I shall instead briefly outline the typological density underlying the Christian sacrament of Baptism in an effort to demonstrate the enormous metaphorical weight and the shared body of mythic events, images and symbols required for kerygmatic consciousness. The aim of this is to show how a single event or image, in this case the baptismal rite, attains enormous imaginative and transformative power through its identification as a fulfilling figure of past events, and how this rich process of imagistic and metaphorical patterning develops from a fundamental existential concern. Indeed, the typological patterns and underlying primary concerns that constitute the significance of the rite of baptism provide a perfect instance of the verbal and imaginative density required to constitute the sort of mythic space that Frye defines as kerygmatic.

The first thing one notices about the typological interpretation of the baptismal rite when considered in the context of Frye’s organization of mythic structures is that it condenses the two fundamental mythic patterns of descent and ascent while also

condensing the movement from the Old to the New dispensations. In other words, the typological meaning underlying the baptismal rite, as Jean Daniélou has shown, presents Christian baptism as being the sacramental antitype to the patterns of destruction (descent) and creation (ascent) that occur as early as Genesis and Exodus. At one and the same time, moreover, it condenses the movement from the Old dispensation — represented by the nation of Israel — to the New dispensation — represented by the incarnation. The rich typological infrastructure underlying baptism originates with “the great works of creation and redemption accomplished by God in the *Old Testament*” (Daniélou 71). The earliest symbolic resonance of the baptismal waters is to be found in “the primitive waters of Genesis” which are presented as a type of the new creation accomplished in Christ (71). Thus the baptismal rite symbolizes the continuity in present history of Christ as the creative principle of regeneration (John 3:5). According to Tertullian the baptismal waters possess two creative characteristics. It consists first of the “primordial element in which life appears, and second it is sanctified by the Holy Spirit: the primordial water brought forth life, so that no one should be astonished that in baptism the waters are able to give life” (72). This creative or ascending dimension of baptismal typology is linked by the recurrence of the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit as a dove who first appears hovering over the waters of creation and who then appears hovering over the waters of the Jordan marking the second creation. This creative aspect of the typological dimension of baptism, which could be filled out in much greater detail than I have done here, is parallel with the Mountain variation that forms one of the main quadrants of the Axis-Mundi as Frye envisions it. In the context of the individual this variation is normally “connected with the intensifying of consciousness” (151). In the context of baptism, however, this “intensification” is really a renewal of creation itself through the individual. In this sense the “intensification” occurs at both the cosmic and at the individual level. The individual participant in baptism re-lives the cosmic drama of creation as it occurs in Genesis and the re-creation as it occurs in the incarnation marked by the baptismal waters of the Jordan. This rich typological pattern, which gives the baptismal rite its mythic significance as a dramatization of creation itself — rather than being a purely “purifying” act — is an expression of the basic primary concern “to make and create.” Indeed, at its most basic level the creative dimension of the sacramental typology behind baptism is an elaborate and potentially kerygmatic ritualization of this creative concern.

This creative and ascending part of the baptismal drama is, of course, only one half of the mythic sequence. The second part of the pattern involves the descent motif which, at its most basic level, “reinforces” the intensification of the ascending motion. From the perspective of primary concern, however, the descent motif in the baptismal drama reveals that a second primary concern is being expressed: the concern to escape

10 Perhaps the most paradoxical of these moments comes when Frye, in the context of a discussion regarding kerygma and its relation to concepts like God, Word, Spirit, suggests that “as the subject-object cleavage becomes increasingly unsatisfactory, subject and object merge in an intermediate verbal world, where a Word not our own, though also our own, proclaims and a Spirit not our own, though also our own, responds” (WP 118).

Cave and Furnace variations in *Words With Power*. In the ascent motion of the ritual, the typological pattern linked to creation takes place at the level of the unfallen World and Christ's renewal of the Waters of creation occurs at the level of Heaven. This utmost level of mythic consciousness is figured by the Ascension of Christ as well as the eschatological promise of the Paradise to come which are typological themes that the *New Testament* and the Patristics also see in relation to the sacrament of Baptism (Daniélou 99-113). To this extent the baptismal rite incorporates, when understood in relation to its typological underpinnings, all four levels of the mythic cosmos. Indeed, baptism finds its breadth of mythic meaning insofar as it is a condensation of the major patterns that form the basis of the biblical narrative. This process of condensation occurs through the dense typological, metaphorical, and mythic infrastructure underlying the sacrament, an infrastructure I have outlined in only the broadest of strokes. Yet, underlying this sacramental act, which moves through the whole mythological cosmos, are two elegantly simple concerns: the concern to make and create and the concern to remain free of constraint.

When we consider the richness of the typological infrastructure underlying Christian baptism and the sheer imaginative force present in it, we get a sense of what Frye means when he suggests that a particular symbol or narrative structure can become a power unto itself — not only a representation of human desire but an embodiment or re-creation of that desire. The rite of baptism, when properly understood within its typological context, is nothing less than a re-enactment of a cosmic drama, a re-living of a fundamental mythic experience. I have presented baptism, in this context, as one example of the conditions of possibility for kerygmatic states to emerge, one instance of how a sacramental space develops out of the richness of a mythic structure. Frye's reading of the Bible is designed to offer the reader a sense of the importance of the ethical and sacramental dimensions of verbal experience, dimensions which, if they are to continue to be meaningful, must be renewed and reconstructed for the present moment. What finally emerges from Frye's reading of the Bible, and his renewed reflections on typology, is the recognition that myth is not something we overcome, it is a basic structure of our understanding.

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from slavery and restraint. This primary concern underlies the typological relationship between baptism as the fulfilling antitype to the deluge in Genesis as well as the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus. Here again, however, we must first begin with creation itself. Daniélou traces baptismal typology all the way back to Genesis indicating the extent to which the Biblical creation narrative contains traces of an even more primitive myth where God's creation is expressed as a "victory [...] over the dragon of the sea, Leviathan" (75). This destructive dimension of the creation waters, represented by the Leviathan reappears, according to Daniélou, in the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. In the Jordan "Christ is shown as triumphing over the dragon hidden in the waters, before giving them the power of sanctification. So, alongside the theme of the creative waters, the theme of the waters of death is to be found in baptismal typology" (75). The basic pattern here can be reduced to its essential features: "the world is filled with sin; the judgment of God destroys the sinful world; one just man is spared to be the principle of a new creation" (76). Daniélou also stresses the place of Christ's descent into hell in relation to baptism: "it is here that we have the substantial realization of the mystery of the Deluge. In the death of Christ, the sinful humanity that He had assumed is annihilated by the great waters of death, and He rises from them as the First-born of the new creation. Baptism, as St. Paul tells us, is a sacramental imitation of the death and the resurrection of Christ" (77).

The primary concern of escaping from restraint and slavery is given an even deeper expression in the sacramental typology of baptism through the type/antitype relation between the crossing of the Red Sea and Baptism: "the Crossing of the Red Sea is one of the types of baptism that we meet most frequently [...] and which] is analogous to that of the deluge, for it concerns the waters of destruction, which are the instrument of the punishment of God" (Daniélou 86). Daniélou points out that the Crossing of the Red Sea is a deepening of the expression of the victory over Rahab, "the sea-monster which symbolizes Egypt." This is then read into the baptismal rite, by figures like Gregory of Nyssa, who saw "The crossing of the Red Sea [as ...] a prophecy in action of the sacrament of baptism" (90). A number of typological threads then gather around the theme of the Red Sea as a figure for baptism, the essence of which is the combination of water as a destructive and creative force as well as a purifying element.

If we consider these descent/ascent patterns in relation to Frye's discussion of the four-fold cosmology we see that the baptismal rite involves all four levels of mythic consciousness. Beginning with the descent pattern we notice that the deluge of Genesis which underlies a major thread of the typological significance of baptism takes place on the level of human history — at the level of the "fallen world of experience" — whereas Christ's harrowing of hell takes place in the "Demonic World." To this extent the baptismal descent involves both levels of mythic descent covered by the

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Visual Texts, Textual Visions: Hypertext, Resistance, and Contemporary Asian-Canadian Writing

Visual and textual media have often been analyzed as forms with different elements or constraints. *Laocoön*, a work by eighteenth century German writer, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, for example, compares the limits of poetry and "painting," arguing that different effects are generated by poetry than by "painting"¹ (the latter term is also used by Lessing to describe a visual art such as sculpture). He claims that the textual medium can diffuse the effects that are often sustained in "painting." However, the visual and the textual are not always conceived of in a mutually exclusive way. Ekphrasis or the textual description of the graphic is an example of the interaction of the textual and the visual.² (The description of the shield of Achilles in *The Iliad* and the portrayal of the shield of Aeneas in *The Aeneid*, both of which Lessing analyzes in *Laocoön*, are classic examples.) Contemporary culture is increasingly challenging the separation of textual and visual forms through various technologies and concepts, one of which is hypertext. The concept of hypertext (not the term) was articulated by Vannevar Bush in 1945 in his description of a "memex," an imaginary machine that would organize information in a spatial manner "with a mesh of associative trails" linked to one another (Bush #8). As a computer based phenomenon, hypertext can be described as "an information technology consisting of individual

1 "In poetry, as I have already noted, ugliness of form loses its repulsive effect almost entirely by the change from coexistence to the consecutive. From this point of view it ceases to be ugliness, as it were, and can therefore combine even more intimately with other qualities to produce a new and special effect. In painting, on the other hand, ugliness exerts all its force at one time and hence has an effect almost as strong as in nature itself" (Lessing 128).

2 Peter Wagner indicates that ekphrasis originally meant "a full or vivid description" (12). While the term is most often used in reference to a description of an actual painting or work of art in literature (e.g., W.H. Auden's poem "Musée des Beaux Arts" which describes Brueghel's *Fall of Icarus*), I am using ekphrasis, "the verbal representation of a visual representation" to discuss fictional, textually articulated photographs as well.