

Key Terms:

symbol: any unit of any literary structure that can be isolated for critical attention; can be words, phrases, or images

mythos: deals with anything related to action, time, or the ear (in that you feel or experience it)

dianoia: deals with anything related to thought; is non-temporal, related to eye (in that you "see" it)

precept: a general rule intended to regulate thought or behavior

catharsis: purification or cleansing through literature (Aristotle)

ecstasis: the belief that ecstasy or pleasure can bring one outside of the self (Hellenic)

compulsions: irresistible urge to behave in a certain manner

Notes: Formal Symbolism

-Frye bases this on Aristotle's notions of "mimesis praxeos" (imitation of action)

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| <i>mythos praxis</i> : imitation of typical actions (movement of dianoia) | <i>mimesis logou (dianoia)</i> :imitation of typical thought (mythos in stasis) |
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- examples of formal symbolism best found in classical or neo-classical literature [particularly that of the 17th and 18th century]
- writers in this phase are in contact with reality and nature, **but** the effect they produce is not realism or naturalism:

the work of art [in formal phase] does "not reflect external events and ideas," but instead "exists between example & precept." (77)

- the formal symbol (also first referenced as the "image") begins by looking at form (i.e. structure) in efforts to establish a pattern

- the formal image attempts to establish **tone**

- three types: modulating, episodic, isolated

- Formal criticism is commentary by nature and tries to translate the implicit [imagery/symbolism] into the explicit [words and meanings] and can "only isolate the aspect of meaning, larger or small" (81)

- formal symbolism is "based on a strong sense of a lurking antagonism between the literal and the descriptive aspects of symbols" (85)

- there is some discussion on catharsis in opposition to ecstasy
"the ecstasy of creation and its response produce, on one level of creative effort, the hen's cackle; on another...the sense of buoyancy or release that accompanies perfect discipline, when one can no longer know the dancer from the dance" (86)

- On allegory: reality is based on three compulsions:

1. on act or law
2. on thinking or fact
3. on feeling

whereas... imagination has a fourth compulsion:

4. compulsion of morality, beauty, and truth, who are free of all compulsions

Bibliography:

Frye, Northrop. "Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays." Collected Works of Northrop Frye. ED. Robert D. Denham. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2006.