

Northrop Frye's "Kook Books" and the Esoteric Tradition

Published in Frye and the Word: Religious Contexts in the Writings of Northrop Frye, ed. Jeffery Donaldson and Alan Mendelson. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004. 329–56. Reprinted by permission of the University of Toronto Press Incorporated. Copyright © 2004.

Northrop Frye's notebooks, which run to well over a million words, provide a record of his critical and imaginative life that in many respects is quite different from what we find in his published work, and one of the areas of this difference is, I believe, worth opening up for discussion. Frye's notebooks were the workshop from which he fashioned his books and essays. If we consider the notebooks he wrote, say, during the last six or seven years of his life, it is possible to trace the connections between the material they contain and the form this material eventually took in *Words with Power*. The published form often represents a distillation into a paragraph of so of what Frye labored over, page after handwritten page, in his notebooks. As one might expect, the late notebooks provide a fairly full account of what Frye was reading during the last years of his life. For me, one of the interesting features of Frye's reading during these years is that he devotes attention to a number of writers who get left behind in *Words with Power*. The significance, for example, that the French symbolists had for Frye—Rimbaud, Laforgue, Nerval, and especially Mallarmé—is not really apparent in his published work. Mallarmé makes six cameo appearances in *Words with Power*, but in the notebooks he appears in ninety-six entries, mostly in the late notebooks and mostly in connection with Frye's fascination with Mallarmé as a religious visionary.¹ One wonders why the fruits of Frye's fascination with Mallarmé—as well as with Nerval and Laforgue²—never made their way into his books or essays.

Other topics that Frye planned to write about but never did in any extended way include Schelling's philosophy of mythology and revelation; the network image in De Quincey, Ben Jonson, and others; "fairies and elementals"; the American Romantics; the Vedic myth of Hiranyagarbha (especially the seed of fire in the midst of the waters); and Poe, who Frye calls "the greatest literary genius this side of Blake" (*Late*, 165). But what I want to consider is a group of works that I have combined under the umbrella phrase "esoteric spirituality." How to understand this material in the development of Frye's thinking is something of a challenge, and I propose here only to outline the broad contours of Frye's reading in this area and the glance at several examples. My intuition is that because the esoteric tradition comes up so repeatedly in Frye's notebooks, it is important to try to understand his interest in it. The appendix to this paper contains an outline of the esoteric tradition as it appears in Frye's notebooks, and the ways Frye draws on this tradition warrants study.

My use of the word "esoteric" generally follows the broad definition given it by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, that very diligent Dutchman who has become one of the leading students of the field. Hanegraaff, drawing in part on the work of Antoine Faivre, says we should distinguish five different meanings of the word ("Some Remarks"):

1. "Esoteric" as a synonym for the occult: here we would have a wide variety of writings on the paranormal, exotic Wisdom traditions, New Age spiritualities, and the like. Frye is clearly interested in the esoteric in this sense.

2. "Esoteric" as secret teachings; the discipline of the arcane with its distinction between initiates and non-initiates. Frye occasionally speaks of secret books and traditions.³

3. The *philosophia perennis* in religious studies: here "esoteric" is a metaphysical concept referring to the "transcendent unity" of exoteric religions. In Notebook 44, Frye writes, "the progress from 'literal' to spiritual meaning . . . is . . . often identified with an exoteric-esoteric movement" (*Late*, 131).

4. “Esoteric” as gnosis, in the sense of various religious phenomena which emphasize experiential rather than rational and dogmatic modes of knowing, and which favor mythical or symbolic over discursive discourse. Such esoteric modes of knowing are again clearly central in to Frye’s grand critical project. “Whenever I read Blavatsky & other deifiers of the void, I realize that Xy [Christianity] & the other great religions are, so to speak, phenomenological: they deal with the infinite only in terms of what the infinite has revealed” (*Bible*, 207).

5. “Esoteric” as a complex of interrelated traditions that arise from Renaissance “hermeticism”: alchemy, Paracelsianism and Rosicrucianism; Christian and post-Christian Kabbalah; theosophical and Illuminist currents; and various occultist and related developments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Frye’s understanding of esoteric in this sense derives chiefly from Frances Yates’s *Giordano Bruno and the Esoteric Tradition*.

Antoine Faivre, another widely published authority on the esoteric tradition, argues that we can distinguish Western esoteric thought by four “intrinsic characteristics,” and these too provide a context for understanding Frye’s thinking (Faivre, xvi–xix.):

1. The belief that there are correspondences between all aspects of the visible and invisible worlds which are meant to be decoded. Correspondences can be (a) within nature itself (e.g., the seven metals and seven planets of astrology), or (b) between nature, history, and sacred texts (e.g., Jewish and Christian Kabbalah). This notion of correspondences is everywhere in Frye, though he usually uses the word “analogy” to refer to it.

2. Nature is felt to be essentially alive in the cosmos (e.g., Paracelsianism, *Naturphilosophie*). This is less important in Frye, who believed with Blake that there is no natural religion, though we see him drawing back somewhat from the Blakean view in *Words with Power*.

3. The imagination is the faculty for revelation and mediation. This is, of course, absolutely central in Frye: imagination is all.

4. The experience of transmutation, metamorphosis, or “second birth.” Such experience is also central in Frye, though the language he uses to refer to it (e.g., resurrection, apocalypse, interpenetration) is different.

As the appendix suggests, Frye’s reading in the esoteric tradition was wide. How deep it was I think we don’t yet know, but we get a number of hints from the notebooks.⁴ Frye was no stranger to the off-beat. In a set of notes written sometime after 1985 he says, “I had a strong impulse the other day to write an article called ‘Fairies and Elementals.’ It branches out in so many directions that it becomes bewildering, and worse, it takes me back to the days when I wanted to read every kooky book in the world as a background for Blake” (*Romance*, 328). He is doubtless referring to Swedenborg, Blavatsky, and Boehme, among others. Frye’s interest in elemental spirits (spirits neither angelic nor demonic, or, as he says in Notebook 3, “non-human forms of more or less conscious existence” [*Bible*, 54])—his interest in the elementals appears to have been motivated by what he found in the early Milton, especially *Comus*, where the elementals are the Attendant Spirit, Sabrina, and Comus himself. It is an interest that can be traced back to his study of eighteenth-century primitivism as well.⁵ But Frye’s remark about wanting to write on “faeries and elementals,” a remark that gets repeated over and over in Frye’s notebooks,⁶ was triggered on this occasion by his having read Maureen Duffy’s *The Erotic World of Faery* (*Late*, 190), which is pretty close to a kooky book. And Frye’s mind begin to branch in every direction indeed: backward to Shakespeare’s Puck and Ariel and further back to Lyly’s *Endymion* and Peele’s *Old Wives’ Tale*; forward to Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno* and George Macdonald and Tolkien’s essay on fairy stories; then to John Crowley’s *Little, Big*, and from there to Giordano Bruno, science fiction, Celtic mythology, James’s occult fiction, and finally to the theosophists (*Late*, 190). To move from Shakespeare to Madame Blavatsky is to move from the center to the circumference. Frye had

read Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* for *Fearful Symmetry* and had had turned to her again when he was trying to crack the code of Yeats's *A Vision*—in the first major paper he wrote after *Fearful Symmetry*.⁷ Why the attraction to such a discredited (though fairly influential) figure as Madame Blavatsky?⁸ “Whenever I read Blavatsky and other deifiers of the void,” Frye writes, “I realize that Xy [Christianity] & the other great religions are, so to speak, phenomenological: they deal with the infinite only in terms of what the infinite has revealed” (*Bible*, 207). Blavatsky's theosophy was, for Frye, “the connecting link between myth and science,” a kind of thinking that was not quite poetic and certainly not rational, but, as Frye says “a synthetic and mythical reasoning [which is] known as occultism” (*Romance*, 91). “I don't want to dismiss the ‘mezzanine’ world of Yeats and Blavatsky as purely unreal: some such theory as Bardo might make sense of it, as I've always thought” (*Anatomy Notebooks*, 118).⁹ What Frye is referring to is Blavatsky's view of the cosmos, which he finds linked somehow to William Morris's revolutionary romances. He describes this as Blavatsky's “dumb-bell shaped cosmos, before birth and after death meeting somewhere around the universe, east of the sun and west of the moon, where the archetypes of the psyche fight their Valhallas, and where the revolutionary drive in all romance isn't perverted or kidnapped by some social institution” (*Romance*, 325).

Frye worries a good deal about such social institutions, including the social institution of second-phase rational thought. If literature can be a critique of pure reason, so can the occult. In his 1947 essay on Yeats, Frye says of Madame Blavatsky, “*The Secret Doctrine*, whatever else it is, is a very remarkable essay on the morphology of symbols, and the charlatanism of its author is less a reflection of her than on the age that compelled her to express herself in such devious ways” (*Twentieth*, 57). In other words, if we shift our perspectives, Blavatsky is not a quack after all. Frye was always engaged in trying to get us to shift our perspectives. Here's the way Frye puts it in a relatively early notebook:

Now let's go back to the occult threshold. . . . Mysticism can come to terms with the dogmatic systems: the soul accepts what the mind hands it just as the mind accepts sense data from the body. . . . All mental systems are symbolic forms, & are held in suspension by the spirit with a detachment beyond all skepticism. The mystic is thus naturally attracted by a “why not?” sense of the relativity of reality, & likes to return to the free speculation of the primitive, who thinks a dream is experienced by his soul when leaving the body. Sophisticated reasoning conventionalizes & orders reality, & uses the word “coincidence” to dismiss any form of unusable design. So he wonders what would happen if he shifted the perspective; . . . occultism has a continuously satanic role to play, as Blavatsky shows (*Romance*, 149–50).

By “satanic role” Frye means the deviousness with which theosophy forces a shift in perspective away from the conventions of Cartesian thinking.

We turn now to several of the categories in the appendix, beginning with what Frye called his “kook books” and then moving to the world of physics—to David Bohm and the idea of the implicate order and the holographic paradigm. The kook books themselves include a group of highly speculative, somewhat zany, and often amusingly eccentric books that Frye was attracted to. They range from the completely bizarre at one extreme, like Robert Anton Wilson's *Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati*, to what we can call new-age religion. They include also perhaps the channeling phenomena, as in Bishop Pike's *The Other Side* and Jane Roberts's various Seth books, as well as transpersonal or fourth-force psychology.

Frye uses the phrase “kook book” four times in his notebooks. The first is at the beginning of Notebook 23, written during the early 1980s, where he announces that he has become interested lately in two literary genres, science fiction, which he read fairly widely in, and the “kook book.” Of the latter category he lists three: Robert Anton Wilson's *Cosmic Trigger*, already mentioned; Adam Smith's *Powers of Mind*, and Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier's *The Morning of the Magicians* (*Bible*, 366). Smith is a journalist, and *Powers of Mind* is a far-ranging compendium of all sorts of consciousness expanding: EST

[Erhard Seminar Training], Zen, Easlen, biofeedback, transcendental meditation, yoga, the *I Ching*, and other such inner-space movements of the 1960s and 1970s. *The Morning of the Magicians* is a book about “ultra-consciousness,” another encyclopedic account of the anomalies of Charles Fort, vanished civilizations, conspiracies, cryptology, Nazism and the Golden Dawn, and tantalizing enigmas of all sorts.

Then in notebook 11h, written in the mid-1980s, Frye lists five books, saying in the next entry that “For years I have been collecting and reading pop-science & semi-occult books. . . . Some are very serious books I haven’t the mathematics (or the science) to follow: some are kook-books with hair-raising insights or suggestions” (*Late*, 713). The five books are Wilson’s *Cosmic Trigger* again, Itzhak Bentov’s *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*, Rudy Rucker’s *Infinity and the Mind*, Ken Wilber’s *The Holographic Paradigm*, and Stanislav Grof’s *Realms of Human Unconscious* (*Late*, 712). Of these, the only two real “nut books,” as Frye calls them later (*Late*, 713), are Wilson’s and Bentov’s. Rucker is a main-stream mathematician; Wilber a biochemist, who has done much to popularize new-age physics, especially the speculations of David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, and Karl Pribram, whom Frye refers to as “the Tao of physics people” (*Late*; 106); and Grof, an LSD researcher who was also connected with the Easlen Institute. Exactly what Frye thought of Grof’s work is uncertain, as he does not mention him elsewhere in the notebooks. The other two times Frye uses the “kook book” epithet is in connection with Merezhkovsky’s *Atlantis/Europe*, and in both cases, while he recognizes that Merezhkovsky comes close to the fictions of Eric von Daniken, he sees the Atlantis book nevertheless as “an example of how yesterday’s kook book becomes tomorrow’s standard text” (*Late*, 17, 495).

To this list of Frye’s “kook books” we would have to add Michael Baigent’s *Holy Blood and Holy Grail*, perhaps A.E. Waite’s book on the Tarot, Marilyn Ferguson’s *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (which Frye calls a “goo-goo book” [*Late*, 713]; it’s a kind of Bible of new-age and expanded consciousness movements in the 1980s, an American version of Pauwels’s *The Morning of the Magicians*, which appeared in France in 1960). We would also have to add Gurdjieff and his pupil Ouspensky, both of whom Frye read. Pauwels had been a member of Gurdjieff’s circle. But how wide should we cast the “kook book” net? As Frye recognizes, there is a wide gap between the serious work of a respected physicist like David Bohm and the zany speculations of Robert Anton Wilson. The “kook book” begins to shade off into other areas. The Tao of physics people (Wilber, Capra) are interested in Eastern mysticism, and so it is not a very large step to Frye’s reading of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra* and Gopi Krishna’s *Kundalini*, or to the hermeticism and theosophy of Madame Blavatsky and G.R.S. Mead’s *Thrice Greatest Hermes* (a book Frye seems to have admired). And then it’s only another small step to Marie-Louise von Franz’s book on alchemy, which would take us toward Jung and Eliade. Yoga and Ouspensky and even A.E. Waite lead us into mysticism, and this opens up another whole area of Frye’s reading. “I have very few religious books,” he wrote, “& those I have stress the mystics” (*Late*, 35). He is speaking not simply of his fondness for Eckhart and Boehme, of William Law and Joachim of Floris, and of scores of others anthologized in Huxley’s *Perennial Philosophy*, a book to which Frye often recurred; he is speaking as well of the writers about mysticism: Silberer, Underhill, Otto, Inge, Fremantle, and Zaehner, among many others. Then there is the *I Ching*, and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the latter of which was the source of Frye’s lifelong fascination with the bardo state—as well as the bardo novel that he kept wanting to write for most of his adult life.

I find no evidence that Frye knew the work of Karl Pribram directly (he appears to have read about Pribram’s neurological research in *The Holographic Paradigm*), but he did read at least parts of the other books I have mentioned, many of them during the last six or seven years of his life. His annotated copies of these books are in the Frye Library at Victoria University. We would not be surprised to encounter writers such as Jung and Eliade and the German mystics in *Words with Power*, where they do in fact appear. None of the other writers I have mentioned appears in that book, though David Bohm’s notion of the implicate order does get mentioned in the closing pages of *The Double Vision*.

The scope of Frye's references to the esoteric tradition can be seen in the appendix. Philo of Alexandria, who is mentioned once in passing in *The Great Code*, appears in fifteen entries of eleven different notebooks. Similarly, one would hardly infer from Frye's published work that he had much interest in Jacob Boehme: he gets mentioned twice in *Words with Power*. Yet in the notebooks there are fifty-five references. Frye says that he is an "architect of the spiritual world" (*Late*, 414), yet much of the architecture in the notebooks disappears altogether when the builder gets to work on *The Great Code*, *Words with Power*, and *The Double Vision*. And we find hardly a syllable about the various esoteric traditions in *Northrop Frye on Religion*.

The kook book genre is actually rather small, containing a half-dozen or so titles, but the genre does begin to shade off into the categories listed in the appendix, and I think it would be possible to organize all these books on a continuum, like Frye's organization in *Anatomy of Criticism* of the kinds of allegory. There his principle is the degree of explicitness of the allegory. Here the principle would be, or at least could be, the degree of acceptance or standing such works would have in an academic community. To speak of Itzhak Bentov and Robert Anton Wilson in the same breath as Karl Pribram and David Bohm may seem curious, but there is a connection, and I'm not alone in seeing the connection. Practically all of the names I have mentioned so far find their way into two of the most comprehensive studies we have of Western esotericism, Wouter Hanegraaff's *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, and Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman's *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*.

The image we have of Frye is of a brilliant and original thinker—creative, schematic, powerfully synthetic—working away for sixty years on the great tradition. Not all readers of the *Anatomy* were overly familiar with the eccentric fictions of Thomas Amory or the curious treatises of Urquhart of Cromarty. But such writers were the exception rather than the rule, and most of what Frye wrote about *was* on the syllabus, was in fact on his own syllabi: Blake, the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, the Victorian prose writers, the Romantic poets, the modernists from Yeats and Eliot and Joyce to Wallace Stevens. There is, however, another image of Frye that has begun to emerge from the notebooks—Frye with one of his two annotated editions of the *I Ching* at his side, using toothpicks instead of yarrow stalks, in order to receive, as he says, "general advice about what to do and be" (*Late*, 4); a Frye who is practicing the various breathing exercises of Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutra*;¹⁰ a Frye who is trying to discover the meaning of interpenetration in the Mahayana sutras,¹¹ and a Frye whose reading of these kook books is moving out from the center to the circumference.

From another perspective we might say that all of the books listed in the appendix are part of the *philosophia perennis*, the perennial philosophy. The phrase was coined by Leibnitz, but it was made popular by Huxley's book, a book that Frye says in one of his notebooks he "must keep in touch with" (*Bible*, 360). The *philosophia perennis* is the philosophical version of what Frye calls, following Blake, the Everlasting Gospel. In that sense, the appendix includes texts that belong to the esoteric, visionary, and mystical traditions. According to Huxley, the perennial philosophy embraces a metaphysics, a psychology, and an ethics. It is a metaphysic, he says, "that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; a psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being—the thing immemorial and universal" (vii). That is not Frye's language, but it wouldn't take much to translate it into third-phase language,¹² and Frye does talk about his own version of the perennial philosophy (*Third*, 241).

Are the kook books a part of the *philosophia perennis*? In Notebook 11h Frye writes, "At present only the real nut books, Wilson's & Bentov's, are interesting to me" (*Late*, 713). The reference is to Robert Anton Wilson's *Cosmic Trigger: Final Secret of the Illuminati* and Itzhak Bentov's *Stalking the Wild Pendulum: On the Mechanics of Consciousness*. What does Frye mean by "real nut books," and why would he be interested in them? *Cosmic Trigger*, published in 1977, is the most popular of more than two-dozen of Wilson's books: it has been reprinted at least eleven times. Wilson, a new-age guru and former editor at *Playboy*, descends from Timothy Leary and Aleister Crowley. He writes on tantric sex, synchronicities,

secret societies, goddess mythology, black magic, and a host of other esoteric topics. *The Cosmic Trigger* is a shapeless book that was itself triggered by Wilson's interest in the Bavarian Illuminati, the alleged conspiracies which are more mysterious than a Borgesian plot. The Illuminati lead Wilson on a discontinuous romp through all forms of esoterica: triple agents, UFOs, presidential assassination plots, the eye of the U.S. dollar bill, messages from Sirius, Aleister Crowley's shenanigans, quantum mechanics, and deliberately induced brain changes. Cosmic trigger indeed! Wilson proclaims himself the ultimate skeptic, yet it's clear that he has come to take all this very seriously. Frye is obviously right in calling it a real nut book, but why would he be attracted to this kind of thing?

In one of his notebooks, Frye quotes, without comment, the epigraph to *Cosmic Trigger*. "it's an ill wind that blows nobody's mind" (*Late*, 713). The source of this twist on Pistol's remark in *Henry IV, Part 2* (5.4.90) is identified by Wilson as *Principia Discordia* by Malaclypse the Younger. Malaclypse the Younger turns out to be a man named Greg Hill, a California libertarian from the 1960s and one of the founders of a wacky "religion" called Discordianism, based on the worship of Eris, the goddess of chaos. Frye says that the kook books are often a frequent source of *adagia* (*Bible*, 367). Does he mean that "it's an ill wind that blows nobody's mind" is one such proverb? Frye doubtless rather liked the notion of mind blowing, which in the late notebooks is at the center of his mission, though he doesn't use such breezy slang to describe it. In fact, Frye devotes entry after notebook entry (there are hundreds of them) to exploring ordinary consciousness and ways to get beyond it. For him, to have your mind blown is to revolutionize consciousness. He has a number of different phrases for it: the intensifying, the exalting, the transcending, the transfiguring of consciousness. The "kerygmatic breakthrough," he says in a notebook entry from 1988 or 1989, "always contains some sense of 'time has stopped.' The sequential movement has become a focus, or fireplace. In intensified consciousness the minute particular shines by its own light (or burns in its own life-fire)" (*Late*, 290). Or again, from a 1985 notebook, "expanded consciousness is not religion, of course, but it may be the precondition for any ecumenical or everlasting-gospel religion" (*Late*, 17). Or still again, from another notebook of about the same time, "Apocalypse is the hidden flame lit up, first setting the world on fire, then shining in its own light of awakened consciousness (omnia sunt lumina)" (*Late*, 515). These are Frye's own *adagia*, but surely he wouldn't have to turn to a one of the founders of a parody of religion—Discordianism, which Wilson calls a "guerilla ontology" (*Cosmic Trigger*, 59)—as a source for *adagia*. No one but the lunatic fringe would take any of this 1960s brand of neo-paganism seriously.

Perhaps a more likely source of Frye's interest is numerology. Here is what Frye writes in Notebook 11h:

He makes a lot of 23: [The reference is to Wilson's speculations about the mystical significance of the number 23.] 24 & 33 are *closed* cycles, because you say twelve o'clock or north time. 23 and 32 have the open spark gap I mentioned in FS.¹⁵ Maybe this is the 7-8 relation too. And my 15 (16)—And the climacteric 63 (64 I Ching, chess, etc.). Blake-Jung's 3 & 4. (No: 7 > 8 won't work: it would have to be 8-9 diagrammatically, although 7 > 8 has a lot of tradition going for it. As I've known since Blake, 7 is an *event* number in time, which includes space by turning 8.)

Note the close paranoia links [in Wilson]: if you get fixated on 23, you develop a "that's for me" feeling about every 23 you see. He'd be nowhere without Jung's "synchronicity" (*Late*, 713).

Frye had a penchant for such number schemes. Except for his elaborate playing with sixes in the Third Essay of the *Anatomy*, he was able to keep a tight rein on anything approaching numerology, the belief that numbers reflect properties of our minds or reveal features of the cosmos, and especially that certain numbers have an occult or mystical significance. But the notebooks are filled with number schemes of all kinds. Consider these passages:

100 sections [for the Third Book] with an occult meaning for every damn one; patterns of repetition connecting them; climactic sequences 27–33, 60–66, 90–99; prime numbers after 50 perhaps philosophical. Odd numbers cyclical, especially 7, 11, 13 & 17; even numbers dialectic, especially 8 & 16; five & decimals mixed, that sort of thing. It isn't *just* childish, either: Dante & Joyce do it. (*Bible*, 207).

I'm back to my alphabet of forms. A fourfold ogdoad would be the full compass of 32. . . . I have a circular vision of 8, a square Eros–Adonis of 12, a triangular katabasis–escape one of 10 (4+3-2-1) and a Thanatos cloven fiction of 2. Incidentally, if the 7's & 12's of Revelation are essentially astrological, then they include the natural religion basis of Blake's Europe, & the woman crowned with stars is Enitharmon. (*Third*, 183)

Seven is the number of sequence (stations of the cross), the drama of fall & redemption in history. Eight is the number of thematic stasis. . . . Most mandalas & contemplation icons involve an even-number principle of symmetry. But if 8 is the thematic stasis of 7, 13 is the thematic stasis of 12, hence Yeats' 13th cone. Well, anyway: the normal plot sequence is the parabola in seven stages. (*Third*, 183)

Jung talks about embracing the demonic principle or shadow. In my scheme, to embrace the demonic is to embrace (incorporate or include) the cycle. That's why all the "square" (cubic) members have to turn into rolling ones (7, 11, 13, 17). At the Last Supper there is the moral establishment number of twelve: thirteen includes the demonic figure, and eleven is the centrifugal movement of gospel into world. In PT [*The Phoenix and the Turtle*] & its parliament of fowls there are seven birds, one banished. (By the end of the poem there are 5). (*Third*, 244)

I still should do some thinking about the I Ching: 64 is the number of squares in chess, 32 of pieces. The hexagrams would have to be in sequence, & no doubt I should study the sequence. Of course they have a primary connexion with divination, oracle, knowledge of the future, & hence Thanatos. But my six phases, each three overlapping with another three, indicates some connexion in my own mind. (*Third*, 261)

There are scores of such passages in the notebooks. How seriously did Frye take all this? He says at one point, "Recurrent numbers, seven & twelve & the like, are elements of design only: they represent no hidden mystery or numinousness in things. Not even the trinitarian three or the Jungian four. There are twelve signs in the zodiac, but it would be equally easy to see nine or eleven or fourteen and a half. Only fractions seem so *vulgar*" (*Late*, 157–8). But at other places Frye certainly seems to think that numbers do contain some hidden mystery. He even has an entry on gemetria, the kabbalistic practice of interpreting the Bible by counting the numerical value of the letters of each word and using the result to derive the meaning of a passage; in gemetria, each letter of the Hebrew alphabet had a traditional numerical value assigned to it. Frye writes, "the numerical value of the Tetragrammaton (or four-letter word) is 26, so that a Trinity would be 78. The word for salt also has that number. Don't know what Rabelais knew or cared about this: I should look at Revelation" (*Third*, 304). In another notebook he writes,

"Re. numbers: one gets 28 either by adding 24 & 4 or by multiplying 4 & 7. For Blake it's important that 24 & 28 make 52. For Chaucer it may be important that 4 humors & 7 planets make 28 temperamental types, along with a 29th narrator who is, so to speak, interlunar. I must track down the moon-on-England reference in Dryden's AA [*Absalom and Achitophel*] & keep in mind Malory's association of 28 & the Round Table. As I've said, there are seven supports or

pillars of wisdom, 7 branches of the tree of life, & 7 hills of the unfallen city (2 Esdras) as well as a sevenfold analogy.” (*Anatomy Notebooks*, 20)

As I say, there’s a great deal of this kind speculation going on in the notebooks, and if we put such passages beside the zaniness of Robert Anton Wilson, we don’t notice much of a difference. Does Frye’s interest relate to synchronicity, the idea that forms the backbone of Wilson’s *Cosmic Trigger*? Frye had read Jung on synchronicity, and he remarks in Notebook 21 that that idea “makes a powerful appeal” (*Bible*, 205). In another notebook he writes, “[T]he possibility remains that as long as [synchronicity is] acausal, in the same way that putting a thermometer outside the window doesn’t cause but only records a change in temperature, not only astrology but any number of ‘mancies’ or forms of divination might be alternative ways of recording the phenomena of human (or any other) life” (*Bible*, 326). Frye calls such recording a “silent écriture” (*ibid.*). Synchronicity for Frye is somewhat broader than Jung’s definition of “meaningful coincidence” (*Synchronicity*, 104). For Frye it means that “every object is an event & every event a signature of a total entity” (*Bible*, 205).

Now this sounds quite similar to some of the ideas of one of Frye’s favorite medieval mystics, Jacob Boehme. In *The Signature of All Things*, a book from his middle period, Boehme maintained that within and behind things in the external world there was an internal spiritual form that incised its signature in various shapes and forms—in the stars, the elements, living creatures, trees, and herbs. Now it’s a long way from Boehme to Robert Anton Wilson, but the idea of the signature of all things is what connects them and helps to explain Frye’s interest in Wilson, for the signature of all things *is* like a cosmic trigger. Frye writes in Notebook 27, following the passage about the religious books he owns stressing the mystics:

I have great difficulty, nonetheless, in reading, say, Boehme, because mystics (less true of Boehme than of others) seem so masochistic: isn’t this stuff just wonderful that we have to say we believe anyway? But now Boehme is making more sense as I move closer to light and signature symbolism. Once more, it’s not that I ‘believe’ him but that this is the kind of link between the Bible and the creative imagination that I’m looking for” (*Late*, 35).

My thesis about these kook books—at least a preliminary one—is that Frye was drawn to them for the same reason that he was drawn to everything else in the verbal universe: the imaginative use he could make of it. He says as much in the several places that he refers to Bentov’s *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*, which he calls a “very good” book (*Late*, 357). Bentov, who was killed in a plane crash in 1979, was an inventor who tinkered in his basement laboratory and who learned a great deal about contemporary physics on his own (he had little formal education). He began to practice meditation in the 1960s and became especially interested in what in yoga is called “the awakening of Kundalini.” Bentov believed that all matter is consciousness and that our bodies mirror the vibrating universe, so that we are in constant motion between the finite and the infinite.

Frye will have nothing to do with Bentov’s views on reincarnation, which Bentov comes at by way of Carlos Castaneda and the Seth books of Jane Roberts, both of whom Frye read. And he will have nothing to do as well with Bentov’s view of “the pyramid-hierarchy of aristocratic levels leading to God the monarch” (*Late*, 357). At least, as we know from *Words with Power*, the mountain-ladder archetype tells but half the story. In other words, Bentov has no conception of the world below, the cave in *Words with Power*, and no conception of what Frye calls the *cullbute*, the revolutionary somersault of which the poets are always aware. But he is attracted to Bentov for the same reason he that he turned to some of the new-age scientists—the Tao of physics and the holographic paradigm writers. This is the way he puts it in Notebook 50: “The second essay [of *The Double Vision*] is the reason why this series may come to nothing before my death. It uses books on pop-science about the bootstrap theory, the implicate order, the hologram metaphor, the wild pendulum, & the like, to show how the

inner dynamic of science increasingly drives it to describe the physical world as an analogy of the spiritual one” (*Late*, 416).

Frye does not actually use these notions anywhere in *The Double Vision*, though he does, as already indicated, make a passing reference to David Bohm’s “implicate order” in the closing pages of *The Double Vision*. But consider this passage:

The physical body is an instrument that allows us to interact best with our physical environment. This body is interpenetrated [there’s that Frye word] by ‘bodies’ or ‘fields’ [that] extend beyond the limits of the physical body. . . . The psyche serves as a bridge between the physical level and our real selves—spiritual beings. . . . It’s unfortunate that the word ‘spirit’ or ‘spirits’ in the English language is so versatile. . . . We shall use the word ‘spirit’ or ‘spiritual’ to describe the highest level of human evolution, which borders on the absolute. It is very difficult to draw any sharp demarcation lines because the very highest spiritual merges with the absolute, which is the level of the Creators.

Now compare that with this passage:

Our physical bodies are a part of a world usually described as material, but if matter is simply energy cooled down to the point at which our physical bodies can live with it, perhaps spirit can enter a world of higher energies where the separate things spread around objective heres and theres are no longer things to keep bumping into. In such a spiritual nature, a nature of ‘implicate order’, as it has been called, or interpenetrating energies, and no longer the nature of congealed objects, we should be gods or numinous presences ourselves.

Now these passages sound pretty much alike: both seek to relate the material body to the world of spirit; both speak about the higher world of spirit; both call on the idea of interpenetration. The first, perhaps, sounds a bit more like Frye because of its attention to the multiple meanings of the word “spirit” and because it leads up to the idea of creation. But the second passage is Frye’s: it is from the penultimate paragraph of *The Double Vision* (*Religion*, 234–5). The first is from Bentov’s *Stalking the Wild Pendulum* (11–12, 120–21). This helps us to see, I think, what Frye means when he says that a book like Bentov’s shows us how “the inner dynamic of science increasingly drives it to describe the physical world as an analogy of the spiritual one.”

Similarly with David Bohm and the “Tao of physics people.” Frye read and annotated Bohm’s *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, but that is a highly technical book for the most part, and my guess is that Frye picked up most of what he knew about Bohm from Ken Wilber’s *The Holographic Paradigm*, which he quotes in Notebook 11h. The notebooks have a half-dozen or so entries in which Frye mentions Bohm. In Notebook 27 Frye says, regarding the conclusion of *Words with Power*, “The apocalyptic finale will have to take in the total-consciousness speculations of Schrödinger and (now) David Bohm” (*Late*, 26). There is no evidence from either the notebooks or his library that Frye knew Schrödinger except through secondary sources, but he did look into what he calls Bohm’s “total-consciousness speculations.” These are speculations about the implicate and explicate order. Bohm called the world we think we live in the “explicate order.” That is the objective world out there, or at least what we take to be the objective world—the world of Newtonian physics. But this is only our perception of order. Beneath it is what he called the “implicate order,” an order where things are folded together and deeply connected. The explicate order unfolds from the implicate order, and the explicate order is only the bare surface of reality. The implicate order includes both matter and consciousness. Frye’s phrase for it, describing the last of his three stages of religion [body, mind, and soul], is the ultimate achievement of the “spiritual body” (*Bible*, 101)

One can understand why Frye would be greatly attracted to this vision of reality, as it does away with the subject-object separation. If Bohm had been around when Frye was writing “The Case against

Locke” in *Fearful Symmetry*, Frye could have enlisted him on Blake’s behalf. Bohm was a very eminent quantum physicist, and he spent the last years of his life trying to find a mathematical expression for his views. He was also influenced by his close contacts with Einstein and Krishnamurti. I do not pretend to understand any of the physics, but I think I understand why Frye would refer to Bohm on practically the last page he ever wrote. For Bohm, a brilliant theoretical physicist, was, like Frye, on a lifelong spiritual quest. That’s what the implicate order is all about. It’s based on a vision of wholeness and totality.

Consider another brief passage. “[We] are often led to speak of the totality, of a wholeness which is both immanent and transcendent, and which, in a religious context, is often given the name of God. The immanence means that the totality of what is, is immanent in matter; the transcendence means that this wholeness is also beyond matter.” These are the words of David Bohm (“Physicist,” 187–8). But they could have been written by Frye. In Notebook 50, Frye clearly has Bohm in mind when he writes, “Explicitly, the part is “in” the whole; implicitly, the whole is “in” the part. But the way that the chicken is in the egg is different: a world of interlocked energies. I suppose this is what the hologram-paradigm people are getting at” (*Late*, 324). Three-hundred-fifty entries later in the same notebook Frye writes, “The end of the journey is interpenetration, or perhaps the hologram model. It’s the recognition scene of proclaiming word & responding spirit” (*Late*, 395). Bohm uses the hologram to illustrate what he means by undivided wholeness, and “hologram model” here is a reference as well to the work of Karl Pribram, Ken Wilber, and others, who postulate that both the brain and the universe function like the unity-in-diversity experience that has been recorded by many of the world’s mystics.

Frye’s relationship to mysticism is still an unexplored topic, and the notebooks provide a number of passages that will help to discover it. Similarly for his relationship to the Renaissance hermetic tradition, to alchemy, to various forms of the occult, to Eastern thought. What are we to make of Frye’s interest in all those texts listed in the appendix? It would be difficult to imagine Frye citing many of these works in *Words with Power*, but he does justify his interest in such writers as A.E. Waite, who is only “superficially off-putting”:

I've been reading Loomis and A.E. Waite on the Grail. Loomis often seems to me an erudite ass: he keeps applying standards of coherence and consistency to twelfth-century poets that might apply to Anthony Trollope. Waite seems equally erudite and not an ass. But I imagine Grail scholars would find Loomis useful and Waite expendable, because Waite isn't looking for anything that would interest them. It's quite possible that what Waite is looking for particularly doesn't exist—secret traditions, words of power, an esoteric authority higher than that of the Catholic Church—and yet the *kind* of thing he's looking for is so infinitely more important than Loomis' trivial games of descent from Irish sources where things get bugged up because the poets couldn't distinguish *cors* meaning body from *cors* meaning horn. Things like this show me that I have a real function as a critic, pointing out that what Loomis does has been done and is dead, whereas what Waite does, even when mistaken, has hardly begun and is very much alive. (*Late*, 460)

I have only scratched the surface of Frye and esoteric spirituality, and I am in no position to provide any kind of definitive answer to the question, Why does Frye think that what Waite and the others I have mentioned have done is very much alive? But I believe it has to do with Frye’s attraction to schematic thinking; with the esoteric tradition coming to us largely in third-phase language; with Frye's conception of analogies of revelation; with his view of the unity of body and spirit or matter and consciousness; with his understanding of a psychic world as existing between Beulah, the world of imagination, and Generation, the physical world; with his understanding of the way genres change over time (Frazer and Jung may have little standing in anthropology or psychology, but they provide us grammars of the imagination; or, as Frye says, to reverse the observation, yesterday’s kook book

becomes tomorrow's standard text [*Late*, 17]); and with his belief in the imagination's providing a critique of pure reason.

The religious contexts of Frye's thought are, I believe, becoming clearer and clearer, and while Frye's views on religion remain firmly rooted in the radical Protestant tradition, his interest in esoteric spirituality is another context worth further investigation if we are fully to understand the Fryean encyclopedic vision.

I conclude with the one reference in Frye's notebooks to Jane Roberts's Seth books. In the early 1970s, almost twenty years before Shirley MacLaine popularized channeling, Jane Roberts with the assistance of her husband, began writing what became a series of trance-dictated books, the real author said to have been a discarnate entity (she called Seth an "energy essence personality"). A substantial literature has grown up around Roberts's Seth. Apparently, the only Seth book Frye read was the two-volume *The "Unknown" Reality: A Seth Book*. In Notebook 50 he writes, "I have to alter the self-delusion bit: what I say is true enough, but I shouldn't suggest junking it all. I may yet find myself stealing from the Seth books, and of course there's James Merrill, who extracted an epic from a ouija board" (*Late*, 283). Frye appears to be talking about something he has written for a draft of *Words with Power*—that he shouldn't junk all of what he's said about deluding ourselves with certain paranormal phenomena. Maybe it is not self-delusion after all to consider Seth to be the author of a kook book, and maybe Merrill really did derive his epic poem from the ouija board. I will leave Frye's cryptic remark hanging in the air, adding only that perhaps in some of these strange books that Frye was reading we do get "the incarnation and withdrawal of a god." And speaking of synchronicities, that is a phrase that James Merrill quotes and attributes to Frye on the first page of his epic poem, *The Changing Light at Sandover*.

Appendix: The Sources of Frye's Reading in Esoteric Spirituality

The breadth of Frye's reading in esoteric spirituality is represented by the following list. A very small percentage of these writers and texts will be found in Frye's published works, but taken together they appear hundreds and hundreds of times in the notebooks. The categories in section 1 derive largely from Antoine Faivre, "Ancient and Medieval Sources of Modern Esoteric Movements," in A. Faivre and J. Needleman, ed., *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, 1–70. The other ten categories, some broadly inclusive and others quite specific, catalogue what we know of Frye's sources, based on the annotated books in his library and his notebooks. Sections 2–11 are arranged alphabetically. It goes without saying that other ways of categorizing Frye's reading are possible. An *asterisk* indicates that the copy of the book in Frye's library has marginal markings or comments or both. These are sometimes extensive, sometimes minimal. A *double asterisk* means that the book or author is not in Frye's library but that there is evidence from the notebooks that he read the book or read about it in some related secondary source. A *triple asterisk* means that Frye owned the book but did not annotate it. The list excludes studies of comparative mythology and books on ancient myth, folklore, and ritual—works that often treat such topics as magic, mystery cults, and other esoteric subjects. It does include a few works of fiction (e.g., novels based on the Tarot by Anthony Piers and Italo Calvino and the novels of Carlos Castaneda).

1. Esoteric Traditions

Frye's Sources

Hellenistic Judaism

Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE–ca. 50 CE)

**Works*

- Alexandrian Hermeticism
Hermes Trismegistus
Corpus Hermeticum
G.R.S. Mead, **Thrice-Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis*
Frances Yates, **Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*
- Neoplatonism
Philostratus (ca. 170–ca. 247) **Life of Apollonius of Tyana*
Porphyry (232–ca. 305) **On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*
Iamblichus (ca. 250–ca. 330) **Commentary on the Dream of Scipio; *The Saturnalia*
Macrobius (fl. ca. 430)
- Christian Esotericism
Clement of Rome (fl. ca. 96)
Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–ca. 211) ****The Exhortation to the Greeks; The Rich Man's Salvation; The Fragment of an Address Entitled "To the Newly Baptized"*
Frances Yates, **Giordano Bruno and the Esoteric Tradition*
- Pseudo-Dionysius (1st cent. CE) **The Divine Names; *The Mystical Theology*
**Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*
- Boethius (ca. 480–ca. 525) **The Consolation of Philosophy*
- Martianus Capella (fl. 5th cent.) ***The Marriage of Philology and Mercury; *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*
- John Scotus Eriugena (ca. 810–ca. 880) ***On the Division of Nature*
- Joachim of Floris (ca. 1143–1202)
- Ramon Lull (ca. 1232–1316) **Blanquenra. See also Frye's paper on Lull in Student Essays*
- Meister Eckhart ** Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation; *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*
- Jan van Ruysbroek **Spiritual Espousals*
- Julian of Norwich **ca. 1341–ca. 1413* **Revelations of Divine Love*
- Nicholas of Cusa **The Vision of God*
- Theophrastus Paracelsus **The Prophecies of Paracelsus: Occult Symbols and Magic Figures with Esoteric Explanations*
- Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) **The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*
Dorothy Singer, **Giordano Bruno*
Frances Yates, **Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*
- Jakob Boehme (1575–1624) **The Signature of All Things; *The Aurora; *Six Theosophic Points; *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence*
- William Law (1686–1761) **Characters and Characteristics of William Law; *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law*
Aldous Huxley, **The Perennial Philosophy*

H.P. Blavatsky (1831–1891)	<i>*The Secret Doctrine; *An Abridgement of The Secret Doctrine</i>
Alchemy	Carl Jung, <i>*Psychology and Alchemy; *Mysterium Coniunctionis</i> Mircea Eliade, <i>*The Forge and the Crucible</i> Arthur Rimbaud, <i>*Poems</i> Stéphane Mallarmé, <i>*Poems and Letters</i> Marie-Louise von Franz, <i>*Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology</i> Herbert Silberer, <i>*Problems of Mysticism and its Symbolism</i> Titus Burckhardt, <i>*Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul</i> Chao Pi Ch'en, <i>*Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality</i>
Astrology	Franz Cumont, <i>*Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans</i> Warren Kenton, <i>*Astrology: The Celestial Mirror</i>
Rosicrucianism	Frances Yates, <i>*The Rosicrucian Enlightenment</i> Israel Regardie, <i>*The Golden Dawn</i> Edward Bulwer Lytton, <i>*Zanoni: A Rosicrucian Tale</i>
Tarot	Piers Anthony, <i>*Faith of Tarot: Book III of the Tarot Sequence; *God of Tarot: Book I of the Tarot Sequence; and *Vision of Tarot: Book II of the Tarot Sequence</i> Papus (Gerard Encausse), <i>*The Tarot of the Bohemians</i> Italo Calvino, <i>*The Castle of Crossed Destinies</i> A.E. Waite, <i>*The Pictorial Key to the Tarot</i> Charles Williams, <i>*The Greater Trumps</i>

2. Channelling

Edgar Cayce	Jess Stearn, <i>*Edgar Cayce—The Sleeping Prophet</i>
James A. Pike	** <i>The Other Side</i>
Jane Roberts	<i>*The "Unknown" Reality: A Seth Book</i>

3. Eastern Traditions

Walt Anderson	<i>*Open Secrets: A Western Guide to Tibetan Buddhism</i>
John Blofeld	<i>*The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet</i>
Chang Chung-yuan, ed.	<i>*Tao: A New Way of Thinking</i>
Chao Pi Ch'en	<i>*Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality</i>
Chuang-tzu	<i>*Chuang-tzu: Genius of the Absurd</i>
Thomas Cleary, trans.	<i>*The Avatamsaka Sutra</i>
Confucius	<i>*The Analects</i>
Kazi Dawa-Samdub, trans.	<i>*The Tibetan Book of the Dead</i>
Mircea Eliade	<i>*Yoga: Immortality and Freedom</i>
W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed.	<i>*The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation</i>
W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed.	<i>*Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, or, Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path</i>
Yu-lan Fung	** <i>The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy</i>
Eugen Herrigel	<i>*Zen in the Art of Archery</i>
Gopi Krishna	<i>*Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man</i>

Lao-tsu
James Legge, trans.
R.A. Nicholson, ed.
Patanjali
James N. Powell
Peter Rawson
P. Rawson, L. Legeza
Paul Reps, comp.

Sankaracara
D.T. Suzuki
D.T. Suzuki, trans.
D.T. Suzuki
D.T. Suzuki
Shunryu Suzuki
Holmes Welch
R. Wilhelm and C.F. Baynes, trans.
Ernest Wood

4. Fairies and Elementals

John Crowley
Maureen Duffy
Jacob Grimm
George MacDonald
Milton
Shakespeare
Edmund Spenser
W.B. Yeats

5. Gnosticism

Hans Jonas
Bentley Layton, ed.
G.R.S. Mead

G.R.S. Mead, ed.
Jacob Needleman

Pheme Perkins

James M. Robinson, ed.

6. Kabbalah

Migene Gonzalez-Wippler

Z'ev Ben Shimon Halevi
S.L. MacGregor Mathers, trans.
Charles Ponce
Leo Schaya
Gershom Scholem

Gershom Scholem, ed.

**Tao Te Ching*; **The Wisdom of Lao-tse*
**I Ching*
**Rumi: Poet and Mystic*
**The Yoga-Sutra*
**The Tao Symbols*
**Tantra: The Indian Cult of Ecstasy*
**Tao, the Chinese Philosophy of Time and Change*
**Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings*
**Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*
**Essays in Zen Buddhism* (3rd series)
**The Lankavatara Sutra*
**Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings*
**Zen and Japanese Culture*
**Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*
**Taoism: The Parting of the Way*
**I Ching*
**Yoga*

**Little, Big*
**The Erotic World of Faery*
**The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*
**Fantastes*
**Comus*
**A Midsummer Night's Dream*; **The Tempest*
**The Faerie Queene*
**Irish Folk Stories and Fairy Tales*

**The Gnostic Religion*
**The Gnostic Scriptures*
**Thrice-Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis*
**Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Miscellany*
**The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Tradition, Symbolism*
**The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism*
**The Nag Hammadi Library*

**A Kabbalah for the Modern World: How God Created the Universe*
**Kabbalah: Tradition of Hidden Knowledge*
**The Kabbalah Unveiled*
**Kabbalah: An Introduction and Illumination for the World Today*
**The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah*
**Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*; **On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*
**Zohar: The Book of Splendor*

Carlo Soares

**The Cipher of Genesis: The Original Code of the Qabala as Applied to the Scriptures; *The Qabala Trilogy: The Cipher of Genesis, The Song of Songs, The Sepher Yetsira; *The Sepher Yetsira, Including the Original Astrology according to the Qabala and Its Zodiac*

7. Kook Books

Michael Baigent, et al.
Itzhak Bentov
Dmitry Merezhkovsky
Adam Smith
Robert Anton Wilson

**Holy Blood and Holy Grail*
**Stalking the Wild Pendulum*
**Atlantis/Europe*
**Powers of Mind*
**Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati*

8. Magic and Shamanism

E.M. Butler
Alphonse Louis Constant
Mircea Eliade
Joseph Ennemoser
Francis Hitching
Francis King
Stephen Larsen
I.M. Lewis

**Ritual Magic*
**The History of Magic*
**Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*
**The History of Magic*
**Earth Magic*
**Magic: The Western Tradition*
**The Shaman's Doorway*
**Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*
**At the Table of the Grail: Magic & the Use of the Imagination*
**The Morning of the Magicians*
**Natural Magick*
**Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion*
**A Guide to Occult Britain: The Quest for Magic in Pagan Britain*

John Matthews
Louis Pauwels, J. Bergier
John Baptista Porta
Kurt Seligmann
John Wilcock

9. Mysticism, Mystery, and the Occult

A.J. Arberry
Franz Cumont
Charles Fort
Anne Fremantle, ed.
Leo Frobenius
Phyllis Hodgson, ed.
William R. Inge
Justin McCann, ed.
Gustav Meyrink
Raymond Moody

**Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*
**The Mysteries of Mithra*
**The Books of Charles Fort*
**The Protestant Mystics*
**The Childhood of Man*
**The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counselling*
**Christian Mysticism*
**The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Treatises*
**The Golem*
**Life after Life: The Investigation of a Phenomenon—Survival of Bodily Death*
**Hypersentience: Exploring Your Past Lifetimes as a Guide to Your Character . . .*
**The God of the Witches*
**Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*
**Yenne Velt: The Great Works of Jewish Fantasy and Occult*
**Mysticism East and West*
**Macroscopic*
**The Mystic Spiral: Journey of the Soul*

Marcia Moore

Margaret Alice Murray
Agrippa von Nettesheim
Joachim Neugroschel, ed.
Rudolf Otto
Anthony Piers
Jill Puree

Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi
Herbert Silberer
Sidney Spencer
August Strindberg
Emanuel Swedenborg

Thomas Taylor
Evelyn Underhill
Alan Upward
Valmiki
Immanuel Velikovsky
Arthur Versluis
A.E. Waite

Paul Waldo-Schwartz
Lyall Watson
John Wilcock
Edgar Wind
Frances Yates

R.C. Zaehner

**Rumi: Poet and Mystic*
**Problems of Mysticism and Its Symbolism*
**Mysticism in World Religion*
**From an Occult Diary*
**The Divine Love and Wisdom; *Heaven and Hell; *The True Christian Religion*
**The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*
**Mysticism; *The Golden Sequence*
**The Divine Mystery*
**The Ramayana of Valmiki*
**Worlds in Collision*
**The Egyptian Mysteries*
**The Holy Grail; *The Quest of the Golden Stairs; *The Unknown Philosopher: The Life of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and the Substance of His Transcendental Doctrine*
**** Art and the Occult*
**Supernature: A Natural History of the Supernatural*
**A Guide to Occult Britain: The Quest for Magic in Pagan Britain*
**Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*
**The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age; *The Art of Memory*
**Mysticism: Sacred and Profane*

10. New Age Science and Religion

Fritjof Capra

Carlos Castaneda

Geoffrey Chew
Marilyn Ferguson
Stanislav Grof
Stanislav and Christina Grof
G.I. Gurdjieff
Aldous Huxley
Abraham H. Maslow
P.D. Ouspensky

Rudy Rucker
Ken Wilber, ed.
Colin Wilson
W.B. Yeats

** The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture; The Tao of Physics*
** The Fire from Within; * Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan; *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge; *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan; *Tales of Power*
****Lectures on Modelling the Bootstrap*
**The Aquarian Conspiracy*
**Realms of the Human Unconscious*
**Beyond Death: The Gates of Consciousness*
**All and Everything*
**Doors of Perception*
**Toward a Psychology of Being*
**In Search of the Miraculous; *A New Model of the Universe; *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*
**Infinity and the Mind*
**The Holographic Paradigm; *The Spectrum of Consciousness*
**The Philosopher's Stone*
**A Vision*

11. Synchronicity

C.G. Jung
Lyall Watson
Robert Anton Wilson

***Synchronicity*
**Lifetide*
**Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati*

Notes

¹ At one point Frye refers to “the pan-literary universe which only three people understand: Blake, Mallarmé, and myself” (*Late*, 247). Mallarmé is a poet, writes Frye, “who will take me through the third great crisis of the birth of the spirit out of the depth of fallen spirits,” who sometimes talks “as though literature was a ‘substitute’ for religion,” who sees the pure poem as a symbol of “something transcendent,” who “tries to sink himself in myth & metaphor so completely that the kerygmatic will speak through,” and who believes “there really is some kind of resurrection by faith in myth” (*Late*, 41, 182, 202, 303, 43). One might also note the connection between Frye’s unsuccessful effort to write the one great book, which we struggled mightily to formulate for a twenty-five year period after the *Anatomy*, and Mallarmé’s equally unsuccessful effort to write the one “Great Book.”

² “I don’t know why,” Frye writes at one point, “I’ve spent so much time on Rimbaud and Mallarmé when it’s so clearly Laforgue who has all the answers” (*Late*, 142).

³ “This lower world, the world of signs, of secrecy, & of oracles, is also the world of writing—proclaimers have to depend on a writing *secretary* or keeper of the secrets. Xy [Christianity], Islam, & probably Judaism, have the conception of the secret books of life in which some angel writes down our largely forgotten acts, & confronts us with them at the Last Judgement. The dark world is the world of signs, of which the archetype is the sign of Jonah, the prophet who descended to that world. It stretches from the paleolithic cave of magic animal pictures to the descent to the cipher or oracle which we have in Arthur Gordon Pym, in Endymion, in Rabelais’ bottle oracle. This all contrasts with the claim of Jesus & Mohammed to have said nothing in secret—secret traditions always have a gnostic, sufi, mahayana sense of heresy about them: the exoteric tradition is what is primary & holds society together: the gospel, not the mystery cult” (*Bible*, 86).

⁴ We can say more about the depth of Frye’s reading after the annotations he made in books in his own library have been examined. Frye’s library is now housed in the Victoria University Library at the University of Toronto.

⁵ See *Fearful*, 170–1.

⁶ See *Late*, 189–90; *Bible*, 54–6, *Romance*, 143, 144; and *Anatomy Notebooks*, 44.

⁷ “Yeats and the Language of Symbolism” (*Twentieth*, 54–73). On Blavatsky and other late nineteenth-century occult systems, see 57, 59, 64, 67.

⁸ By “discredited” I mean only that Blavatsky’s claims of psychic powers did not stand up under investigation by the Society for Psychical Research.

⁹ Frye uses “mezzanine” to refer to various occult and imaginative conceptions that exist halfway between the physical and the spiritual levels of reality. See *Fearful*, 156. “Bardo” refers to the “in-between” state in Tibetan Buddhism that connects the death of individuals with the rebirth that follows.

¹⁰ Frye’s most extensive reflections on Patanjali’s *Yoga-Sutra* are in Notebook 3 (*Bible*, 5, 9, 11, 36, 37).

¹¹ See Denham, “Interpenetration.”

¹² For Frye’s comment on Huxley’s “Thou art That” collection of second-stage mystical texts, see *Religion*, 100.

¹³ “The final comprehension of the Bible’s meaning is in the spark of illumination between its closing anode and its opening cathode, and if that gap were not there the Bible would not stimulate the imagination to the effort of comprehension which recreates instead of passively following the outline of a vision” (*Fearful*, 375–6).