trol, achievements including SALT for example, just because they have not yet produced any noticeable disarmament: for they nevertheless contain elements of *meaning* which may offer the chance for fruitful development. For deterrence is not only a network of hardware: it is also a network of meanings (for example, of concepts like 'defence' and 'aggression') and the meanings can sometimes be changed even while the hardware appears to remain the same. Confidence Building Measures, for instance, may have a value in terms of the way in which each side views the other, despite lack of change in weaponry.

Now it seems to me an essential bit of this whole thesis that, in facing any particular crisis, a government should look not only at its 'rights' in the sense of what it is strictly entitled to do in terms of its treaty commitments etc., but also at its responsibility to ensure that its actions are pushing in a fruitful, developmental direction for the world as a whole, and are not essentially atavistic in tendency. Thus, the British government may be right in the 'atavistic' sense, in their policy about the Falklands (I write in the wake of the South Georgia recapture, but before the awaited invasion of the Falklands by the task force): but are they right in the 'prophetic' sense? Are they doing anything to help or hinder what the Brandt Report called the indispensable new understanding of the very concepts of 'defence' and of 'security'? For in today's world, if Stan Windass is right, any governement that is doing its fundamental job *must* see this as its most basic responsibility. Global and human rights considerations are not superfluous extras, or bonuses on top of national considerations of self-defence: they are the very heart of the matter. In the long run (and the run may not be very long) security, justice, even survival depend upon enough governments taking this larger view of their task. This is the theme (to make another point) of nearly all the papal statements on security and peace in recent times: they put the priorities where they belong. What we have here then, and the Falkland Islands crisis is a test case of it, is a new 'development' in the concept of the Just War. There never has been just one 'just war' theory: like every bit of genuine wisdom, it has always been subject to 'development'. If this book is right, then, it seems very doubtful whether the Thatcher government is living up to its responsibilities over the Falklands. To consider just one point here: the Galtieri junta has made clear, by its whipping-up of nationalistic feeling in Argentina, that it cannot govern without the support of its own people. Intelligent democratic opponents of the junta in Argentina are beginning to see how this tacit admission of dependence on popular consent could be put to good use; by pushing for human rights in Argentina as the price for support over the Falklands. Even, then, the ugly and degrading spectacle of people in a frenzy of anti-British feeling in the streets of Buenos Aires has a positive aspect: it is a possible growth-point. The danger is that British military priorities may be such as to stifle that growth, even if in the short term they are defensible on the 'self-defence' theory. It is the merit of Stan Windass's book to stimulate the reader into thinking anew about a current preoccupation, and to see something positive where otherwise darkness would appear to prevail. It is a very valuable merit which not many books of political theory can claim for themselves.

BRIAN WICKER

THE GREAT CODE: The Bible and Literature, by Northrop Frye.
***Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London 1982. pp 233. £9.95.**

I first learned of this book from reviews in *The New York Review of Books* and *The Times Literary Supplement*, one of them, if I remember rightly, by Anthony Burgess. It is not a theological book, and they were not theological reviews: in fact Mr Burgess at times irritated by a tone of shallow secularism. But it was easy to conclude that it would probably be a book of great value to theological students of the

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Bible, and indeed to any believers who wish to read the scriptures with more profit and understanding. Then shortly after I had received the book for review, but before I had read it, I read another review of it, in *The Tablet* this time (3 July 1982) by Hamish Swanston. This one could assume to be a review from a theological standpoint. It was short, and of a quite outstanding and (so I have to conclude after reading the book) unaccountable sourness. Swanston's feelings about Professor Frye seem to be rather like those of the moon about the sun in *The Walrus and the Carpenter*.

Is Professor Frye, then, rude enough to come and spoil the fun of biblical scholars and theologians? I suppose he is; he is an outsider treading on sacred ground, and I am not sure that he has bothered to take his shoes off, and perhaps this is what irked Swanston. He states his intention in the first sentence of his Introduction: to study the Bible "from the point of view of a literary critic". But he is not concerned with 'the Bible as literature', and is careful to point out that this is not the phrase to be found in his title. He is studying the Bible as a literary critic because of its formative influence at the very heart of European (especially English) culture and literature. His is "a book concerned with the impact of the Bible on the creative imagination" (xxi).

I shall first say why I think the book is valuable even from the theological point of view, and why it should be read, if possible, by all students and teachers of theology; and then in a more personal way say why I myself enjoyed it, and found that, far from in fact spoiling the fun, it points out to perhaps over-solemn biblical scholars and theologians where half the fun of the Bible is.

The first value of the book, then, is that it smites the fundamentalists hip and thigh. This is, alas, by no means a matter of flogging dead horses. Fundamentalism is not confined to way-out sects, but is in the very air we breathe. Ordinary people today, which includes ordinary Catholics and seminary students, will spontaneously approach the Bible with one of two attitudes: either they will assume that the Bible is true, and therefore everything is, and happened, as the Bible says it is and happened; or they will observe that not everything is and happened as the Bible says it is and happened, and therefore the Bible, by and large, is not true. Both these attitudes, not simply the first, are fundamentalist, both springing from a common assumption that the only serious kind of language there is, involving the judgment of truth and falsehood, is plain matter-of-fact descriptive language, Now the scripture scholars and theologians, if they are worth their salt, also scorn the fundamentalists. But they do not usually attack, or even notice this fundamental assumption of fundamentalism. Professor Frye, approaching the Bible as a literary critic, does, because of course it is an assumption that makes nonsense of literature and its study as a serious pursuit.

This kind of language, which he calls demotic or descriptive, has been the latest, he observes, to emerge as dominant in human culture. It has no doubt been there from the beginning of culture and speech as an element in mutual communication, but until modern times it has been a merely trivial element. The oldest culturally dominant kind of language (he says) was the poetic, which can also be called metaphorical and mythic; and this was followed by what he says he calls the hieratic as the cultural dominant. But in fact he treats it as an abstract, philosophical, analogical kind of language, which can also be called metonymic. To clarify: metaphor means "this is that", metonym means "this is put for that" (p 7). The poetic phase of culture is represented in Greece by Homer, the following metonymic phase by Socrates and Plato. The third or descriptive phase is not represented at all, because it is a modern phenomenon, but the seeds of it may be seen perhaps in Aristotle and some of the early Greek scientists and astronomers.

Professor Frye makes two points in applying these distinctions to the Bible. First he asserts that the Bible as a whole, including the New Testament, belongs to the poetic phase of culture. Some may think this is an oversimplification. But at any rate it must surely be universally agreed that its language is not of the de-

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motic or descriptive kind. Even when it is narrating an actual event, like the crucifixion for example, it is clearly not concerned to give a mere accurate description of it, as a modern reporter would do, but to place it by an elaboarate series of allusions and quotations in the whole context of the wonderful works of God. So the conclusion is inescapable: it is vain to interpret or assess the scriptures by the very limited canons of demotic or descriptive writing.

The second point Professor Frye makes is that it is absurd to see the progresssion from a dominantly poetic culture to a dominantly demotic or descriptive one as progress pure and simple, as though the latter were a higher form of culture than the former, and the former were now outmoded. Poetry and rhetoric and analogy, metaphor and metonym survive, thank heaven, even into our demotic descriptive age. They survive thanks, among other things, to the Bible, and their values and truths are worth cherishing. What we have to remind ourselves of from the theological point of view is that it was in these kinds of language that God chose to make his revelation to us, and therefore these kinds of language and their appropriate canons ought to dominate our perception and expression of Christian truth.

Besides routing the fundamentalists, which is a service needed more by students than (I trust) by professors of scripture and theology, Professor Frye does something even more worthwhile for the theologians and scholars themselves. He does not do it deliberately, and is probably not aware of doing it. But it is there as an effect of his book nevertheless. The book shows up the absurdity of the division, or even separation that has been allowed to develop between scriptural scholarship and dogmatic theology. Of the former he says "textual scholarship has never really developed the 'higher' criticism that made such a noise in the nineteenth century . . . There are any number of books, for example, telling us that the account of creation with which the Book of Genesis opens comes from the Priestly narrative, much the latest of the four or five documents that make up the book. A genuine higher criticism, I should think, would observe that this account of creation stands at the beginning of Genesis, despite its late date, because it belongs at the beginning of Genesis. That would lead to an integrated study of the Book of Genesis, and eventually of the whole Bible, as it now stands, concerning itself with the question of why the Bible as we know it emerged in that particular form" (xvii). A rather cavalier and sweeping criticism of biblical scholarship, no doubt, But the point made is still a good one, even though there are biblical scholars who have begun to make it for themselves. And the enterprise asked for by this literary critic is one that can only be effectively undertaken by an integrated biblico-dogmatic theology.

Professor Frye's insistence on the unity of the Bible as *a* book – even though he knows perfectly well that it is in fact a collection or library of books, and that that is what the word 'bible', *ta biblia,* actually means (xii), can be rather disconcerting. He insists on it both because that is what the Bible in European culture has in fact been treated as, and also because that is how he feels compelled as a literary critic to see it. But the interesting thing for us is that that is the dogmatic view of the Bible as 'divinely inspired scripture'. Frye links the conception of inspiration with fundamentalism, which is not surprising, since he gives a thoroughly fundamentalist description of it (pp 202-3) as "a semi-trance-like state in which an author is a kind of sanctified tape-recorder". He fails to observe that in its origins this picture of it is a patristic or rabbinic myth, metaphor or metonym, and should be interpreted as such. But if, with a more authentic Catholic theology we do interpret it as such, then we will be obliged to adopt something like Professor Frye's literary approach to the Bible, and to 'marry' biblical scholarship and dogmatic theology.

In his exposition of the structure of biblical typology the author writes: "As century after century passed without a second coming, the Church developed a progressive and forward-moving structure of doctrine (dogmatic theology; E.H.), one that carries the typology of the Bible on in history and adapts it to what we have called

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second-phase, or metonymic, language. This structure of doctrine became increasingly the compulsory means of understanding the Bible; and so, as Cardinal Newman remarked in the nineteenth century, the function of the Bible, for the Church, came to be not to teach doctrine but to prove or illustrate it. What this means in practice, whatever may be true of theory, is that the doctrines of Christian theology form the anti-types of which the stories and maxims in the Bible, including those of the New Testament, are types" (p 85).

This practice, this function of the Bible as purportedly described by Newman (I trust in a spirit of critical disapproval), represents precisely that corruption of dogmatic theology which has led to its alienation from biblical scholarship. It is certainly not true in theory. This book thus reminds us of our theological duty to go on trying to make it cease to be true in practice.

I lack the space to carry out the second part of my programme and say why I personally enjoyed this book. But I will conclude with a little story which is descriptively or demotically true but also says something metonymically if not metaphorically about *The Great Code.* On the 17th Sunday of the year, Cycle 2, I preached, more or less *extempore,* on the connection between the first and third readings, respectively the story of Elisha multiplying some loaves and of Jesus feeding the 5,000. To try and help the congregation bring the right frame of mind to reading the Bible I pointed out the typological connection; how behind both stories was the story of the manna in the desert, and how feeding with food is a regular biblical metaphor (or metonym – words I did not use in the sermon) for teaching the Word of God. After Mass a great friend of mine said, I *disagreed* with your sermon. It *does* matter whether things actually happened or not". I protested that I had not said it didn't. And then she said that during the sermon her husband had whispered to her "Northrop Frye".

EDMUND HILL O P

THE INNER LONELINESS by Dom Sebastian Moore,
***Darton, Longman & Todd,* 1982. pp 120 £4.95.**

This most unusual study of loneliness by the Downside monk, Dom Sebastian Moore (author of *God is a New Language*) turns upon the distinction between the notion of 'self-image' – the baggage of impressions, feelings and impulses which condition our discursive life – and the existential, punctual 'me existing', the simple awareness of 'being with myself'. Most people today, inured to generations of psycho-analytical probing, have the impression that our problem is with our self-image. Moore, on the contrary, has become convinced that our real problem is with the sense of 'me existing', because unless that simple sense can be pushed through to a genuine reference point in the simplicity of God as the 'mystery that thinks us', it is fated to consign us to an intense loneliness in face of the partitions of sex and death.

For most people 'me existing' remains an insubstantial notion compared with their self-image. But paradoxically, the greater our self-knowledge becomes and the closer we are to grasping our very being *as subject* than *as object,* the lonelier we also become, according to Dom Sebastian. So "at the heart of men and women and of the whole history of men and women there is a loneliness that all share and that we cannot relieve in each other". It can, in fact, only be relieved by death, that grand eliminator of all limitations, and we cannot meaningfully talk of that ahead of our own deaths. What we *can* see now, however, is that the tension involved in self-awareness can only be relieved at *all* through self-exposure to others. We stretch out to that even now with more altruism than we have come to trust ourselves to have. But only in God, the one who is both wholly involved with me and wholly other, can the tension be completely eliminated. Moore sees Nietzsche's madman as a true prophet pointing us to the fearful

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