BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

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BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Aspects of Literary Form

A. E. Dyson

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For
GEORGE AND TINA COLE

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is about literature, not about criticism, and I have tried to avoid 'the critical debate'. But a few general acknowledgements seem called for, and I am glad to name the critics who have influenced me most. First (among the moderns) Northrop Frye and C. S. Lewis; then, I think, the Geneva School, more indirectly than directly – Marcel Raymond, Georges Poulet, Jean Rousset, Jean-Pierre Richard, Jean Starobinski, and very particularly Albert Béguin, whose incarnational language links literary criticism most usefully outwards to the universal quest for religion, rather than inwards to the abortive romantic quest for the 'self'. Helen Gardner and Maynard Mack write beautifully, and often wisely; Frank Kermode's is a sparkling mind with which to disagree.

To name other living critics might be invidious, in times when so much good as well as bad criticism abounds. My more distant and chief debts are to T. S. Eliot, Coleridge and the whole tradition of literary Platonism and neo-Platonism, not forgetting – as I hope will be apparent – Plato himself.

The idea of this book has been in my mind for fifteen years, and parts of it have been published in earlier forms. I should like to thank the editors of *Essays and Studies* 1955, *Essays and Studies* 1967, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Review of English Literature* and the *Twentieth Century*, and my co-editor of the *Critical Quarterly*, in whose pages material included here has appeared. All the chapters except the most recent one (on Mann's *Death in Venice*) have been extensively revised and rewritten, and the earlier versions are now superseded.

My thanks are also due to the many friends and students with whom I have discussed these topics over the years. The ideas and analyses are my own, but I have incurred more debts than I could record, or even remember.

April 1971

A. E. DYSON