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The  
**Charles  
Williams**  
Society



**Newsletter**

No. 106

Spring 2003

## The Charles Williams Society

The Society was founded in 1975, thirty years after Charles Williams's sudden death at the end of the Second World War. It exists to celebrate Charles Williams and to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information about his life and work.

Members of the Society receive a quarterly newsletter and may attend the Society's meetings which are held three times a year. Facilities for members also include a postal lending library and a reference library housed at The Centre for Medieval Studies in Oxford.

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Web site: [http://www.geocities.com/charles\\_wms\\_soc/](http://www.geocities.com/charles_wms_soc/)

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### Reading groups

For information about the **Oxford** reading group please contact Brenda Boughton, tel: 01865 515589.



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### **From the Editor**

... our suffering “is permanent, obscure, and dark / and hath the nature of infinity.” and our enemies, or the great majority of them, know it as well as we.

To press guilt upon them therefore is, to begin with, unwise; we are all caught in the same trap. To begin therefore to forgive the present [.....] Government or indeed the [.....] for our financial loss or our personal separation is for most of us nonsense; it is as difficult to forgive as to indict a nation. Without a direct sense of present personal injury by a particular person or persons there can hardly be any question of forgiveness.

But, it will be said, there are those who have directly suffered. There is also the sense of offence against morals – the treaty breaking and the massacres. It is presumably the thought of those two problems which causes [Mr X] to refer to [Mr Y] as “that bad man”. One must distinguish between the rhetorical force of the phrase and its literal meaning. The rhetorical force is of the greatest value to us at the present time, and may, of course, be entirely justified. It comes to us with a sense of the greatest sincerity, but that is only to say that [Mr X] is a superb rhetorician. In view of human history one can hardly believe that rhetoric necessarily implies sincerity. Men have been greatly moved by liars and knaves.

Charles Williams *The Forgiveness of Sins* Chapter VIII [adapted by Edward Gauntlett]

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## COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

The Council of The Charles Williams Society met on 22 February 2003 at St. Matthew's Church, Bayswater

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The Chairman said that the stone for the Williamsses' grave was now ready, but had not yet been put in place because of the frosts.

Plans were agreed for the all-day meeting at Oxford on June 21st.

The Secretary reported the forthcoming weekend school at Knuston Hall. It was agreed that he and the Librarian should compile a page about the Society for the forthcoming reissue of *The Image of the City*.

The Membership Secretary reported two new members (with one more on the way) and one resignation. Two members had not yet updated their Standing Orders.

The Librarian reported good progress with the room at the Oxford Centre for Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies where the Reference Library would be housed; it was to be called the "Charles Williams Room". The Chairman added that her recordings of BBC broadcasts about C.W. would be going there as well. The Librarian also mentioned that Anne Scott's collection of Newsletters would be going to the British Library. It was agreed to supply copies of any missing numbers.

The Treasurer delivered his Report, showing balances on January 16th of £1,511.01 in the current account and £10,014.40 in the higher interest earning Gold account. From this he was paying £1,500 to Ian Blakemore to help with the reissue of *The Image of the City*.

The Chairman said that a provisional booking had been made at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine for a Conference on June 18th-20th, 2004.

There was a discussion of publicity, introduced by the Treasurer, who strongly emphasized the importance of the Internet. It was suggested that our website might include lists of, and extracts from, recent papers in the Newsletter.

A questionnaire, also devised by the Treasurer, was discussed, to go out to members at a later date.

Richard Sturch

## Society News & Notes

### All Day Meeting: Saturday 21 June 2003

This will take place at Pusey House, St. Giles, Oxford. The programme for the day is as follows:

10.30 am Tea/Coffee.

11.15 am Bishop Kallistos Ware will speake on “Heaven and Hell in Charles Williams”.

12.30 pm (approx.) Lunch.

3.00 pm Stephen Medcalf will read us a story.

4.15 pm Afternoon Tea.

The cost per person is £3.00, payable on arrival. This does not include lunch but a good tea will be provided.

Members may bring guests.

Please complete and return the enclosed form so that we have an idea of numbers. If, however, you have not sent in a form and find at the last minute that you can come please do so.

This is planned as an interesting and also a leisurely day, with time to meet friends.

## Conference 2004

We plan to hold a conference at the Royal Foundation of St. Katherine, London, from Friday 18 June to Sunday 20 June. The full conference fee will be £100 per person. Accomodation will be ensuite. Details will be given later but please note the dates now.

## New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of the Society:

Jim Morgan, 1 Mill Green Court, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3PJ, UK.

Reverend Dr. David B. Reynolds, 76 Ridge Road, Deerfield, NH 03037, USA

Norman Taylor, Shire End West, Cobb Road, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3JP, UK.

## CW Books Republished

We have received notification from Robert D Clements of Regent College Publishing, Vancouver that they have recently reprinted *Descent of the Dove*. They have also acquired publication rights to *All Hallow's Eve*, *The Place of the Lion*, *The Greater Trumps* and *Shadows of Ecstasy*. The four novels

were due to go to press in early March. Members may also be interested in the following lectures which they sell on audio cassette: *C.S. Lewis & Charles Williams* by J.I. Packer (Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology at Regent College). Cassette (4 tapes) Product Number: RG2749S Price: CDN\$20.85 (USD\$13.76)

The details for the various methods of getting in touch are as follows:

Post: Regent College Publishing,  
5800 University Blvd., Vancouver,  
BC V6T 2E4 Canada.

Tel: 604 228 1820

Fax: 604 224 3097

Email: [bookstore@regent-college.edu](mailto:bookstore@regent-college.edu)

Websites: [www.regentbookstore.com](http://www.regentbookstore.com)  
and [www.regentpublishing.com](http://www.regentpublishing.com)

## **Charles Williams Society Meetings**

- ◆ **Saturday 21 June 2003** (All-day meeting – see Notes)  
Bishop Kallistos Ware will speak on 'Heaven and Hell in Charles Williams' in Pusey House, St Giles, Oxford.
- ◆ **Saturday 25 October 2003** (Annual General Meeting – 12 noon)  
Revd. Dr. Richard Sturch will speak on 'Ideas about Imagery' in the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm.

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## Charles Williams and Magic

By Edward Gauntlett

The following paper was given at a meeting of The Charles Williams Society on 22 February 2003.

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*Hegemon.* Inheritor of a Dying World, arise and enter the Darkness.

*Stolistes.* The Mother of Darkness hath blinded him with her Hair,

*Daduochos.* The Father of Darkness hath hidden him under His Wings.

*Hierophant.* His limbs are still heavy from the wars which were in Heaven.

*Kerux.* Unpurified and Unconsecrated, thou canst not enter our Sacred Hall.

*Stol.* I purify thee with water.

*Dad.* I consecrate thee with fire.

*Hiero.* Conduct the Candidate to the foot of the Altar. Inheritor of a Dying World, why seekest thou to enter our Sacred Hall? Why seekest thou admission to our Order?

*Heg (for the Candidate).* My Soul wanders in Darkness and seeks the Light of the Hidden Knowledge, and I believe that in this Order Knowledge of that Light may be obtained.

*Phillida (bearing a sword).*

Nay, hark, what rash foot beats the enchanted floor?

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*Manuscript.*

Is this then the place of achievement, the end of the waiting,  
The portal of freedom, the high city's final un gating?  
Am I come at the last to the house of all holy indwelling,  
Where is peace for desire, and the time of printing and selling?

Is this then the place of disposal, of wide proclamations,  
Of news that are rumoured afar through the tribes and the nations,  
Where the heads of the just are raised up, and the righteous assembled,  
But folly hath fled to her caves and presumption hath trembled?

*Phil.*

Wayfarer, come; but yet forbear  
Unless thy heart be true and clear.  
Foul falls thy road – bethink thee still! –  
Without permission and good-will.

*MS*

I was my father's sole delight,  
His *dulcis filia*, lass of might.  
He sent me forth - and here I am –  
That the high gods may bless or damn.

*Phil (making the sign of the magical pentagram)*

Art thou purged as by fire and by water made clean?

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The first passage above is from the Golden Dawn's Neophyte initiation ceremony

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and it struck me that *The Masque of the Manuscript* owes something to that ritual. The MS is the soul wandering in darkness as is the candidate for initiation. On arrival in the Library, like the candidate in the temple, it is purified by fire and water, but then found wanting. In darkness it is transformed by the officers into an acceptable member of the Library. In the Formula of the Neophyte, on which the main Golden Dawn initiations were based, the candidate is purified and given form and direction. Aleister Crowley says that the Neophyte Formula is complicated but, in a phrase that aptly describes the state of the MS as it first appears, “this is the fault of the first matter of the work, which is so muddled that many operations are required to unify it” (Crowley 1929 p 40). Perhaps this caricature of an initiation ceremony, written when it was, is an outward manifestation of Williams’s withdrawal from active involvement in the rituals of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Or perhaps it was a sign to those in the know that he was one of their number.

Esotericism in London in the ‘20s and ‘30s: there was a lot of it about. Ouspensky had set up a school based around Gurdjieff’s teachings and I have noted parallels between these and Nigel Considine’s philosophy as it appears in *Shadows of Ecstasy*. Rudolph Steiner’s Anthroposophy, Theosophy, New Thought and Spiritualism were all popular; and there were Waite’s Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, Dion Fortune’s Fraternity of the Inner Light, several versions of The Golden Dawn (including the exclusively Christian Cromlech Temple) the *Ordo Templi Orientis* and so on. Add to this the trauma of the Great War and the flu pandemic, the shortage of eligible young men, economic boom & bust and we have an interesting atmosphere in the City.

But first I think it may be as well to run through the history of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn briefly since A. M. Hadfield, writing as late as 1983 - by which time there was no excuse - got it remarkably wrong. She says:

This society had been originally formed in Paris by S. L. Macgregor Mathers, also a Mason and a Rosicrucian. W. B. Yeats was much involved with this. It had not flourished, and had been reformed and moved to London by Waite. Evelyn Underhill was also a member.

The Order was actually founded in London in 1888 by William Wynn Westcott, a

prominent Freemason and the Coroner for N.E. London. He co-opted fellow Freemasons Samuel Liddell Mathers (the Macgregor bit was adopted later) and the elderly Dr. W. R. Woodman to establish themselves as a governing triad of adepts qualified to initiate others. These initiations were in mysteries that Mathers rapidly elaborated into a powerful series of rituals and a body of Magical instruction. The latter was a synthesis of information from ancient and medieval sources, his own intuition and possibly (at least so he claimed) teachings from Theosophical style ‘masters’ with whom he had occasional meetings. The Golden Dawn did, in fact, flourish. In 1888 Isis Urania, as the first London temple was named, initiated 56 members, Oscar Wilde’s wife Constance among them. Between 1888 and 1897 332 people passed between the pillars of Isis Urania, and additional temples were founded in Edinburgh, Bradford and Weston-super-Mare. Mathers went to live in Paris in 1894, establishing a fifth temple there which was abandoned rather than closed by his widow Moina Mathers in 1919, shortly after her husband’s death. By this time Waite had long since ceased to have any dealings with Mathers and wrote a dismissive (even insulting) obituary of him for *The Occult Review*, prompting J. W. Brodie-Innes to submit a corrective article.

Until 1892 there was no Magic as such practised officially within the Golden Dawn: members were put through the grade ceremonies, and these were intended to open candidates to certain inner forces and awake innate but latent powers. Members had to learn the basics of Astrology, Alchemical and Qabalistic symbolism and the philosophy behind these. Mathers, however, had been busy since the founding of the Order and produced an impressive body of instruction that formed the basis of the Second Order’s Magical curriculum. I should perhaps explain that the Golden Dawn, the Outer Order, comprised the five grades of Neophyte, Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus, and Philosophus (the latter four being attributed to the elements Earth, Water, Air, and Fire respectively). Above this was the sub-grade of the Portal to the Second, inner, Order of the Red Rose and Cross of Gold (*Roseae Rubae et Aureae Crucis*) that the candidate entered fully by way of initiation to the grade of Minor Adept. The Second Order in turn depended from a third, usually un-named withdrawn Order that was regarded as being of the nature of the Hidden Church of Eckartshausen and Lopukhin. The Third Order was the abode of Mathers’s masters, otherwise known as the Secret Chiefs. Some 97

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of the Golden Dawn's members entered the Second Order, W. B. Yeats, Annie Horniman, J. W. Brodie-Innes, the actress Florence Farr, A. E. Waite and Aleister Crowley among them.

Opinions of Mathers tend to be polarized: some were all for him (Brodie Innes for one) and others, such as Waite, opposed. Waite and Mathers clashed, I suspect, because they were so similar: brought up in genteel poverty by single widowed mothers, largely self taught, autocratic, fond of setting up orders with themselves as resident gurus, and competitors in the field of publishing books on esoteric matters. The ground for their disagreement was Mathers having no time for Mysticism and Waite none for Magic.

Anyway, Dr. Woodman died in 1891, before Mathers's teachings transformed the Hermetic Students into Magical Adepti, and he was not replaced. Relations between Westcott and Mathers became strained and in 1897 a number of Golden Dawn MSS were, according to the story, left in a London cab, possibly by accident, possibly by design on Mathers's part. These MSS had Westcott's name and address (G.:D.: material was lent to members to copy and return). The cabbie brought the material to the authorities' attention and, as Aleister Crowley wittily put it, Westcott's employers told him "that he was paid to sit on corpses, not to raise them; and that he must choose between his Coronership and his Adeptship." He opted for the former and resigned (though remaining a clandestine 'back-bencher' thereafter). Thus left in sole authority Mathers set about alienating numerous members of the Second Order. He precipitated a crisis by claiming that Westcott had forged the Order's founding documents and this led to a period of upheavals and schisms that it would be impossible and pointless to outline in the time available.

However, on 27 April 1900 Yeats was elected Emperor of Isis Urania and an Executive Council was established to run the Order. Various members vied for position in the ensuing months, notably Dr Robert Felkin, J. W. Brodie-Innes and A. E. Waite. Annie Horniman, who had bankrolled Mathers for some years, resigned in high dudgeon in February 1903.

There were, broadly speaking, three factions within the Order towards the end of this first phase of its history. I quote Ellic Howe's summary.

The respective attitudes of Waite, Brodie-Innes and Felkin were roughly as follows: Waite wanted to throw overboard the old 'Magical' tradition which derived from Mathers and be free to pontificate about the Graces of the Spirit in his own inimitable fashion; Brodie-Innes hoped for the restoration and preservation of Mathers's authoritarian concept of the Order; and Dr Felkin wanted to *find* the Secret Chiefs and continue from that point.

Yeats tried to bring the opposing parties together but failed.

At a meeting held in 1903 to agree a constitution Waite took his chance. He torpedoed Brodie-Innes's attempts to reconstitute the order in a recognizable form as a Magical Order and split, with his supporters, to establish a version of the Golden Dawn (or Morgen Rothe as it was now called) on a Christian Mystical basis.

Here we leave the history of the original Golden Dawn temporarily, though it should be noted that groups claiming more or less legitimate descent from it, under a variety of names, continued operating and still exist. This is not to make the less relevant but more obvious point that every contemporary Magical group owes its existence and such Magical knowledge as it might possess to the work of Samuel Liddell Macgregor Mathers, William Wynn Westcott, Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune (of whom I shall have more to say shortly).

Waite took Mathers's grade rituals and revised them, usually making them longer and duller while retaining the basic structure. I have compared Waite's Neophyte and Zelator initiation rites, and his Equinox ceremony, with the versions used by the G.:D.: proper and find them broadly similar. He also retained the First Order knowledge lectures in some form (Evelyn Underhill wrote to him complaining that she was having trouble memorizing the Hebrew alphabet). Consequently his 'Holy Order of the Golden Dawn' or 'Rectified Rite' as this body was sometimes known did not fulfil his intentions and in 1915 he closed it down. The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross that replaced it was, it seems, more of an original conception, having four rather than three sub orders and, according to R. A. Gilbert, no Magical teaching whatsoever. Incidentally Gilbert also confirmed to me that there was no place for ceremonial swords within the F.:R.:C.:, though mem-

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bers of the G.:D.: were all routinely required to own them.

It was to the period leading up to the 1903 schism that I had assumed Anne Ridler was referring when she wrote, in her Introduction to *The Image of the City*, that Williams laughed “to remember the quarrels for precedence among the children of the Second Birth” (Ridler p xxiii). I thought this sounded like a hazily remembered misinterpretation of something she was not much interested in. However, re-reading the passage I find that she continues as follows.

As a result of the earlier and even more bitter quarrels in the society, there had been a rebellion against Mathers and his emissary Crowley, which ended in schism in 1900. W. B. Yeats, who had led the revolt, became head of the dissident London temple ('Isis-Urania'), and continued so, in spite of bickering, until 1904, when there was a further split. Yeats then followed Dr. Felkin, who founded the Order of the Stella Matutina. (pp xxiii – xxiv.)

Ridler, therefore, distinguished between quarrels she implies Williams witnessed at first hand with those others I have previously mentioned. She also says that Williams “always spoke of himself as having belonged to the Golden Dawn”. Unlike other less careful commentators Ridler was aware in 1958 that the G.:D.: was not the F.:R.:C.: to which, as we know, Williams did belong from 1917 to either 1927 (when he last attended a ritual), or 1928 (when, in September, Waite visited him at Amen House), or 1931 (when Waite stopped writing to him). (Gilbert 1987 p 149.)

Returning to Hadfield, she manages to further confuse her understanding of the Golden Dawn by suggesting (p 31) that Yeats was a member of Waite’s Order and that he and Williams might have discussed Magic after meetings. It struck me that her errors might, as in accountancy, have cancelled each other and somehow, on this particular point, arrived at a fact.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1903 meeting Yeats took his bat home and left the other adepts to squabble over what remained. However, he continued as a non-active member of the more or less orthodox Stella Matutina version of the Order headed by Dr. Robert Felkin.

By this stage the name ‘Golden Dawn’ had been dropped officially because of unwelcome publicity in the press. The Stella Matutina was one of the two most orthodox and legitimate of the derivations from Isis-Urania. The other was the *Alpha et Omega*, a temple run by one of the original members, Dr. E. Berridge, that remained loyal to Mathers, that Brodie-Innes ended up in, that Moina Mathers returned to from Paris and that Dion Fortune joined. The S.:M.: and the A.:O.: were both, to their members, *the* Golden Dawn. I have it from Gilbert that members of the F.:R.: C.: did not feel such an identification.

Yeats was sufficiently convinced of the importance of sticking to the bye-laws that, when he finally retook an active role, he had himself put through the First Order rituals again, though everyone acknowledged that he was, by any standards, an adept. In 1912 Yeats was once again a Theoricus Adeptus Minor (there were a number of subdivisions within the grade of Minor Adept) and became an Adeptus Major in 1914. He was, according to Gilbert (Gilbert 1997 p 179) “Imperator of the Amoun Temple from 1914 to 1922, and left only when the Order [and here he quotes Yeats] ‘ended amid quarrels caused by men, otherwise worthy, who claimed a Rosicrucian sanction for their fantasies.’” He was also “Instructor in Ancient Traditions” in Amoun (Gilbert 1997 p 180). The Amoun temple of the Stella Matutina was, then, a Magical group more or less active in London under Yeats at the time of Williams’s entry into Waite’s Order. Dr. Felkin, in search of Mathers’s secret chiefs and the ultimate source of the Golden Dawn’s teachings had looked to Germany and made contact with Rudolph Steiner, and it may have been disagreements relating to the incorporation of Steiner’s version of Rosicrucianism that led to Yeats’s final withdrawal. Hadfield doesn’t say when Yeats met Williams: she assumes 1917 or thereabouts because of her mix up of the various Orders; but we can at least be sure that they did meet.

So, we have a number of points of interest. Waite had no liking for Magic and his mystical Order, that we know Williams joined, was called The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Yeats was deeply involved in Magic, an adept, and Imperator of a London temple of the Golden Dawn as late as 1922. Williams spoke of himself as being a member of the Golden Dawn, remarked on the squabbles of adepts as if he were there, and knew Yeats personally. I will add to this one other point from Hadfield. “In the cupboard in his office there was a ceremonial sword, remaining probably

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from Golden Dawn days.” (Hadfield p 106). We have already established that the sword belongs to G.:D.: workings but not those of the F.:R.:C.:.

In Gavin Ashenden’s paper (CW # 103 p 18) Williams is quoted in a letter to Phyllis McDougall mentioning “a magical method for banishing an image” – hers – that he chooses not to use. I’m not sure that Waite taught such practices. Gavin says the letter continues on the inadequacies of the pentagram, so Williams is clearly referring to a practice common among the original G.:D.: members and familiar to all students of the Esoteric, The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. Brodie-Innes wrote a paper as early as 1895 giving a variation on the basic method of visualizing a circle around oneself with pentagrams at the cardinal points, pushing the offending image outside this circle and then either hurling an imagined lightning bolt at it or simply having it explode.

The raising and banishing of images is something Yeats was introduced to early in his Magical career. In his 1901 essay *Magic* he describes how he was received by Mathers and his wife at their house adjacent to Horniman’s Museum in Forest Hill, and how Mathers caused Yeats to see visions which he then dispelled as readily as he conjured them.

According to Hadfield (p 31) Williams retained some ritual paraphernalia – a robe & perhaps a sash or banner – in his London desk. That, no doubt, would have kept them out of the way of his wife, and we know that Michal thought (or at least claimed) her husband had only transitory and peripheral involvement with Esoteric Orders. When he decamped to Oxford Hadfield says that he passed some or all of these items “to a friend, who destroyed them.” That is typical in Magic: equipment disappears or is deliberately destroyed. In this case it seems to leave the trail cold: an extant sash or banner might clinch the issue by identifying the order it belonged to. In her next paragraph she makes the point that meeting Yeats was “not necessarily influential” on Williams. It seems to me that she is overly concerned with playing down any influences, such as those of Waite and Yeats, that are tainted with Esotericism.

The old idea that Williams can only have been in the Golden Dawn for a short time, discarded after R. A. Gilbert produced the documentary evidence of longer term membership of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross may, therefore, have had

something to it. In blaming Williams's occult education on Waite commentators may well have been barking up the wrong tree. It is by no means unusual for those interested in the Esoteric to join more than one group concurrently: most of the early members of the Golden Dawn were also involved with the *Soc. Ros. in Anglia* and the Theosophical Society for instance. As I mentioned earlier, there were plenty of societies to be joined. If Williams could keep his membership of one Order from his wife, why not two?

But to be fair it is not necessary to establish that Williams joined the Golden Dawn or became heavily influenced by its ideas through communication with Yeats. I have long assumed that Williams claimed membership of the Golden Dawn as a sort of boast. Waite was widely regarded as a boring old pedant and the fact that so little is known of the internal politics etc. of the F.:R.:C.: suggests that not much happened. By contrast the G.:D.: had an air of glamour about it from its founding.

But one didn't need to be in the G.:D.: to know its secrets. In 1932, having spent the years 1928 to 1931 as Aleister Crowley's secretary and disciple Israel Regardie published probably his best book, *The Tree of Life: A Study in Magic*. In this he gave a comprehensive overview of the Order's system as he had received it from Crowley. In 1929 Crowley himself had published (privately, in Paris) his own *magnum opus: Magick in Theory and Practice*; but Regardie's book, from an established London publisher, commanded a wider readership. Both were reviewed in the course of a long paper by Dion Fortune. Both gave details of The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. Regardie's book alarmed members of the Stella Matutina and they invited him to join, probably in the hope of shutting him up. This backfired. Accustomed to Crowley and Magic actually being practised Regardie concluded that the comparatively staid membership of the S.:M.: were not real initiates and had no proper grasp of the material of which they were custodians. He claims the leading 'adepts' were prone to burning MSS if they didn't understand or couldn't work their instructions. He therefore published all their secrets in his four volume *The Golden Dawn* between 1937 and 1940 to prevent the material being lost forever. Interestingly Waite, who had planned to publish his revised versions of the old G.:D.: rituals, managed to block Regardie's efforts to publish in the UK, so he returned to the USA and had the work issued there. Much of the same material had appeared Crowley's periodical *The Equinox* between 1909 and 1913. These books

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sold very slowly but then, immediately the print run was exhausted, commanded huge sums on the second hand market. This was seen by some as the Order's revenge on those who broke their oaths of secrecy.

Another popularizer of Magic drawing from the Golden Dawn well was Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Evans nee Firth). She trained as a Freudian analyst and joined the *Alpha et Omega* in 1919. Her major works appeared between 1924 and 1935 and she subsequently authored four Magical novels widely regarded as the best ever written (for those who know her work I am not counting *The Demon Lover* among these).

Now Dion Fortune, a Christian Occultist, was very concerned with love, aspects of polarity and the interchange of energy between men and women. Her early books include *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* (for which Moina Mathers tried to have her expelled from the A.:O.: for revealing too much) and *The Problem of Purity*. Furthermore, Regardie had published the basic techniques of Sexual Magic (couched in suitably vague alchemical terms) in *The Tree of*

*Life*; Crowley had included similar material in *Magick* and *The Equinox*. The higher grade rituals of the Stella Matutina (as developed by Felkin) were concerned with the interaction of the candidate with Shekinah, the female aspect of the divine in Qabalistic tradition. So, it seems, were those of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross which, Gilbert states, require “such an exalted state of consciousness on the part of each of the participants that their working was – and is – virtually impossible.” (Gilbert 1987 p 143).

Christian theology is based on the imageless God the Father – abstract and removed from creation. The complement of this is the Divine Feminine, immanent as Nature and multiform. In this aspect the divine can be worshipped at various levels:- as Beatrice, Mary, in the tradition of Courtly Love and so on. All are (or can be transformed through consciousness into being) aspects of Shekinah. In most men’s experience this manifests temporarily in a lover. This can be manipulated as a form of Tantra, sometimes one that culminates in sex, but not necessarily: avoidance of physical sex can be used to establish a human / divine polarity through the feminine. At any level this is a tricky thing to carry off and is prone to misunderstanding (as Williams discovered when his wife found out).

I mention all this because it may have a bearing on Lois Lang-Sims’s account of abuse at Williams’s hands. As she relates, their last meeting was followed by her collapse and long illness. An Occultist, to be blunt, would see this as straightforward vampirism on Williams’s part. Lang-Sims herself tries to make sense of it in terms of a form of Tantricism: raising power by setting up an intimate situation and going some way towards physical sex but stopping short of consummation. A similar interpretation might be put on the story Hadfield tells of the young female student Williams had come to his office prior to going on to evening lectures.

The poet Ithell Colquhoun, in her study of Mathers *The Sword of Wisdom*, suggests that Waite was involved at some level in Tantric practices. She makes a case that the privately printed *House of the Hidden Light* (1903) is a description of a Tantric procedure, duly disguised in allusive Latin phrases. Gilbert has rejected this interpretation and states that the book, co written with Arthur Machen, is a sort of joke, an epistolary description of their joint liaison with two women (Dora Stuart-Menteath and Vivienne Pierpoint). However, as I have intimated

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above, Occultists and Magicians of the time were deeply concerned with polarity and the exchange and raising of etheric magnetism, odic force or whatever, and this sort of procedure is always open to misinterpretation, short-circuiting, or deliberate abuse. Equally it is always of the nature of practical Magic. It should be remembered that these people were the first generation after Freud and that many eastern texts on Tantra had only recently become widely available in translation.

Dion Fortune, late in life, chose to publish (for her own initiates) some fairly explicit instruction on this, referring to it as *The Circuit of Force* and linking it with Tantra and Hatha Yoga. In order to function as a healthy human there must be exchanges of energies. This is most commonly manifest in ordinary social intercourse and physical sex, but is also present in the circulation of power within the aura via Magical exercises such as the Middle Pillar (akin to Yogic Kundalini practices and the subject of a book published by Regardie in 1938) which can be extended to an interchange between the divine and the earth or the human and the higher self, the disciple and some master, lovers and so on.

In Fortune's novel *The Sea Priestess* the heroine works with an estate agent she used to obtain a suitable building to house her temple. In pursuing her ends the pair are aided by a Priest of the Moon – a discarnate entity whose presence is felt and inferred though he doesn't really appear as a character. As a side effect of her workings (what the contemporary writer and adept Kenneth Grant might call a tangential tantrum) certain blocks and difficulties in the man's life are cleared, enabling him to enter a fulfilling relationship with another woman after the priestess disappears.

Descriptions of such relationships can also be found in Williams's novels. For instance, in *Descent into Hell* we have Pauline Anstruther and Peter Stanhope, where he takes the role of master and she is enabled, through his intervention, to provide an exchange across the centuries with her ancestor. This triangular working of Pauline and John Struther with Stanhope in the background as a sort of presiding magus is the ideal arrangement described by Fortune. It may be contrasted with the sterile and infernal triangle of Wentworth, his succubus and Lily Sammille where there is, in effect, only one participant, Wentworth, and so no exchange.

In *All Hallow's Eve* the relationship between Lester and Richard Furnival is contrasted with that between Lady Wallingford and Simon the Clerk, both involving the unfortunate Betty: one is reciprocal and the other essentially vampiric. Where Simon fails is that he tries to rely solely on himself (as Wentworth does in *Descent*) and so ends up destroying himself. Also, he has not healed those around him as they believe. No real exchange has taken place: only at the end does it – with Lester and Richard. In Crowley's terminology, Simon and Wentworth are not prepared to give up their selves, be stripped of all that they are, and be reborn as Babes of the Abyss. They cling to their current earthly personae and try to isolate these from the rest of the universe specifically, in Simon's case anyway, with the idea of living (that is, remaining the same) forever. The result is that, being resistant to change they are destroyed rather than developed by it.

The circuit of force is also seen at work in *The Greater Trumps* where Henry Lee tries to take charge but doesn't know what he's doing and it is left to the intuitive feminine participants to work it out. In esoteric philosophy the male is Passive / Negative on the Inner Planes and the female is Active / Positive. The exchange is apparent between Lothair and Sybil, especially in the storm where he assumes, as social convention dictates he must, that he is doing the rescuing, but as they are essentially in an Inner Plane situation the female is positive and the male negative: we know that she rescues him. At the climax of the story all this is made explicit in the image of Sybil as the Magus. She is also the presiding third power over the relationship between Henry and Nancy. The possibilities and consequences of failure in these practices are described when Aaron tells the story of Joanna and her husband and child.

Williams's novels, like Dion Fortune's, avoid the exchange of energies coming out as ordinary sexual intercourse. Human relationships are not solely aimed at the production of children to keep the race going: for better or worse we have developed beyond life-as-racial-survival. Where two people, or one person and a spirit, or whatever come together in a relationship it will only effect change if there is an exchange of energies leading to changes in both parties. This goes for God as well - the Bible indicates that He is open to amending His plans and repenting His anger: the perfect isn't necessarily changeless.

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In Magic the circuit of force is deliberately manipulated between the operators to achieve certain ends: Change in conformity with Will. Dion Fortune was trying to work along those lines in the '30s to bring about healthier attitudes to sex in western society, and who can say she wasn't successful? At the same time A. E. Waite invoked the Shekinah in his higher workings which were presumably dramatizations of the soul's relationship with the Divine as a relationship in the sense that the word is taken to mean most often in modern parlance. In each of Dion Fortune's last two novels (*The Sea Priestess* and *Moon Magic*) the Priestess manipulates a relationship with a man to produce magical effects by sublimating or transforming the potential sexual energy to other channels. Both the writer and her heroine sailed close to the wind with the result that Fortune had to publish the first novel herself and the second waited until 10 years after her death for publication, finally appearing in 1955.

Williams's novels also develop through human loving relationships.

The proximity of all this to sex as ordinarily understood is fairly clear. That it can go all the way is indicated by Crowley's predilection for using sexual intercourse as a form of Magical operation, drawing on aspects of Tantric practices. Dion Fortune frowned upon such practices as she was bound by the prevailing attitudes of her time (however much she struggled against them) to see and feel that illicit sex was exactly that: somehow wrong and against divine law as well as human. One of her rationalizations or justifications for her attitude is that there is no power left after orgasm for practising Magic and that Magic, if properly done, leaves no energy for orgasms. CW may have taken that (or a similar) view and so set up the situations we find in Hadfield's book and Lang-Sims's recollections. In Williams's case the teacher / pupil guru / chela relationship is established from the very start: his women fall under a spell or glamour and there is, in Magical theory, a circuit of force set in motion through the polarity of the relationship from then on. In Freudian terms this is projection and counter-projection and the manipulation of the projection is a tool in analysis. Both sides should benefit but it is arguable that at times (such as with Lang-Sims) Williams deliberately exploited the situation to obtain a boost to himself of some sort for inspiration or whatever. Consciously or otherwise he seems to have drawn off more of Lois's energy than she could comfortably do without. He needed to do this sort of thing,

Hadfield quotes him as saying, for the sake of writing some poem. It may be noted that many of Crowley's Sex Magick operations were also undertaken to obtain poetic inspiration.

Leaving polarity workings aside, there is in Williams's work other evidence of the influence of Golden Dawn theory. Most crudely (and aversely) this appears in *War in Heaven*, with its description of Goetic Magic and the use of a child as a seer: and *All Hallows' Eve*, with Simon the Clerk's reversed Tetragrammaton. Some of the most interesting allusions are in *The Greater Trumps*.

Joseph Hone gives a brief description of Yeats playing 'Enochian Chess' with Mathers, Moina and a spirit (Enochian Chess being a four handed game). This is of interest because of its connection with the Tarot. In *La Clef des Grands Mystères* by Eliphas Lévi "The Tarot is said to be the original of chess" (pp 329 - 330) and if Williams had gone to Lévi's book he might have read:

In old times, chess-players sought upon their chess-board the solution of philosophical and religious problems, and argued silently with each other in manoeuvring the hieroglyphic characters across the numbers. Our vulgar game of goose, revived from the old Grecian game, and also attributed to Palamedes, is nothing but a chess-board with motionless figures and numbers movable by means of dice. It is a Tarot disposed in the form of a wheel, for the use of aspirants to initiation. (Lévi 1972 p 195).

Lévi also refers, a couple of pages earlier, to The Tarot as "This perfectly simple philosophical machine." (*ibid.* p 193). This tradition may have been what originally gave Williams the idea of the golden figures in Aaron Lee's hidden room. An alternative and more exact source than Lévi appears in a note made by Mathers in a Golden Dawn manuscript in which he states that "like the Tarot originals the Chess pieces were anciently small figures of Egyptian Gods, representing the Divine Forces in Nature." (in *The Sorcerer and His Apprentice*, 1983 p 84). Eliphas Lévi was, of course, one of Mathers's sources of esoteric lore. Waite, I think, would not have taught Enochian Chess and, as far as I know, had no interest in the Enochian system as derived by Mathers and Crowley from John Dee's MSS since it is exclusively Magical. Waite did translate some of Lévi's books,

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but not *The Key of the Mysteries*; this job was undertaken by Crowley who published it in number 10 of *The Equinox* in 1913.

An article by J. W. Brodie-Innes which appeared in *The Occult Review* for February 1919 as part of a series of pieces in which he and Waite had a sort of debate on the history of the Tarot cards is also of interest. In this Brodie-Innes appeals for the retention of the original symbolism as far as possible in modern renditions of the cards and expresses the hope that archaeological research will eventually turn up the original forms and source of the Tarot. There are two points in the article of particular, though minor interest:

Many years ago it was my privilege to examine at leisure the magnificent collection of playing cards made by my friend, Mr George Clulow, one of the greatest living experts on the subject. That collection is now in America, where I am told it is the model for all such collections. The item that chiefly interested me was a splendid series of Tarot packs of all ages and countries. And the point that struck me most was the continuance of the designs throughout... (Brodie-Innes 1983: 119-120)

The cards have been called the 'Tarot of the Bohemians', and have often been popularly spoken of as the gipsy fortune-telling cards. As a fact, however, when gipsies lay the cards for the fortune of an inquirer it is the ordinary pack that is used...Moreover gipsy folk-lorists, with the exception of Vaillant, have very little to say about the Tarot.

The only evidence on this head that has come under my own observation was from a woman of pure Romani blood, whom I knew many years ago, a Mrs Lee....She once showed me an old tattered and much thumbed Tarot pack, of the ordinary Italian design, and told me that these were the cards she used among her own people, but never for Georgios. (*Ibid.*: 122).

Gareth Knight, in *The Magical World of the Inklings* suggests that the Lees' hidden room in *The Greater Trumps* is a fictional version of a Magical practice

known as ‘composition of place’. Following St. Ignatius Loyola and, latterly, Carl Jung most modern Magical sodalities engage in the group creation of visualized rooms, usually stylized temples containing the correspondences of the lowest Sephirah of the Tree of Life, Malkuth, from which to launch their explorations of the Inner Planes. This is a Magical procedure certainly in use within the Stella Matutina and much used by Dion Fortune, within whose own Order Knight himself was later trained. It may be that Waite used it, but I am inclined to think not, particularly since he preferred to make the temple physically with all the props: thrones, pillars, banners and what not. A glance at Gilbert’s biography indicates that he was always having trouble finding premises big enough to house the stuff. Crowley, on the other hand, recounts performing a ceremony daily for many months in an ‘astral’ (that is vividly imagined) version of his temple while travelling. And Yeats was fond of the practice, required among Golden Dawn adepts, of concentrating on a symbol visualized as being on a heavy curtain or veil (such as hung behind the door of Aaron Lee’s room) and then passing through the veil and allowing cognate visions to arise in the mind.

Crowley defined Magick as “The Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will” and Dion Fortune modified this by inserting “in consciousness” after “Change”. The first definition is perhaps too broad and the second too narrow. But taking the latter I think one could argue that Williams’s practice of substitution as practised partakes of Magic. When he asked Lois

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Lang-Sims, for instance, to bear part of the burden of Alice Mary Hadfield's fear as she voyaged across the U-Boat infested Atlantic Ocean he asked her to perform a Magical act, one that would cause changes to occur in the consciousnesses of both women.

In connection with this I would note that the Companions of the Coinherence, as described by Lois Lang-Sims, appears to be based on the ideal manifestation of the Interior Church as described by Lopukhin, Eckartshausen, Waite (in *The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal* and elsewhere) and, Aleister Crowley. When Williams told Lois that members were scattered around the world unknown to each other that echoes all the writers above. Crowley, having been involved in the ructions within the Golden Dawn, insisted that his initiates should be personally acquainted only with those who introduced them and any they subsequently introduced.

Williams's knowledge and understanding of Christianity is profound and apparent in all his work. For those interested in Magic and the Secret Tradition there are also plenty of allusions to Esotericism. There is a clear split it seems, between those who (like A. M. Hadfield) would much rather Williams had never had any direct dealings with Magic or the Occult and those who attempt to annex him as a sort of closet initiate. What must be granted is that Charles Williams combined a devout Christian faith (the orthodoxy of which I leave others to argue about) with – in terms of the Esoteric world – an enviably high degree of initiation conferred directly by one of the leading inheritors of the Secret Tradition as filtered through the Golden Dawn. He may also, as I have indicated, have had close links to sources purer than Waite.

My attitude to the perceived difficulty in 'facing up' to the fact of Williams's Esoteric activities and interests is this: *what is the problem?* Perhaps simply this: people naturally indulge an interest in the biographies of their favourite authors, pop stars and so on and it is a fact that these biographies often contain details their researchers would rather not have known.

I think that it is Williams himself who demonstrates the sort of detached attitude to adopt in his essay on Yeats in *Poetry at Present*.

But magic and faery, and those other old alchemical wisdoms in which Mr Yeats has found interest, what is their poetic value? It is perhaps the continual suggestion of other possibilities than the normal mind is conscious of. Since this verse does not give us (as naturally it could not) instruction how to work spells and practise the true alchemy and discover faery kingdoms, we are not concerned with it as practical doctrine; it is but the effect of these continual apostrophes, invocations, and visions to which we look. And so looking we must not omit one other vision which haunts this longing and desirous verse – the vision of a final attainment more perfect than faerie, the dream of the Rose, the Red Rose of beatitude and peace. (Williams 1930 p 63).

There is another thing, besides awakening our minds to dreams, more or less imaged in actuality, which Mr Yeats has done. He has given to English verse, and made native to it, a new mythology. Until he wrote, our literature had had, on the whole, three mythologies to draw on – the Greek and the Norse and the Christian; now it has also the Celtic. Names and shapes, unapprehended till now are now its possession; its boundaries are so far enlarged. This certainly is an accident of time and place and genius, but it is an accident for which we can hardly be too grateful. It is less of an accident that he has renewed in us the sense of great interior possibilities by his use of the traditions of magic and faerie, and made his own verse tremble with their imagined presence. (*ibid.* p 69).

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## Letters to the Editor

### CW & ECONOMICS

Dear Mr Gauntlett,

Angelika Schneider's paper, *Charles Williams, Economics and "Bors to Elayne: On the King's Coins"* (NL 105) contains an interesting and valuable analysis of Williams's poem, and while I cannot fully accept her argument, I am sure that members would agree that there must be room for more than one view. Where I have to part company with her is illustrated by her criticism of "the increasing freedom of economic life from political constraint" which she claims that "the United States has sought to impose on the rest of the world since World War II" (page 11). This highly political statement is open to dispute, but I would go further, and question her assumption that poverty has resulted from this "increasing freedom of economic life from political constraint". If I may quote Professor Niall Ferguson's recent book *Empire – How Britain Made the Modern World* (page xx): "...the modern consensus among liberal economists is that increasing economic openness raises living standards, even if there will always be some net losers as hitherto privileged or protected social groups are exposed to international competition".

Angelika might be put off by papers from the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Adam Smith Institute, not to say the Libertarian Alliance, but I would recommend to her a book called *In Defence of Global Capitalism*, by John Norberg (Stockholm, A B Timbo 2001, ISBN 91 7566 503 4). The author tells us that he was an Anarchist when he was a student, and then explains in a very readable text how he came to see global economy in a different way. He uses generally available statistics to show how liberalisation has reduced poverty and increased freedom for ordinary people in the world's 'emerging economies'. In the same context I would recommend Deepak Lal's book, *Against Dirigisme, the case for unshackling economic markets* (San Fransisco 1994, ISBN 1 55815 324 1). Political power, on the

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other hand, is not concerned with ‘exchange’. As Lord Acton observed in 1887, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Some parts of Angelika’s argument I could respond to in more detail as a professional economist. But I doubt whether members would want to go into that territory, however fascinating and challenging they might find it.

John Hibbs

### *Williams & Walpole*

Dear Editor,

Recently I re-read Hugh Walpole’s *Herries Chronicle* for the first time since schooldays in the 1940s, when Charles Williams and his works were unknown to me. Towards the end of the fourth volume – *Vanessa* – I got a surprise: it is the evening of May 3rd, 1926, the General Strike is due to begin at midnight, Londoners are uneasy.

At the top of Portland Place, where several roads met, there was a complete confusion. Under torrential rain a mass of cars, coming from different directions, faced one another like angry heads of cattle. Horns hooted, men shouted, nothing could move. A policeman, his black cape shining in the rain, appeared as it seemed from the bowels of the earth, waving his hand. He came right up to the General’s car, placing his hand on the bonnet, and Benjie saw his face, his blue eyes, his cheeks wet with the rain, and a clear, unflinching, unhesitating power of direction and order in his every movement. He seemed a giant from some

other planet, impersonal and inhuman. He called out, waved his hand, and at once disorder was composed into order: the cars separated and divided.

That was published in 1933. *The Greater Trumps* was published in 1932 and one of the most quoted passages from CW's writings must surely be the passage in Chapter 4 where –

A policeman's hand held them up. Henry gestured towards it. "Behold the Emperor," he said to Nancy ... and ... for a moment she saw in that heavy official barring their way the Emperor of the Trumps, helmed, in a white cloak, stretching out one sceptred arm, as if Charlemagne, or one like him, stretched out his controlling sword over the tribes of Europe pouring from the forests and bade them pause or march as he would...

I don't suppose the notion of plagiarism arises: each policeman fits perfectly into his context; but I wonder whether anyone before me noticed what seems to be their close relationship. That makes for more wondering and pondering:- are there other such relationships in other books (probably most likely novels I expect) awaiting discovery? And what image, now that we no longer have traffic policemen like these, could so symbolize Authority over "the moving tides of humanity"? Traffic-lights really don't seem the same somehow!

Yours light-heartedly,

Gillian Lunn

## SONNET

After Charles Williams

Under the stars' strong silence here they stand,  
two in their separate world the world goes by,  
lip closed on wine filled lip, and gentle hand  
in firm caress speak the eternal cry  
of their triumphant solitudes. No silent land  
rejoices round the lovers now, only the sky  
watches about them; stars above them stand,  
who in their stronger City pass the city by.

This is indeed the surging of that stream  
whose waters make us glad. Unharm'd, their joy,  
breaking between the banks of their high courtesy,  
shines with the City's light so clear that we,  
who are afraid if we cannot destroy  
such beauty, choose to see this as a dream.

John Blyth  
London, 1947



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Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. If you wish to submit a contribution, please take note of the following:

- ◆ Submissions should be sent to the Editor, preferably on floppy disc; otherwise by email attachment to: Edward.Gauntlett@down21.freeuk.com.
- ◆ Submissions on paper should be typed double spaced and single-sided.
- ◆ All quotations should be clearly referenced, and a list of sources included.
- ◆ Submissions of just a few hundred words may be hand written.
- ◆ The Editor reserves the right to decide whether to publish a submission. Usually the main article in any issue will be a paper previously read before the Society; in most cases such papers will be published as received, with little or no editorial input. Other submissions may be edited.

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