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The  
**Charles  
Williams**  
Society



**Newsletter**

No. 109 Winter 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**

We are now all set for the 2004 Conference, details of which appear in this issue of CW. This promises to be a rich and memorable event and we hope for a 'full house' with as many members as possible meeting and renewing friendships. A booking form is enclosed.

It has been noted in the report of the AGM that a number of longstanding matters exercising the Council's attention have now been brought to satisfactory conclusions. A less important issue, but one which carries danger of being more noticeable, is the imminent demise of the computer on which the Newsletter has been produced since I took over as editor. For some time now it has been warning me about something called Quantum Bigfoot – which ominously named beast is said to herald an imminent hard disk failure. No, I don't know what it means either. However, I have just been informed that the replacement machine is now ready for collection. Of course, that means I have to copy everything connected with the Newsletter (along with the rest of my life) from one pc to the other: templates, articles, miscellaneous files, software and so on. Such procedures are not my forte.

So:- if the next issue of CW bears no resemblance to this one or is handwritten you'll know that it all went horribly wrong.

Edward Gauntlett

## Society News & Notes

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### SOCIETY CONFERENCE

2004

**The Royal Foundation of St  
Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, Lime-  
house, London E14 8DS**

**Friday 18 June to Sunday 20 June.**

Booking is now open for the Confer-  
ence. We look forward to an enjoyable  
and interesting time together with  
friends old and new.

The Conference opens with registration  
between 5 and 6 p.m. on Friday and  
closes with afternoon tea at 4 p.m. on  
Sunday.

The speakers are:

Dr. Suzanne Bray - Between Death  
and Paradise: The Intermediate State in  
Charles Williams

The Revd. Michael Hampel - title to  
be announced

Dr. Brian Horne - Charles Williams  
and Dorothy L. Sayers as Letter Writ-  
ers

Mr. Grevel Lindop - Charles Williams  
as seen through Michael Williams's  
Papers.

In addition there will be: a recital of  
songs from *The Masques* and 'The  
Moon' (in a setting of music by Pur-  
cell), a seminar on CW's Arthurian Po-  
ems, and a reading of some of CW's  
unpublished letters.

Daeron's Books will provide a book-  
stall for part of the Conference and  
members may also bring any spare cop-  
ies of CW's books to sell.

A service of Holy Communion will be  
held on Sunday morning for those who  
wish to attend.

The full cost of the Conference is £100  
per person. Accommodation is avail-  
able for 41:- 35 in single en suite rooms  
and 6 in 3 twin-bedded rooms that are  
not en suite. If a member can attend  
only as a day visitor coffee, lunch and  
tea are available at £20 and the evening  
meal at £7.50 per day.

All bookings must be made in advance  
for the full amount. (Overseas members  
please see the booking form.) The latest  
date for the **receipt** of bookings for  
everyone is 8 May. 10 places will be  
reserved for overseas members until 24  
April. Refunds for cancellations can

only be considered prior to 27 May.

Any Conference member who wishes to spend an additional day in London before or after the Conference may enquire about bed and breakfast accommodation by application to the Conference Administrator at St Katharine's (020 7790 3540). These extra bookings must be made direct with St Katharine's.

Please note: there is parking space for about 20 cars. Spaces cannot be reserved in advance. Full information about access and recommended travel routes will be supplied with confirmation of your booking, together with a description of the facilities at St Katharine's. There is wheel-chair access.

### LIBRARY REFERENCE COLLECTION

Brian Horne reports on the new library arrangements.

As members of the Society will know, the reference collection and the lending library of the Society, have for the last fifteen years, been located in my own room in the Department of Theology

and Religious Studies in King's College, London. Members might also know that I retired from my lecturing post at King's College last year and, naturally, had to surrender my room in the College. This made the two collections homeless. I have been able to bring the lending library, which is quite small, to my flat in London, but, unfortunately, I cannot accommodate both collections and, over the past year, I have been trying to find a home for the reference collection.

Initially I had hoped it might be deposited at Pusey House, but the conditions which the Principal and the Librarian of Pusey House felt they had to impose made it impossible for the Council to agree to its going there. I also approached the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the first signs were encouraging. This would have been an appropriate place as so many of Charles Williams's documents are already there. That approach too, unfortunately, came to nothing; the Bodleian eventually decided not to accept it on the grounds that, given the fact that the library is pressed for space, the items in our collection would duplicate too many of the documents they already possessed.

It was suggested that I get in touch with Stratford Caldecott at Plater College in Oxford, which housed the G.K. Chesterton collection. He was extremely helpful and wondered if we, the Society, would consider housing the Charles Williams collection in the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford. The Council discussed this proposal and agreed to its implementation. At first sight, this seems rather odd, but, in fact, it has proved to be the best solution - for a number of reasons. The Centre occupies a building in the centre of the city (Shoe Lane, the entrance of which is opposite the gates of St. Peter's College). The building is in the process of being renovated and is able to house the collection in congenial surroundings. Moreover, the Director of the Centre, Dr. John Feneley, has an interest in Charles Williams and has warmly welcomed the placing of the collection there. We are most grateful to him and his wife Sandy for their help.

The collection was moved there on Friday 13 September 2002 and is now housed in its own room in St. Michael's House. Members are welcome to visit and use the collection, but Dr. Feneley has asked that members get in touch with the Centre in advance of their visit

so that proper arrangements can be made.

The address is: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, St. Michael's Hall, Shoe Lane, Oxford OX1 2DP.

Tel: + 44 0 1865 241071; Fax: + 44 0 1865 243740;

e-mail: [enquiries@cmrs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cmrs.org.uk)

### HEAVEN'S WAR

We have received notice of a forthcoming book entitled *Heaven's War*, which members may find of interest.

(W) Micah Harris

(A) Michael Gaydos

BW 120pp \$12.95 Graphic Novel

(which is to say, picture book / comic)

In stores the week of November 19th.

1938: As the world moves toward global war, a secret angelic battle is waged in the heavenly realms to determine mankind's fate. The infamous Aleister Crowley plans to manipulate those angelic struggles and thus shape the world according to his will.

Only "The Inklings" -- fantasy authors J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and

Charles Williams -- oppose him. They must decipher a landscape of sacred geometry to intercept Crowley at the threshold of heaven. And, for one of the Inklings, the pursuit will reach outside time itself. (Thrilling stuff, eh?)

## FAERIE AND FANTASY

Northamptonshire County Council arranged a weekend course on this subject at Knuston Hall, Irchester, from the 5th to the 7th of September, led by Ian Russell Lowell, at which your Secretary was present. About equal time was devoted to Williams, Tolkien and C.S.Lewis, with shorter glances at George MacDonald, David Lindsay, and (rather unexpectedly), J. W. Dunne – his theories of time, not his one excursus into "faerie and fantasy", "An Experiment with St. George"! There were eight students on the course, two of whom had come with little acquaintance with the three writers, least of all with Charles Williams, simply because they had attended courses with Mr Lowell - on the Hittites - and found him a stimulating teacher. He was indeed stimulating, and well-informed, and I am glad to say that at least one of the ex-Hittite students went away determined to start on Williams as soon as

possible. In the section on Williams, the ideas of coinherence and exchange were brought out, and we looked at some of the novels; also at the short story "Et in Sempiternum Pereant" and some of the Arthurian poems.

Members of this Society would no doubt have been familiar with most of the Williams material - though there was a reading of the poem "Divites Dimisit", which is probably not all that well known - but might well have enjoyed the other topics raised and the comparisons made. There are, I gather, no plans to repeat the course as it stands in the immediate future, but it would be worth keeping in mind if there is a repeat; meanwhile, Mr Lowell is planning one on science fiction.

## NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

At the AGM it was agreed to increase subscription rates to cover costs. They have not been increased for some years. The new rates will be:

Individual membership:           £12.50

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Joint membership:	£20.00	McFarland & Co.
Concession	£7.50	Price £25.95
Joint concession	£11.00	
Overseas individual	£15.00	
Overseas joint	£21.00	

These rates will take effect from when subscriptions are next due. A change of standing order mandate is enclosed with this newsletter. Members who pay by standing order are asked to complete this with the appropriate rate and send it to the Membership Secretary. Those who have signed Giftaid forms are not required to sign new ones. Overseas members are asked to pay in sterling, as the Society otherwise incurs high conversion charges.

### NEW CW BOOK

We are pleased to note that new material by CW has been published:

*The Detective Fiction Reviews of  
Charles Williams 1930 – 1935*

Ed. Jared Lobdell

P/B 184pp

## Charles Williams Society Meetings

- ◆ **Saturday 21 February 2004**  
In the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm. Mr. Christopher Scarf will speak on 'Monarchy and Charles Williams'.
  
- ◆ **Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June 2004**  
Society Conference at The Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, London E14. (See Notes.)
  
- ◆ **Saturday 30 October 2004**  
Venue and details to be announced.

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## Council Meeting Reports

The Council of The Society met on 21 June and 25 October

The Society's Council had an Extraordinary Meeting on June 21st at Pusey House, Oxford, at which it approved the idea of a joint meeting with the George MacDonald Society on October 24th 2004. It also held an ordinary meeting on October 25th, 2003, at St Matthew's, Bayswater.

The Chairman reported that the Williamses' grave at Holywell was now completed.

The Secretary said that information about Charles Williams and the other Inklings would be included on the forthcoming DVD of "The Two Towers", and biographical material on him in a forthcoming collection of C. S. Lewis's letters. The website had been updated, and had received 9653 visits to date.

The Treasurer presented his accounts for the year. He pointed out that our ordinary expenditure had exceeded our ordinary income, and recommended that the subscription be increased accordingly. It was agreed to fix the new rates at £12.50 for ordinary members (£20 for joint membership), £7.50 concessionary rate (£11 for joint), and £15 (£21) for overseas membership. This should suffice for the next three years.

The Librarian said that the reference library at Oxford could now be visited, if prior notice was given. The library had received copies of correspondence between Charles Williams and Mr and Mrs Hubert Foss, the gift of their daughter Diana Sparkes.

The Newsletter Editor said he would be acquiring a new computer, and the one belonging to the Society would no longer be needed. It was agreed that it be disposed of for whatever it would fetch.

The Chairman reported on progress with planning the 2004 Conference outlining the provisional programme.

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## Ideas About Imagery

By Richard Sturch

The following paper was given at a meeting of the Society on 25 October 2003

The act of being in love is still not in the deepest sense the Good.  
But it may possibly become a helpful educator. (Kierkegaard.)

This paper is based on part of a small book I wrote a few years ago about Christian fantasy, with Charles Williams especially in mind, together with his friends Tolkien and Lewis, and a considerably earlier figure, George MacDonald. They are not, mind you, the only practitioners of this art. The names of Poul Anderson, Anthony Boucher, Zenna Henderson and Cordwainer Smith come to mind, as well as a number of later imitators. But the four I mentioned were not just Christians writing fantastic stories with allusions to the faith; they actually embodied Christian ideas in their fiction, and Christian ideas which they had thought a good deal about. (Tolkien perhaps rather less than the others.)

There is a certain tendency to assume that the only way to do this must be to write allegory, and as a matter of fact all four of the writers I am considering have been accused (if that is the right word) of writing allegories. Oddly enough, all four actually did so (despite Tolkien's cordial dislike of the genre), and this is itself the clearest evidence that the rest of their writings were *not* allegorical: for the differences stand out a mile when you compare the genuine allegories with the others. 'As if nothing but an allegory could have two meanings!'<sup>1</sup> (MacDonald) The actual allegories can be enumerated quite briefly. They are: MacDonald's short stories 'The Golden Key' (at least in part) and 'The Castle'<sup>2</sup>; Williams's Nativity plays *Seed of Adam* and *The House by the Stable*, with the latter's sequel *Grab and Grace*; Tolkien's short story *Leaf by Niggle*; and Lewis's *The Pilgrim's Regress*. And in at least two of these - 'The Golden Key' and *Leaf by Niggle* - the sheer story-telling at times reduces the allegorical element to a minor role. (*Leaf by Niggle* is in any case at least as much about the relationship

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of the artist to his creation, in which aspect it is not allegorical, as it is about Purgatory, in which it is.) In each of these pieces, except perhaps for the two last mentioned, there is no attempt to provide a setting in 'real life' (even in a secondary world) - the setting is itself symbolic; and even in the two exceptions we very soon move out of the 'real' setting into a symbolic one. Moreover, the characters we meet symbolize - or even are explicitly called - things like Faith, Hell, Pride, Wisdom, Death, and the Church. Even the human characters involved in the stories sometimes shift and change into symbols: the Emperor Augustus in 'Seed of Adam' is also Adam himself, and a symbol (of authority), while conversely the hero of *The Pilgrim's Regress* is split into two, one of them being the other's conscience.

Now if you look at their other writings, a whole series of differences leap to the eye. First and foremost, most of the characters in them are human (or non-human) beings, and they react to 'real' (though improbable) surroundings as beings with that sort of character might; they do not represent Everyman, nor do their surroundings represent Purgatory, say, or Life. This means that new relationships have to be established between the stories and everyday life: of which the simplest is to take a state of affairs that the author believes in in this world and transfer it into the fantastic world he has invented. The commonest such transference is that of moral situations; but it also applies to doctrinal matters. Thus Williams did very decidedly believe in substitution and exchange: and in *Descent into Hell* he shows them in action. But the way they are shown acting is unexpected. Pauline Anstruther, as you will remember, is being haunted by her own ghost or Doppelgänger; her fear is borne for her at one point by Peter Stanhope; and it turns out in the end that this same fear was being borne by her in the first place on behalf of a long-dead ancestor<sup>3</sup>. The setting is fantastic; but the idea expressed in it was very definitely believed in.

A similar device is used by Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where Aslan allows the Witch to kill him in Edmund's place. Lewis always fought shy of 'theories of the Atonement': 'any theories we build up as to how Christ's death did all this are, in my view, quite secondary: mere plans or diagrams to be left alone if they do not help us, and, even if they do help us, not to be confused with the thing itself.'<sup>4</sup> Consequently, a whole series of questions

about this 'Narnian Atonement' are left unanswered - not only because to have answered them would have cluttered up the book, but because Lewis would not presume to answer them. But the fact of the substitutionary death is indisputable.

It should be noted that in neither case is the transferred situation an allegory of its original. It is, of course, in each case fictitious; but, if we forget that for a moment, it is a 'real' instance of the original. Very occasionally transference can be combined with allegory; but this is unusual. A case would be that of the repentance of Eustace in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*. To some extent this is treated naturalistically - Eustace does come to realize his own character and the way he has been behaving. But he has also (as a result of this previous behaviour) become transformed into a dragon; and he cannot return to human shape without the removal of his dragon-skin by Aslan; his own efforts to get rid of it strip off one skin only to reveal another underneath. This is genuine allegory, representing, of course, Eustace's inability to change himself and his character without Christ's help: but there are not many instances of such mixtures in any of our writers.

When *The Lord of the Rings* first appeared, it was quite widely taken to be, or contain, an allegory of the atomic bomb. This had to be abandoned in the light not only of Tolkien's denials but of the fact that the idea of the Ring long antedated the Bomb. But there has been at least one later attempt to impose an allegorical interpretation on the book, by Mr Gunnar Urang in his *Shadows of Heaven*<sup>5</sup>. Mr. Urang is too wary to make it all allegory, nor does he equate Ring with Bomb; but I think him misguided for all that. He takes the free peoples of Middle-earth to represent 'the rational-moral nature of man'; thus, the Dwarves stand for man as craftsman, the Hobbits for 'ordinariness', and so on, while Gandalf, coming as he does from outside, stands for grace. The book is eschatological in theme, and Aragorn's coronation inaugurates a new, messianic age. This will not do. It derives its plausibility in large part from the use of the word 'represent' rather than the word 'are'. The Dwarves *are* craftsmen; the Hobbits *are* ordinary and apparently unheroic; Gandalf's coming *was* the work of grace. But they no more represent human characteristics than characters in any other book who happen to be craftsmen, ordinary or gracious. While Aragorn's coronation inaugurates only a new age, not a messianic one; indeed, it will be one in some

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ways inferior to the one that preceded it, for the Elves are passing from Middle-earth. (Significantly, the Fourth Age did not begin with the coronation of Aragorn but with the departure of Elrond.) It is made abundantly clear that the Fourth Age will have its own troubles, as the three previous ones did; if there is eschatology involved, it is an eschatology that has been thoroughly demythologized, so that men (and Hobbits) are always living in an age under attack from the Darkness. Actually, Tolkien began a story of the resumed attack, 'The New Shadow', but never got far with it<sup>6</sup>.

But there are parallels, surely, with what Christians believe about this world and its history? Yes indeed; but Tolkien has not allegorized his beliefs into a story, he has given his story shape in accordance with his beliefs. He has not given us an allegory of Christian hope; he has written his imaginary history in the light of the Christian hope with which he regards real history. To call this 'allegory' is to stretch the meaning of the word beyond all reasonable limits.

Much more common than allegory, in MacDonald and Williams at least, is what one can probably best call Personification (though in some cases this might be a little misleading) - the appearance in a story, most of whose characters are normal human beings, of one or more allegorical figures. Several of MacDonald's stories include the figure of a woman, often young in appearance but immensely old in actual years: North Wind, Irene's great-grandmother in the *Curdie* books, the Wise Woman in *The Lost Princess*, the woman in the cottage in *Phantastes*. More familiar to us, perhaps, would be Williams's figures of Necessity, a being who presses upon people through events until they reach whatever is needed for them: the Skeleton in *Cranmer*, the young man in grey in *War in Heaven*, the Flame in *The House of the Octopus*, Mary in *The Death of Good Fortune*. Interestingly, in *Judgement at Chelmsford* Williams turns this kind of symbolizing inside out. The plot of the play, in so far as there is one, involves chiefly the personifications - the Accuser and the Sees, that is, Chelmsford herself and the Great Sees (Rome, Canterbury, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem) who act as observers and commentators: the human characters only appear in brief episodes. Something of the same effect was also introduced into the much earlier *The Rite of the Passion*.

It is arguable that MacDonald's 'fairy-story' *The Golden Key*, which I included under allegory, should really be included here, though its symbolic characters are far from mere observers. For the most part it is allegory, symbolizing the journey of the hero and heroine through life and death towards heaven. But the 'machinery' of the story is not easy to interpret. The couple are started on their journey by a wise woman not unlike those found elsewhere in MacDonald; and eventually they come (separately) to Death in the person of the Old Man of the Sea, 'a kingly man of middle age' to those who can see him as he really is. He is not personally acquainted with their destination, though he is able to send them on towards it; and the route on which he sends Tangle, the heroine, takes her successively to the Old Man of the Earth ('a youth of marvellous beauty' gazing into a mirror in which he sometimes sees the shadows of heaven) and the Old Man of the Fire, a naked child arranging coloured balls, who does know heaven and gives her her final instructions.<sup>7</sup> I do not think that MacDonald really intended separate meanings for each of these figures; they seem rather to represent different stages in Tangle's understanding or spiritual growth. (That part of this takes place after her death is no argument against this interpretation; MacDonald strongly believed in growth, and purification, after death, and it is surely significant that at one stage Tangle has to pass through almost intolerable heat<sup>8</sup>.) Her successive guides are there to help the allegory, and the story, along, but they are not allegorical themselves. Perhaps they are closer to being 'mythical' - of which more later on.

We can look at these different uses of symbolism as forming a kind of sequence. In allegory proper the symbolic figures are, so to speak, puppets; what happens to them is determined by that which is being depicted in the allegory. Personifications have more of a life of their own, because the story in which they figure is not determined in this way; the human characters have their own choices and decisions. But there is a third stage in the sequence, of considerable importance in the understanding of Williams and MacDonald, which may be called that of the Image.

It is not easy to pin this stage down and define it. Perhaps the best way to do this is to quote a passage from MacDonald<sup>9</sup>; in it he is attempting to define 'mysticism', and to my mind shooting very wide of the mark, but defining im-

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agery (in the present sense of the word) rather well. 'A mystical mind', he says, 'is one which, having perceived that the highest expression of which the truth admits, lies in the symbolism of nature and the human customs that result from human necessities, prosecutes thought about truth so embedded by dealing with the symbols themselves after logical forms...The Lord himself often employed it, as, for instance, in the whole passage ending with the words "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"'<sup>10</sup>

There are varying levels of complexity in the use of such images. A rather simple instance would be that of stairs in MacDonald. 'I have a passion for stairs', he once wrote<sup>11</sup>, and in his writings they are a constantly recurring symbol; but they do not always recur with exactly the same meaning. Stairs do, in real life, have different effects at different times; and the same applies to stairs as an image. At the simplest level, you find the stairs inside the rainbow in *The Golden Key*, leading to heaven.<sup>12</sup> In *The Princess and the Goblin* and in *Lilith* the point lies chiefly in the fact that the stairs lead to parts of huge, half-empty houses which the central characters have never yet explored. No doubt a corridor would have served as well in this particular respect, but there is obviously the additional element of the associations height has for us. A ground-level corridor would only lead to a room which might in theory have been approached by some other route, perhaps even from outside; the upper room accessible only by the stairs is a better home for mystery. And MacDonald did not choose this image because it fitted something he wanted to say in any case; it suggested things to him, and was used and developed accordingly.

In the introduction to his anthology of excerpts from MacDonald, Lewis suggests that the great houses in these two books are themselves to some degree symbolic, representing the way in which a man is so much more than his own conscious self. ('The conscious self is less than the self', MacDonald wrote elsewhere<sup>13</sup>. 'Your impulses, your desires, your tendencies, your likings...may spring now from some chance, as of nerves diseased...now from some infant hate in your heart...or, it may be, now from some far-piercing chord of a heavenly orchestra'.) If so, of course, the stairs provide also the link between the conscious self and the 'heavenly orchestra'. Certainly the image is used to make just this point, for instance, in the poem 'That Holy Thing', where we find MacDonald, addressing

Christ, saying

'My why or when thou wilt not heed  
But come down thine own secret stair.'<sup>14</sup>

This image is scattered thinly through a number of works: for a more concentrated one I might instance the figure of North Wind. In some ways she resembles the other young/old women in MacDonald. But this character belongs to her, in a sense, simply as being the North Wind - something strong and vigorous yet as old as the earth and its air. (Actually, MacDonald's North Wind is evidently the latest of a series; she is only a few thousand years old, she says.) More than that: she carries with her a certain air of cold yet energetic clarity, of the blowing away of cobwebs and rubbish; and she has a dangerous side to her as well. All this is true enough of real north winds. Even the idea of the Earthly Paradise 'at the back of the North Wind', while doubtless not strictly true, has (as MacDonald reminds his readers in the first paragraph of the book) a very ancient tradition behind it. But these qualities and associations take on a new significance as we realize that North Wind is also Death. They remain true, but teach us something new (or something we did not altogether believe) about what North Wind symbolizes. I wonder, incidentally - is it coincidence that Diamond's first and last meetings with North Wind both occur in rooms over a stairway? I doubt it.

In his biography of his parents<sup>15</sup>, MacDonald's son Greville remarks that, to him, 'a symbol was far more than an arbitrary outward and visible sign of an abstract conception: its high virtue lay in a common substance with the idea presented...We find co-substance between the stairs of a cathedral spire and our own secret stair up to the wider vision - the faculty of defying the "plumb-line of gravity" being the common and imaginative heritage.' These are not invented symbols like the plus and minus signs in arithmetic; they are things already existing in their own right, even if we do not always realize their potentialities as images. 'They may not have revealed him to us, but at least when he is revealed, they show themselves so much of his nature, that we at once use them as spiritual tokens in the commerce of the spirit.'<sup>16</sup> 'The Cross', said MacDonald elsewhere<sup>17</sup>, 'is an historical *sign*, not properly a *symbol*, except through the facts it reminds us of. On the other hand, *baptism* and the *eucharist* are symbols of the loftiest and

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profoundest kind, true to nature and all its meanings, as well as to the facts of which they remind us. They are in themselves symbols of the truths involved in the facts they commemorate.' Such symbolism is not of course confined to the sacraments: 'nature is brimful of symbolic and analogical parallels to the goings and comings, the growth and the changes of the highest nature in man. It could not be otherwise. For not only did they issue from the same thought, but the one is made for the other.'<sup>18</sup>

MacDonald seems to have limited his use of the Image to the better understanding or communication of truth about God and 'the highest nature in man'. In Williams the Image is taken much further. Not only is it the key to much of his theological thought, it dominates his thought on all sorts of subjects. 'A symbol', he wrote (later he came to prefer the word 'image' as more expressive of 'the vivid individual existence of the lesser thing') 'is rather a representative than a representation'<sup>19</sup>. It must, according to a definition of Coleridge's (i) exist in itself, (ii) derive from something greater than itself, (iii) represent in itself that greatness from which it derives<sup>20</sup>. The knights of the Round Table are 'capacities of men and modes of being (but also knights)<sup>20A</sup>. 'We have to start with figures as intensely themselves as can be managed; the less themselves they are, the less identical with the facts of another category they become. But the more themselves they are, the less "suggestively similar" (and hence useful to the *allegorist*) 'of another kind of fact can they be.'<sup>21</sup> Thus Beatrice is not, to Dante, a useful way of depicting Theology - namely, as a woman whom he loves. She could only be that by ceasing to be the actual Beatrice whom Dante did in fact love. 'She is a given fact which has in two categories of experience two different names. But the fact itself is identical everywhere'<sup>22</sup>: the 'fact' being in such cases a pattern of qualities or relations that is always the same, whether we are talking about Theology or a particular young woman from Florence. (Perhaps the most spectacular instance in Williams's own writing occurs in the poem 'The Departure of Dindrane'<sup>23</sup>, where the 'identity' of straightness and strength appears in nine different forms - not all, admittedly, as different from one another as the 'categories' of Beatrice and Theology. Most of the nine also appear in the earlier poems 'Taliessin in the School of the Poets' and 'The Son of Lancelot'<sup>24</sup>.)

Now the drawback to the use of Images in fantastic literature - or indeed any sort of fiction - is that the writer has so much control over what he or she writes. Can the Image - really 'be itself'? Beatrice really did exist; so did the highways, octaves and measuring-rods of 'The Departure of Dindrane'. But if you are writing a novel, or a poem which is in part narrative, you are creating what did not exist in reality, and will you not find yourself producing an allegory whether you want to or not?

Williams succeeded to a certain extent in avoiding this difficulty by using (in most of his novels) symbols that already existed in the world of ideas - or indeed had at some time existed in the real world. There really was a cup used at the Last Supper (the Arthurian, legendary associations of the Grail are not utilised in *War in Heaven* - Williams left that to his poetry!); there was (presumably) an original set of Tarot cards. True, there was no mysterious stone in the crown of Solomon, nor a sorcerer named Simon Leclerc; but the legends of Solomon, and belief in sorcery - these are realities all right. To a certain extent, therefore, these can 'be themselves' with the intensity needed if they are to serve as proper Images. But in fact Imagery is nothing like as prominent in Williams's novels as it is in his poetry or theology: the only case in a novel in which the Image is developed to its full extent is that of the Tarots in *The Greater Trumps*. The whole idea of the golden figures (of which the cards are pictures) is one of an Image; there is not so much a 'suggestive similarity' between their dance and that of creation as there is a fact (if one can use that word of something fictitious), the dance itself, which is identical in both. Moreover, with several of the cards we have the individual Images used as well, notably the Emperor. He is of course important because of the important part hierarchy and order play in Williams's thought; but an instance which can be quoted here is the striking passage, describing a journey out of London by car, in which an ordinary policeman controlling traffic suddenly takes on the aspect of the Tarot Emperor, Image of order and law. A few moments later another, kindred Image appears, that of the Empress. Over the gate of a large hospital 'was a light, and under the light was a nurse holding a big key. A gate - a light - a nurse; yet one lobe of her' (Nancy's) 'brain showed her again a semblance of one of the Tarot cards - ceremonial robes, imperial headdress, cloak falling like folded wings, proud, austere face...And then the car quickened again,

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and they were flying into the darkness, and away in the roads behind them was that sovereign figure and the sound of a suffering world coming up to it out of the night.<sup>25</sup> And again, the car in which she is travelling becomes the sixth of the Trumps, the Chariot, and a wayside crucifix the Hanged Man, the thirteenth...The sense that the Tarots really are in some way identical with the universe (yet the Universe is one of the cards too) becomes almost irresistible. But it is only the beginning. There is a vision later on of the whole planet 'dissolving, taking fresh shapes, rising into, changing into, the golden shapes that danced...Cities leapt together, and Death came running instead; from among the Alps the Imperial cloak swept snow into itself; rivers poured into the seas and the seas into nothing, the cups received them and bearers of cups, and a swift procession of lifted chalices wound among the gathering shapes...All earth had been gathered up: this was the truth of earth.'<sup>26</sup>

Towards the end of the book another Image becomes more and more important (not itself one of the Tarot pack, though Williams shows a link with them) - that of Hands. Arm and hand were clearly Images of particular significance to Williams personally<sup>27</sup> - though of course the whole body was<sup>28</sup>. The whole geographical landscape of the Arthurian poems is an immensely elaborate instance of Image in the sense in which I've been using the term. But to concentrate on Hands: instances could be found in as diverse passages as 'Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins' and 'The Coming of Palomides' in *Taliessin through Logres*; in *James I*, and in *Shadows of Ecstasy*. Hands of course appear in the Tarots whenever there are human figures depicted (which means on nearly all the Greater Trumps): sometimes they have a special significance. The Juggler's hands toss the balls that are the beginning and the continuation of the dance; the High Priestess's hand directs the flow of the waters that pour beneath her feet; the Emperor's directs the world; the Falling Tower is built out of hands that perpetually change into masonry as the Tower builds up, and are changed back as it falls apart; the hand of the Fool summons the dead out of their graves to Judgment. It is the hands of Nancy Coningsby that are the key Image of this section of the book. 'They had been so busy, with one thing and another, in the world, continually shaping something. What many objects had rested against those palms...O, everything! and always she had had some purpose, her hands had been doing some-

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thing, making something, that had never been before - not just so. They were always advancing on the void of the future, shaping her future.' Then associations - hands in ritual gestures, in art, in the Tarots, the hands of whoever it was first actually fashioned the Tarots; and finally the work her hands are now to do, controlling the storm that is threatening her and those with her<sup>29</sup>. It is not now the created world which is being Imaged but the creating power that brings that world into existence and sustains it; and to be handless - like the animals on the Tarot cards of the Moon or the Fool, or the cat that Nancy's aunt has rescued from the storm - is a loss and even a horror. The cat 'had no spiritual instruments of intention, only paws that patted or scratched' and were not creative. So it is that the infernal emperor 'beyond P'o-lu' in the Arthurian poems has 'indecent' hands hidden under a crimson cope:

'lost are the Roman hands;  
lost are the substantial instruments of being'.<sup>30</sup>

There is no question in these passages of a solemn rational argument about the nature of creativity or anything like that. What we are given instead is a vision of creativity as it exists in human hands, as an aid to a better vision of its nature in the world as a whole, the creativity of God. Ideally, we should emerge from a reading of *The Greater Trumps* with new ideas about, or a new outlook upon, the world and its Creator, much as we ought to emerge from the reading of Christ's discourse about the eye with a new realization of what is meant by the words 'spiritual darkness'.

But there is yet another level of symbolism, beyond Allegory, Personification and Image, and far harder to describe than any of them, yet clearly of immense importance to the understanding of these writers: that which Lewis called Myth. This is of course a word that is used in an inconvenient number of different ways! Myth in the commonest sense, in which it is more or less identical with Legend, one need not look for - except perhaps in the 'Ainulindalë', the creation myth which begins the *Silmarillion*. Here Tolkien is giving us what corresponds, in the culture of his Elves, to the opening of 'Genesis' in Christian culture - a narrative which is not literally true, which may or may not have been taken literally by its composers (its Elvish composers, that is, not Tolkien himself!), but is meant to

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convey a very genuine truth about the world and its relationship to God and (in the case of the 'Ainulindalë') the Valar. But this is exceptional. Even the creation scene in *The Magician's Nephew* is not mythical in this sense; in terms of the book, it is meant as 'literal truth'. Yet 'myth' seems far and away the best word to use for *The Princess and the Goblin*, *Perelandra*, or *The Lord of the Rings*, or at least for one element in their power - and what is one saying if one does so use it? Lewis, as a matter of fact, did make two attempts to pin the idea down, in the introduction to his MacDonald anthology and in *An Experiment in Criticism*; but I am not sure that these completely solve our problem. Lewis's suggestion is that the myth reaches us, not in the language of a skilled writer, but in the story itself. The story of Orpheus and Eurydice can make its impact just as well in a bald summary as in, say, Virgil; the story of the Odyssey cannot; and to make a 'bald summary' of a book like *Vanity Fair* is to undertake the preposterous. Again, Lewis suggests, a full reading of Kafka's *The Castle* really adds nothing much to the outline, if one knows that already. The point of the book lies in the Myth contained in its story, not in the writing in which the story is embodied.

This is very true, as far as it goes. But the stories of Orpheus and of *The Castle* are not the only Myths cited by Lewis, and I am not sure that his analysis will apply to the others. The German Romantic writer Novalis, for instance, is a 'mythographer' for Lewis, and so is MacDonald. But where in their works can one find a story that can be reduced to a bald summary without losing its effect? Just possibly Novalis's story of Hyazinth and Rosenblütchen in 'The Disciples at Sais' might qualify; but this seems nearer to allegory than myth. And I cannot see how any of the other writings of either Novalis or MacDonald could possibly qualify. The notion of compressing *Phantastes* or *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* into a few pages (let alone a few paragraphs) is ridiculous. You can do it with *The Lord of the Rings* - Tolkien himself did it, in synopses prefaced to his second and third volumes - but the 'mythical' quality is largely lost in the process. To be fair, Lewis himself recognizes this. 'Sometimes', he admits, 'there is hardly any narrative element...The shadow of Ragnarök is hardly a story. The Hesperides, with their apple-tree and dragon, are already a potent myth, without bringing in Herakles to steal the apples.'<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Urang suggests<sup>32</sup> that something of the 'mythic' quality in Lewis's *The Great*

*Divorce* comes from what he calls 'unassigned' imagery - 'imagery not required by, though consonant with, the allegory', which suggests the 'feel' of transcendent reality. This too is partially correct; but what sort of unassigned imagery will do this? Not just *any* imagery that is consistent with the allegory: and, of course, there need not be any allegory for it to be consistent with.

I think there may be a clue towards the solution of our problem in a remark I came across in the introduction to a French edition of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*: 'Une idée qui prend corps et devient vivante n'est autre chose qu'un mythe' (M. Camus.) 'An Idea which takes shape and comes to life is precisely what we mean by a Myth'. Allegory and Personification, however well done, remain partly in the control of the writer, partly in that of the truth allegorized or personified. Even the Image, though it has a life of its own, is studied and worked upon by the imagist. But sometimes there comes a point where an idea breaks free, so to speak, from the writer whose idea it was, and becomes a living thing active in readers' minds. It remains there even when they have forgotten the words that originally embodied and conveyed it.

Now such an Idea, such a Myth, might well be a story, like that of Orpheus and Eurydice. I suspect, however, that more often it is nearer a verbal picture, or a series of linked pictures. The key to the Orpheus story lies surely in two pictures - the living man singing before the God of Death with the kingdom of shades gathered round to listen, and the half-turned lover glancing back over his shoulder only to see his beloved fading away in despair. You can give this Myth in a paragraph, because you can give the two pictures in a paragraph. Ragnarök, similarly, is a picture - a short moving-picture, perhaps. But *Phantastes*, for example, requires a whole series of such pictures; indeed, the book consists of such a series - the threatening Ash, the wise woman in her cottage, the knight with the rusty armour, above all the blighting Shadow. *Lilith* is much the same, though it is more of a coherent whole than *Phantastes* is, and its pictures are both more sombre and more intense.

Do we find Myth in this sense in Williams? To a great degree he remains too much in control of his Images; he is thinking about them too much, to be producing a Myth. and we are aware of this. Myths, I suspect, are not made in the intel-

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lect, even in an intellect as unconventional as was Williams's. MacDonald, we are told by his son, 'was possessed by a feeling - he would hardly let me call it a conviction, I think - that [the writing of *Lilith*] was a mandate directly from God, for which he himself was to find form and clothing'<sup>33</sup>, and the first version was written straight down, without preliminary sketches or corrections. And it may be relevant that Lewis's stories began with mental pictures, not with plots - though these pictures were not themselves of mythical quality. I think the nearest we get to Myth in Williams is in his use of Byzantium; I shall have a bit more to say about that later.

Tolkien's stories began with artificial languages! But then Tolkien's appeal is not wholly 'mythical'. He did indeed originally propose to write a 'mythology for England', as the *Book of Lost Tales*, with its elements of paganism and its siting in a supposed past of *England*, not Middle-earth, show. The idea never quite left him. And his developed story is set in a world which we naturally associate with mythology - with the traditional mythology of Northern Europe in particular, and its 'machinery' of trolls, dragons and dwarves. But there are of course a number of different attractions in *The Lord of the Rings*, as there are in so many great books. Some are attracted above all by the detailed 'sub-creation' involved, and want to explore it further, just as others explore the sub-created world of Sherlock Holmes. (What became of Radagast? How long do Orcs live? Did Arnor break up so soon because, unlike Gondor, it had little in the way of water-communications? and so on.) This has nothing to do with myth. Perhaps even the great theme of the story might be held to belong to epic rather than myth (though the two are not of course incompatible). We come near to myth in the picture of the Shire and its Hobbits. Some might feel they are too cosy and not grand enough for myth, though part of what Tolkien was doing was showing that you do not need grandeur for heroism. We come nearer still, perhaps, with the Rangers, the dwindling race of heroes still keeping guard over peaceful lands that could not stand without them. I wondered at first whether this picture, and the allied one of Minas Tirith, derived in part from Byzantium, whose story has for me always been in some sense a Myth. In view of Tolkien's remarks about Byzantium in his poem on Williams<sup>34</sup>, however, this seems unlikely; he saw Byzantium as

'rotting within while outwardly alive,  
Where power corrupts and where the venal thrive',

rather than as the doomed bastion of the Faith still maintaining its resistance and the ritual glory of its worship even as the tide of the enemy steadily rises about it.<sup>35</sup>

I wonder whether Williams' choice of Byzantium as *the City par excellence* in his Arthurian poems had anything to do with this mythical quality. The ritual – 'the outward form of inward harmony' one Emperor called it – would have appealed to him, I fancy. 'Glory of the Emperor, glory of substantial being'; 'the smoke of earthy hopes Went up to him as incense, and the tapers shone around As prayers before the Emperor, sitting aureoled and crowned.' I think Williams recognized the Mythical quality of Byzantium when he saw it, even if he used it more as what I have been callin an Image..

Again, Tolkien's Ringwraiths, 'Mortal Men, proud and great', who have become mere shadows under the spell of the One Ring, yet still wield a terrible power and fear - these are Myth, I think, in a way in which, say, the Balrogs are not. However powerful an impact a Balrog may make on the reader, it can hardly 'come alive' in his mind, because it is in no way open to us to become Balrogs, even in the imagination. There is in each of us the germ of a Ranger, a Ringwraith, a Hobbit - and indeed of an Orpheus or a K.; and therefore, if we are shown pictures of these things, there is something in us that responds. And possibly this is part of what is involved in Myth.

That is as may be. But it is clear, I think, that the use of Myth by a Christian fantasist must be very different from his use of Allegory, Personification, or even Image. The first two are the fantasists' servants; they invent Puritania or Giant Despair to suit their own purposes, and that is that; the only question is whether they do it well or badly, and the only limitation imposed on them is the need for their symbols to be appropriate. ('One couldn't, it has been pointed out to me, 'make Despair a butterfly'.) Images cannot be treated thus; they exist in the real world, and the author must explore and study them. You can allegorize or personify a falsehood; you can only misinterpret an Image. But a Myth, which is no more the author's servant than an Image, is not a thing to be studied or explored;

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the author may have invented it, but once this is done so he or she must take it or leave it. Can a myth, then, be of a falsehood? or can it be misinterpreted? Something along these lines, one way or the other, must be possible. The myth of Ragnarök, the battle of ancient Norse myth in which the gods and the giants destroy one another, and the heroes of Valhalla choose to die on the side of Father Odin, is incompatible with the Christian myth of the Last Judgment<sup>36</sup>; at least one of them must in some sense be false. (In calling the Last Judgment a 'myth' I am of course thinking only of its effect when told of. This in no way implies that it is not also literally true, as the history of Byzantium was, whether or not one perceives in it a quality of Myth.) I believe in the Day of Judgment; I do not believe in Ragnarök, although I'm not sure it isn't the better myth of the two from an artistic point of view. But should one say that Ragnarök is an untrue myth, or that it has been misinterpreted? The first is the more natural comment (for a Christian, that is), and yet there are situations, Ragnaröks in miniature, where we *must* say 'I will die with Odin', even if we do believe that somehow in the end Good will be victorious; the Ragnarök myth is for the moment the more helpful. At such times is it not possible to say that Ragnarök is a true myth, not a false one at all? is it perhaps only when you take it to apply to the sum of things in general that it becomes false? And this is, I suppose, a kind of misinterpretation; though I am not too happy about saying this, as surely Ragnarök, to be Ragnarök at all, must *seem* to be final. (It was not *in fact* final even in the Norse Myth.) However, it remains possible that there do exist myths that are totally untrue - myths that neither convey any truth about the universe nor have any relevance for good to the lives of men and women. Perhaps, if Christianity is true, a case in point would be the myth of 'Wellsianity' which Lewis described in his 'The Funeral of a Great Myth'<sup>37</sup>: roughly, the picture of the infinite void giving birth to some tiny spark of life, which evolves and builds itself up into human beings, and at last, after reaching who knows what heights, dies in the final cold of an extinct universe. (Equally, of course, if this Myth is true, the Christian 'myths' are for the most part false and dangerous.)

However this may be, it is clear that for the fantasist, and especially perhaps the Christian fantasist, a Myth in this sense - *if* he or she can produce one - is an instrument of immense power. It is likely to be fantastic anyway, for one thing.

There are of course myths which describe, or purport to describe, the real world, to be accurate history as well as myth: the 'Wellsian' one just mentioned, for example, and the life of Christ, and (for me) the Byzantine Empire; but these are unusual. Fantasists may, then, write fantasy simply because there is no other way to embody the Myth; but if they actually want to write fantasy for some other reason, the presence of a Myth to hand is obviously ideal. Moreover, if it is a good Myth it will both enchant and enlighten their readers. (I say 'enchant'; but it is worth remembering that enchantment is not always a pleasant experience. So Odysseus's sailors discovered on Circe's island; and the Myths of Kafka provide a modern example.) But myths cannot be produced to order. Even in the works I am considering they are rare. MacDonald's two long fantasies are 'mythical', and so are some of his children's books: *The Princess and the Goblin* surely qualifies, though I am not sure about its sequel, *The Princess and Curdie*. So do some of the short stories - 'The Golden Key', certainly, and perhaps also 'The Day Boy and the Night Girl'. *Perelandra*, yes, though its central myth is not of course Lewis's own; and among the Narnia stories *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* and *The Magician's Nephew*. And, as I have said, there is definitely a 'mythical' element in *The Lord of the Rings*. But I should personally doubt - others may disagree, both on the positive and on the negative side - whether any of the others qualify; not even *Till We Have Faces*, which sets out to retell a famous Myth of old. For the most part, the fantasist with a purpose must keep to the more tractable forms of symbolism - Allegory, Personification, and Image - and hope that, since the borderlines are not after all too sharp, some tinge of the Mythical may come and bestow extra power upon his symbols.

In speaking of true myths, I have come close to a related subject dear to Tolkien in particular. The great merit of fairy-stories, Tolkien believed, was the Consolation of the Happy Ending, what he called the "eucatastrophe", a sudden reversal of things into joy. In it, "we see in a brief vision....a far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the world." And the supreme eucatastrophe of history is the Incarnation, and the supreme eucatastrophe of the Incarnation is the Resurrection. The mythical (Tolkien uses that word) enters the real world above all in the story of Jesus Christ<sup>38</sup>.

There is one last field of symbolism that must be mentioned here, because of its

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immense importance in the life of the Christian Church and the history of Christianity in general; and that is the symbolism of the Sacraments. And here I come up against something of a problem - the sheer lack of explicit sacramental teaching in three at least of our writers. In Tolkien this is not really very surprising: the sacraments did not exist in the Third Age of Middle-earth. But what of the others?

Lewis makes his own position clear in *Letters to Malcolm*<sup>39</sup>. 'You ask me why I've never written anything about the Holy Communion. For the very simple reason that I am not good enough at Theology...The trouble is that people draw conclusions even from silence. Someone said in print the other day that I seemed to "admit rather than welcome" the sacraments.' The supposed 'explanations' of the sacraments seemed to him not so much mistaken as failures; they left the mystery still a mystery. We are given more of a clue in *Perelandra*, where Ransom, present at the temptation of the Perelandrian Eve, begins to see that he must intervene physically. His reaction is that this 'would degrade the spiritual warfare to the condition of mere mythology'; but then he realizes that the distinction between myth, truth and fact are purely terrestrial and do not apply elsewhere. Even on earth they do not apply altogether - not since the Incarnation. And of this the sacraments are a permanent reminder. Sacraments only have a meaning to the fallen; in reality there are no sacraments, or everything is sacramental<sup>40</sup>.

To MacDonald too this was the case - except that he did not make quite the concession to the weakness of fallen humanity that Lewis did. The sacraments are of profound value; but as *isolated* examples of the sacramental principle they have faded in his thought, or, rather, the principle has grown as intense as they:

'...from every clod  
 Into thy foot-print flows the indwelling wine;  
 And in my daily bread, keen-eyed I greet  
 Its being's heart, the very body of God.'<sup>41</sup>

Every particle is a sacrament, just as every man is a prophet, if he and we will but see it.

Williams took the idea a step further. The universal principle is there, certainly;

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unable to go to church because of his wife's illness, he pauses as he brings her her breakfast:

'...above the common food  
I sign the Cross with sanctifying hand:  
'*Hoc corpus meum, hic sanguis meus est*'.<sup>142</sup>

And *vice versa* too; the Sacrament is itself a universal principle. 'If it [the central mystery of the Mass] is the centre of Christian life, it is, also and therefore, the centre of all life – anyhow on this planet, and perhaps everywhere. For the mystery of the Redemption – of which this is the sign and means – lies close to the mystery of Creation'<sup>43</sup>. But this is only one of the two great Ways in imagery - the Way of the Affirmation of Images. There is also the Way of the Negation of Images: the Way of the mystics, the Way (on the whole) of Protestantism. 'This also is Thou; neither is this Thou', to use Williams's favourite maxim; the images and sacraments are images and sacraments of God, yet they are *only* images and sacraments of Him. You can choose either Way, as long as you do not condemn the other. The Way Williams chose himself was that of Affirmation; but due honour must be paid to the masters of Negation - Dionysius, Kierkegaard, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Chiefly, of course, all this appears in Williams's non-fictional writings - in *The Descent of the Dove* in particular. But it also appears in one of the novels, *The Place of the Lion*, in the contrast between Anthony Durrant and the bookseller's assistant Richardson. Especially perhaps in their last conversation, before Richardson walks into the fire:

"And so", Richardson said at last, "you think that the common things will return?"

"I'm quite certain of it", Anthony said. "Won't He have mercy on all that He's made?"

The other shook his head, and then suddenly smiled. "Well, if you and they like it that way, there's no more to be said," he answered. "Myself, I think you're wasting time on the images."

"Well, who made the images?" Anthony asked. "You sound like a

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medieval monk commenting on marriage...I can't see but what the images have their place. *Ex umbris* perhaps, but the moon has to drive the shadows away naturally, hasn't it?"

The other shrugged. "O I know", he said. "It's all been argued a hundred times...But all I know is that I must make for the End when and as soon as I see it."<sup>44</sup>

The sacramentalist - both Durrant and Richardson use the word - is simply a special case (if that) of the Affirmer of Images. The difference between the Lord's Supper and (let us say) Beatrice, or the North Wind, lies presumably in the fact that the former is a means of union as well as of understanding. Union through understanding (of a sort) it may be:

'The sacred gifts, to the awakening soul,  
Open on Him who opens on the whole.'<sup>45</sup>

But the 'opening' precedes understanding; Dante's brain told him 'Behold your blessedness' in Beatrice without as yet having worked out *how* she could be any such thing. There are images in the creation - many of them; but the sacraments, like the Incarnation itself, are creations within the creation, with their own particular powers. They are not things the fantasist can use as he will; he can at best describe them in action. This Williams did: so we have the baptism of Betty Wallingford in *All Hallows' Eve* and the Eucharists in *Shadows of Ecstasy* and *The Place of the Lion*. But more than this is not possible to do.

#### END NOTES

1. MacDonald, letter to Mrs. A. J. Scott, quoted in G. M. MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, page 297.

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2. I have the impression that the first, manuscript version of *Lilith* was much nearer allegory than the final, published one. See the synopsis in the 1924 centenary edition.
  3. Cf. the poem 'Taliessin on the Death of Virgil'; also *He Came Down from Heaven*, p.88.
  4. *Mere Christianity*, p.55.
  5. (London, 1971) Chapter 3, esp.pp.106 ff.
  6. Tolkien, *The Peoples of Middle-Earth*, pp.409ff. The description in the *Letters* (pp.344 and 419) shows that this would have taken the form of corruption from within. But the story breaks off before we have any real details of the nature of the attack.
  7. MacDonald notes that this last Old Man was probably borrowed from Novalis - presumably *The Disciples at Sais*; there has been considerable adaptation!
  8. Cf. his 'Unspoken Sermon' 'The Consuming Fire'.
  9. *Unspoken Sermons*, series i, 'The New Name', pp.100-1.
  10. Mt.6:22-23.
  11. Letter to Carey Davies, quoted in *George MacDonald and his Wife*, p.530.
  12. Cf. *George MacDonald and his Wife*, p.485.
  13. *Unspoken Sermons*, series iii, page 92 ('Freedom').
  14. Version in *George MacDonald and his Wife*, p.481; a later version may be found in *Songs of Praise*, hymn 668, and MacDonald's *Poetical Works*, vol.2, p.323.
  15. Pages 481-2.
  16. *Unspoken Sermons*, series 3, p.32 ('The Knowing of the Son').
  17. *England's Antiphon*, p.187.
  18. *On the Miracles of our Lord*, pp.153-4.
  19. *Christian Symbolism*, by Michal Williams, p.20. This passage is, I understand, by Williams himself.
  20. Quoted in *The Figure of Beatrice*, p.7.
  - 20A. *The Image of the City*, p. 176; my thanks to Stephen Barber for reminding me of this passage!
  21. *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind*, p.55.
  22. Ibid.
  23. *The Region of the Summer Stars*, page 31.
  24. *Taliessin through Logres*, pages 28-9 and 55 respectively.
  25. Page 56.
  26. Page 102.
  27. See e.g., in *Taliessin through Logres*, 'The Coming of Palomides' and 'Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins'; also *James I*, pp.298-300; *Shadows of Ecstasy*, p.56.
  28. See esp. *The Image of the City*, pp.80-87; and, in *Taliessin through Logres*, 'The Vision of the Empire'.
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29. Pp.192 ff.
  30. *Taliessin through Logres*, p.12.
  31. *An Experiment in Criticism*, pages 43-44.
  32. *Shadows of Heaven*, page 12.
  33. *George MacDonald and his Wife*, page 548.
  34. Given by Carpenter on pages 123-6 of *The Inklings*; the lines cited here are found on page 125.
  35. Yet Tolkien was well aware of the Byzantine parallel; see his *Letters*, p.157. Elsewhere, though, he suggests ancient Egypt as the nearest model (p.281).
  36. I should add that the myth of Ragnarök does not *end* with total destruction; there is to be a restoration at last, with Balder returned to life. But there is no Judgment - except in so far as Odin and the gods themselves are judged for past oathbreaking.
  37. *Christian Reflections*, pp.82 ff. Cf. *S crewtape Proposes a Toast*, pp.45-8; and see also S. Toulmin in A. MacIntyre (ed.) *Metaphysical Beliefs* (1957), pp.47 ff.
  38. *Tree and Leaf*, pp.60 ff., esp. pp.62-3.
  39. Letter XIX, p.103.
  40. Page 131 of the 'Pan' edition.
  41. *Diary of an Old Soul*, Feb.7th.
  42. 'On the Sanctissimum' (in *Theology*, 1941), p.144.
  43. *Outlines of Romantic Theology*, p.43.
  44. Pages 193-94.
  45. *Theology*, 1941, p.142.

On 2 September 2003, George Every, one of the most distinguished members of the Charles Williams Society, died at the age of 94. Having become increasingly infirm in the last years of his life, he was rarely able to attend meetings of the Society, but he continued to take a keen interest in its affairs and those meetings he was able to attend were always made the more lively because of his presence. Many will remember his erudite contributions to discussions delivered with what one can only describe as a kind of enthusiastic naughtiness. His speech, especially in his later years, was sometimes faltering, and his manner was eccentric, but the rush of ideas was irresistible - as were the warmth of his smile and his

obvious enjoyment of life.

He has been called an old-fashioned man of letters and indeed he was if, by that expression, is meant a person whose extraordinarily wide range of interests in no way compromises the scholarly depth of his researches. In this he resembled his early mentor, Christopher Dawson, who was his tutor at the then university college in Exeter while George was reading for an external degree in the University of London. But George Every's temperament was to lead him into a greater variety of intellectual disciplines than those of his eminent teacher. Theology, liturgy, history, literature all fascinated him, and he made a name for himself, at least in academic circles, for his studies in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. His best known work is still *The Byzantine Patriarchate* published in 1947 at a time when Byzantine scholarship was still in its infancy in this country. For the society he contributed an essay to the volume *Charles Williams. A Celebration* published in 1995: *Taliessin in Byzantium*.

At the age of 22 he joined the Anglican order of the Society of the Sacred Mission and the society's mother house at Kelham with its impressive chapel and extensive grounds became his home for the next forty years. His contemporaries there included the celebrated scholar of both Liturgy and the Old Testament, A.G. Hebert; and in these years his life was enriched by frequent contact with a number of remarkable scholars and poets: T.S. Eliot, Dorothy L. Sayers, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams and John Heath-Stubbs. However, soon after the mother house of his order closed in 1973 he became a Roman Catholic and moved to St. Mary's College, Oscott on the outskirts of Birmingham where he was given ample opportunity to teach, think, write and pray.

His first publication, in 1940, was entitled *Christian Discrimination*, a book which brought a Christian perspective to bear on the examination of modern culture. Two years after *The Byzantine Patriarchate* there appeared a book of literary criticism, *Poetry and Personal Responsibility*, which contains his first published thoughts on Charles Williams in the chapter: 'The Poetic Influence of Charles Williams'. In the 1930s he had written to T.S. Eliot about the possibility of publishing his poetry. His poems were not accepted for publication but in the course of his reply Eliot remarked: 'My dear George . . . there is a chance that

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## George Every 1909 - 2003

Obituary by Brian Horne

you are a poet - and that is saying a great deal . . . . I don't believe that a good poet can be killed by not being published . . . . If you are a good poet you are good enough to be neglected'. His last book was, in fact, a book of poetry: a collection of his annual Christmas poems entitled *A Christmas Collection*. It has a subtitle that accurately characterises his sensibility: *Poems of Incarnation and History*.

They live the best life  
 Who after the next war  
 Live prepared for warfare.  
 The spade their best spear.  
 Earthscratchers they call us. The wave  
 Drowned the city, spared us. The beetroot  
 Crop is ruined. The spire still  
 Still stands on the hill. Field under plough. *Masks 3*

Brian Horne

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October 2003

The Officers' reviews of the Society's activities over the past year show a number of projects coming to fruition. The Williamses' grave was finally finished, largely through the tenacity of Eileen Mable; the website has had over 9,000 'hits'; Brian Horne was able to announce that he has successfully finalized the installation of the Reference Library in its new home in Oxford where it may now be visited; the details of the 2004 Conference have been fixed and were announced at the meeting.

The Conference, as announced and discussed, sounds very exciting and should make for a pleasant weekend with four speakers, a song recital, a reading of some of CW's unpublished letters, a seminar on the Arthurian poems (led by

Stephen Barber who has researched them so thoroughly), and a bookstall. As in 2000, we shall be the guests of the tranquil and newly improved Royal Foundation of St Katharine's.

On the publishing front it was noted that *The Descent of the Dove* has been re-issued in paperback, *The Detective Fiction Reviews of Charles Williams* is also now available, and all the novels are in print with US publishers. We are still awaiting the reprint of *The Image of the City* (towards the funding of which the Society made a substantial contribution) but this too should be available soon, and Society members may be able to obtain it at a special rate.

Guy Carter noted that the membership was 124 worldwide - from Moscow to Salem and beyond.

A recent addition to the Reference Library is a collection of letters and poems sent by CW to Dora and Hubert Foss.

The Society's Accounts as presented by the Treasurer, were proposed and accepted. These showed that ordinary expenditure now outstrips regular income and so a raising of the subscription rates is required. This is the first such increase in ten years. The Society's finances are quite healthy, however, and there is scope for future contributions to projects such as the grave and the republishing of books by CW.

There is still one vacancy on the Council, but most Officers were re-elected for three years at the 2002 AGM and elections were not necessary. Eileen Mable thanked the members of the Council for their efforts (especially Brian Horne and Richard Sturch for their work on the Conference). She concluded the meeting with a reading from Waldo Williams.

*Statement of income and expenditure for the period 15/06/2002 to 22/10/2003*

<u>Income</u>	£
Opening balance	806
Subscriptions	561
Book sales	21
Donations for grave	200
Other income	386

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## Annual General Meeting Report

Transfer from Royal Bank of Scotland	636
Transfer from reserves	2,000
Giftaid	278
Interest	<u>33</u>
Total	4,921
<i><u>Expenditure</u></i>	
Newsletter	1,120
Room bookings	240
Rosley Books	1,500
Grave	1,522
Leaflet	134
Miscellaneous	<u>157</u>
Total	4,673
<i><u>Reserves</u></i>	
Opening balance	9,839
Interest	382
Transfer to current account	(2,000)
Closing balance	8,221



## Editorial Policy

The Charles Williams Society's Newsletter and Web site have two functions. Firstly, to publish material about the life and work of Charles Williams. Secondly, to publish details of the activities of the Society.

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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