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The
**Charles
Williams**
Society



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Newsletter

No. 112 Autumn 2004

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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Reading groups

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



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From the Editor

For those of you who didn't make it to the conference: commiserations. There are, however, reports of our activities and the AGM to bring you up to date.

I note, from the preliminary questionnaire results Brian Horne has collated, that many members would like to see more correspondence and debate in the newsletter. This is encouraging – to an extent. As editor I have control over many aspects of the newsletter, but the quantity of correspondence submitted for the letters page (when it appears) isn't one of them. I too would like more letters and discussion in these pages, so please do write in. And if there is something anyone feels I could be doing to encourage more feedback (short of resigning) please let me know.

Several people said they would be willing to write something for publication (some with provisos and some had previously submitted material). Again, we would like to see it. There is plenty of scope for items that are more involved than a single point which might be put in a letter, but which haven't been and won't be worked up into a fully argued article. I'm inclined to think that the odd thoughts which occur after reading Williams, or coming across something that seems to connect to his work, make a valuable contribution in opening up lines of investigation for the rest of us. I look forward to hearing from you.

Edward Gauntlett

Society News & Notes

New Members

A belated but nevertheless warm welcome is extended to the following new members of the Society:

Larry E Davis, 4 Crofters Court, Croft Street, Deptford, London SE8 5DW.

Alison Day, 4 The Wharf, Midhurst, GU29 9PX.

Ian Russell Lowell, St Albans Vicarage, Broadhead Avenue, Northampton NW3 2RA.

Michael F Alexander, 31 Keble Park Crescent, Bishopthorpe, York YO23 2SY.

Thomas Gerold, Buchenauer Str 22, 82256 Furstenfeldbruck, Germany.

Charles Williams Society Meetings

- ◆ **Saturday 30 October 2004**
Joint meeting with the George MacDonald Society at Pusey House, St Giles, Oxford , starting at 10.30 am.

- ◆ **Saturday 2 April 2005**
Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Shoe Lane, Oxford (the entrance to Shoe Lane is opposite the gates of St Peter's College). The meeting begins at 11.30, though members may arrive from 11.00 am onwards. There will be a visit to the Reference Library collection and, in the afternoon, a reading of *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury*.

Council Meeting Report

The Council of the Charles Williams Society met on Saturday 19 June 2004 at The Royal Foundation of St Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, London E14

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The Chairman said there had been a further delay in the publication of *The Image of the City* and this would be discussed with Ian Blakemore

The Secretary had received copies of the four novels published by Regents College, and these were passed to the Librarian. He reported that the website had been enhanced considerably by Andy Armstrong, who suggested a possible switch to a paid form (at a cost of about £60 per annum). It was agreed, however, to remain with Geocities for the time being.

The Treasurer said the higher subscriptions were now coming through and a legacy of £113.50 had been received following the final distribution of Charles Hadfield's estate. The reserves now stand at a little over £9,000. Not all payments for the Conference had been received and although some bills had been paid, the bulk would appear in the next accounting period. A fall in the receipts from Gift Aid was noted and the reasons for this will be investigated.

The Membership Secretary announced the first new member joining through completing the application on-line. Three new members were balanced by two resignations and one death.

The Editor mentioned he had received copies of 'The Open Book' (from the Alliance of Literary Societies) and 'Inklings' (predominantly in German). These were passed to the Librarian.

It was proposed that, if material for the newsletter was in short supply, *A Myth of Bacon* might be a suitable item to include, along with some of the early articles

or CW's verses written for St Silas's parish magazine.

Dr Horne led the meeting through a discussion of the responses to the Questionnaire. These supported the idea of meetings alternating between Oxford and London. It was mentioned that we ought to accommodate the membership's expressed wish for more seminars and play-readings though these would not contribute material for the Newsletter.

Future Plans. The immediate future was of urgent importance. It was agreed that the next meeting be a full day at the Oxford Centre, including a visit to the Reference Library, meeting the Centre staff and a reading of *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury*.

The Chairman said that St Matthews, Bayswater, had deteriorated and was an unappealing venue for our meetings. She and Dr Horne had visited the old venue at Liddon House but they found this to be in a worse state than when it closed for renovation. Other London venues are prohibitively expensive.

It was agreed, following our partial backing of the republication of *The Image of the City*, that the Society might provide some financial support to Grevel Lindop while he was working on his biography of Charles Williams.

Annual General Meeting Report

The AGM of the Charles Williams Society took place on Sunday 20 June 2004 at The Royal Foundation of St Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, London E14

The AGM, after the usual apologies for absence, was opened by the Secretary announcing that our website had received 10,717 hits. On the publications front, the novels not in the 'Reader' have been reissued by Regents College, Vancouver and the Detective Stories Reviews book was mentioned again. He was reluctantly drawn out on the matter of the graphic novel *Heaven's War*, the review of which is outstanding. Richard said he would do the review when he could summon up the resolve necessary to read "the beastly thing" – comments which aroused everyone's interest, so there may have been a run on it from Amazon by the time this goes to press.

The Librarian reported that the Reference Library is now safely ensconced in the Centre for Medieval Studies in Oxford. Cataloguing has been delayed by illness, but is now progressing once more.

Moving on to the Questionnaire, there were a total of 38 responses from members, mostly in the UK with a disappointingly low result from the USA. There were a variety of answers to questions 1 and 2. The majority had come to CW via the novels, then theology, then poetry. A number of members said they would like to see more correspondence and discussion in the Newsletter, with some saying they would be willing to submit material, though concerned that their work might not be sufficiently well informed or well written. About half said they would like more occasional conferences rather than events at which a single paper was given, and about half again liked the idea of having more play readings. This has all been taken on board in the planning for next year.

The Treasurer reported that some standing orders remained unchanged following

the raising of subscriptions and a sweep-up would be required. Charles Hadfield has left the Society a small legacy of £113.50. The Accounts presented are appended to this report.

The Membership Secretary reported that there had been a handful of movements in and out of the Society, with one new member joining via the website. The number of members now stands at 124 - 91 in the UK and 33 across the rest of the world.

The question of how we could attract younger members was raised. Stephen Barber mentioned that Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman used CW (*Witchcraft*) in *Good Omens* and this fact might be exploited. There is also the possibility of interest arising from mention of the Inklings in the DVDs of the recent *Lord of the Rings* films.

People interested in CW are scattered, but the Internet now allows for immediate communication irrespective of location. Grevel Lindop said that there are several newsgroups and websites devoted to the Inklings and asked if they all had links to ours. In response Richard Sturch said the Tolkien Society does have such a link, but the Inklings webring was no longer functioning and a check would have to be made on the others (the DLS website was mentioned in this context). Grevel suggested that we email the many 'unofficial' groups every so often with a link included in the message. Thomas Gerold (from Germany) confirmed that the new Inkling Gessellschaft website will have a link.

In furtherance of a proactive approach Grevel Lindop suggested that the website address should be placed on the front cover of the Newsletter, rather than lurking hidden on the inside and that all the Officers' email addresses be published in future issues.

The Chairman reported that the paperback edition of *The Image of the City* should be available in September. Ian Blakemore had not had many orders from members of the Society and it had been hoped there would be more support for the project. Grevel Lindop is currently working on a biography of Charles Williams, but there is a problem in interesting a publisher. His article in the Times Literary Supplement recently raised a bit of interest with the Oxford University

Press, but that company won't provide an advance and without a publisher he cannot apply for grants elsewhere. However, there is every reason to suppose that it will be a good book when it appears and the Society will give it all the support it can.

The meeting moved on to consider the future of the Society. It was pointed out that the last London meeting had only six attendees, comprising the Council members who had gathered for the earlier Council meeting, and it was embarrassing that the speaker should have such a small audience. It was conceded that the Church room at St Matthews is not the nicest of venues and alternatives are being investigated. The nature, format and annual number of the meetings is also under review. For 2005 it was proposed that there be just two meetings, each being for a full day: one in Oxford at the Centre of Medieval Studies in April with some form of discussion in the morning and a play reading in the afternoon; the other in London, possibly at St Katharine's, in October with a speaker in the morning and a seminar or other participatory event in the afternoon.

These proposals led to a lively exchange of views. The time of day was the first point raised: 10.30 is inconveniently early for some, and a shift to later - noon running on to six pm - might be more satisfactory. This would have to be clearly announced in the newsletter once decided upon.

There followed a discussion of a most interesting point raised by Stephen Medcalf. He said that he had always understood that there was intended to be a link between the Society and the Companions of the Coinherence, which had four significant dates, and opined that we were unlikely to attract more people to fewer meetings. Eileen Mable admitted that the connection with the Company had been neglected or forgotten over the years. Grevel Lindop thought fewer but more substantial meetings would be preferable and that the Society should not try to be an ordinary exoteric society *and* act as a vehicle for the Company, which should subsist as a separate sodality for those who felt themselves to constitute it. This point was disputed, however, Stephen Medcalf maintaining that the two should connect and at the very least, if there were to be only two meetings a year, these should fall as close to dates instituted for the Company as possible. Brian Horne, therefore, proposed that the meetings in 2005 should take place around the Feast

of the Annunciation and the Feast of All Saints. The discussion was left at that for the purposes of the meeting, but with the intention that this issue be left open for discussion at greater length [possibly in the pages of the Newsletter – Ed].

The Chairman then thanked the Council and Officers for their work, with special mention for Brian Horne and Richard Sturch for organising the Conference; thanks also went to the Royal Foundation of St Katharine. Two members of the Council, Richard Jeffrey and Stephen Barber, were re-elected for a further three year term. There were no nominations for the ordinary member vacancy, which remains unfilled.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Since the last AGM was on 25 October 2003 this report covers a period of only eight months. On that occasion it was agreed to raise subscriptions, for the first time for a number of years, as expenditure was outrunning income. This was agreed, and subscriptions at the new rates are beginning to come through for those members who pay by standing order. However, at the end of the calendar year we shall need to take stock, because it appears that some members have overlooked the request and are still paying at the old rates. For convenience, the new rates are set out here:

Standard	£12.50
Joint	£20.00
Concession	£7.50
Concession joint	£11.00
Overseas individual	£15.00
Overseas joint	£21.00

Overseas members are asked to remit their subscriptions in sterling.

Long-standing members will remember Charles Hadfield, who with his wife Alice-Mary, helped to found the Society, and who left a generous bequest to us. We have benefited again from his generosity, as his executors have passed on to us a further £113.50 as part of the final distribution of funds from his estate. We have of course written to express our gratitude and thanks.

The main unusual activity undertaken has been the conference. This is intended to be largely self-financing from delegate attendance fees, though appropriate expenses will be paid. Since the AGM occurs during the conference, the accounting straddles two of our financial periods, with significant income lodged beforehand, while expenditure will fall mostly into next year. £750 was transferred from the current account to the reserve, representing a batch of conference booking fees. This will be transferred back when the conference accounts are settled.

Giftaid to cover the period of the financial year 2003-4 has been for but has not yet been received. The number of subscriptions paid with Giftaid declarations is considerably down from the previous year (we apply for each financial year in retrospect), and we should continue to encourage new members who are UK taxpayers to make the Giftaid declaration.

Stephen Barber

Treasurer

Report on the Conference of the Charles Williams Society

Friday 18 June to Sunday 20 June 2004 at the Royal Foundation of
St Katharine

The Charles Williams Society Conference took place in the refurbished and upgraded Royal Foundation of St Katharine over the weekend of Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June. Those members who attended the 2000 Conference may recall the general feeling that it would be better to extend the event into Sunday (2000 ran from Friday evening to Saturday afternoon) and this certainly allowed for a much richer experience, with an extended and more varied programme than was possible last time.

Following registration and supper on Friday evening, Michael Hampel spoke on *Waiting for Conflict: a creative response to the experience of war*. This talk considered the work of Christian writers in England during the “long weekend” between World Wars One and Two, particularly Eliot and Sayers, with a look at Christopher Fry’s post war *A Sleep of Prisoners* and CW’s *House of the Octopus*. The emphasis was on plays and the reaction of critics and public to the English Christian response to global war.

On Saturday morning Suzanne Bray gave a paper on *The Intermediate State in Charles Williams*. This began by distinguishing the various possible intermediate states, bringing the focus on what we tend to understand by Purgatory and Williams’s approaches to it in his writings. Dr Bray pointed out that Williams was, from an early age, preoccupied with the notion of death (though obviously not to any pathological extent) and, with Lewis, is one of the few writers to have seriously attempted to describe the post mortem state. The “voyage of discovery” in her talk ranged over *The Prayers of the Pope*, the short story *Et in Sempiternum*

Pereant, and, of course, the two last novels, *Descent into Hell* and *All Hallows Eve*.

Following a coffee break, Brian Horne considered *Dorothy L Sayers and Charles Williams as Letter Writers*. He began with the question of whether we ought to be interested in *private* communications over published works, and whether there is anything valuable to be learnt from such un-revised occasional pieces as personal letters. There is, of course, and hence the frequent publication of letters and the extensive quotations from them in biographies. Of particular interest, following Michael Hampel's talk, were the extracts from letters written specifically about (and during) the 39-45 war.

Stephen Barber's 'non-compulsory' seminar on just two poems, *Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande* and *The Coming of Palomides* was attended by everyone. The discussion was lively and stimulating, bringing out a number of fascinating insights and leads for further reading and study.

In the evening we adjourned to the chapel, with its very fine acoustics, for a set of songs from the *Masques* and CW's *The Moon* set to music by Purcell. The songs were a delight to hear, framed by Stephen Medcalf's readings from the opening and closing of the plays. By a strange coincidence, one of the singers co-opted by Brian Horne's friend for the performance already knew the songs, having performed the *Masques* in Oxford a few years ago (and appeared in the video of *The Masque of the Manuscript*). As the light faded outside and we returned to the main building for a nightcap the day seemed perfectly complete.

Sunday morning began with Holy Communion and moved on, after breakfast, to the business part of the Conference – the AGM. Given the number of members in attendance this was a more valuable meeting than is often the case, and a report of the discussion appears elsewhere in the Newsletter.

After coffee Grevel Lindop shared his ongoing experience of investigating Michael Williams's papers – a treasure-trove, a jumbled mass of letters, bills, notes, a short story and family photographs. The sorting of this material is by no means complete and Grevel conveyed the excitement of delving into the heaps of paper, never knowing what will turn up next. For the purposes of the talk a number of

photos, hitherto unpublished, had been reproduced as slides, providing a new insight into the life of CW.

Lunch was followed by a number of those present reading some of CW's letters, both published and unpublished, in a selection made by Brian Horne. Afterwards the Conference was brought to a gentle close over a final afternoon tea.

In the days immediately following the Conference there was a brief exchange of emails among the "Coinherence" web group, reproduction of which would seem to be an appropriate way to round off this report.

From: Richard Sturch

Just to say that the Conference, which has just ended, was quite splendid. And that one TOTALLY unexpected item in it was CW's first published piece of fiction - in the "Temperance Recorder" of 1899, when he was thirteen...
Richard Sturch

From: Suzanne Bray

It was! I thoroughly enjoyed it. The photos of the young Charles Williams were fascinating too.
Suzanne

From: Angelika Schneider

Though two encomiums are good enough, I hasten to add mine - I too enjoyed the conference immensely, particularly the variety of contributions. Not just ordinary papers on literary works - a seminar on poetry, a comparison of letters and what they reveal about character, insight into the work of a biographer faced with a couple of large cartons of - truly!- miscellaneous, and a perfectly delightful concert!
Angie

From: Thomas Gerold

A rather late addition to the emails on the conference, but I stayed in

London till yesterday. It was the first time for me to attend a conference of the Charles Williams Society and it was really a very good and interesting time. So I really can recommend you to attend the next time even if you had nothing to do with the Society before.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed,

In an old parish magazine of 1983 I found an obituary extolling a memorable person who had just died full of years ... “everyone hereabouts knew and loved her ... [she] will be keenly missed...” Two A5 pp by the then Rector ended thus:

Some words from W. H. Auden seem to catch something of her quality – “ironic point of light” flashing out – “an affirming flame.” We could do well to follow Auden’s bidding and “show an affirming flame” ourselves in her memory.

Indeed, I recall her well, but not this obituary. It sounds so C. W. -ish. Does anyone reading this know where the quotations come from?

Best Wishes

Gillian Lunn

Heraclitus on the Way of Exchange

Stephen Barber

Bishop Kallistos Ware once¹ memorably described Williams's account of heaven as the place of exchange. He summed it up by drawing on a phrase Williams quotes in 'Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins':

This is the way of this world in the day of that other's;
make yourselves friends by means of the riches of iniquity,
for the wealth of the self is the health of the self exchanged.
What saith Heraclitus? - and what is the City's breath? -
dying each other's life, living each other's death.
Money is a medium of exchange.

In one of his few notes, Williams gives his source: 'The quotation from Heraclitus was taken from Mr. Yeats's book, *A Vision*.'

This is a little terse, and it is worth following through in more detail. Heraclitus or Heraclitus² was one of the early Greek philosophers known to modern scholars as the pre-Socratics, and even in antiquity he was celebrated for his obscurity. This is compounded by the fact that, as with many others, his book survives only in quotations made by later writers, so what is published under his name is a collection of fragments. In any case his book may well have been a collection of sayings, rather than a treatise. These gnomic utterances are very striking, as is clear from a few examples³, including the original of the passage used by Yeats and Williams:

The sun is new every day. (32; 6)

You cannot step twice into the same rivers; for fresh waters are
ever flowing in upon you. (41,42; 49a, 12)

War is the father of all and the king of all; and some he has made gods and some men, some bound and some free. (44; 53)

The immortals are mortal, the mortals immortal, each living in the others' death and dying in the others' life. (67; 62)

Fire lives the death of earth, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of air, earth that of water. (25; 76)

Although the Word is common to all, many live as if they had a private wisdom of their own. (92; 2)

The way up and the way down are one and the same. (69; 60)

Yeats came across Heraclitus in 1909, when he recorded the third and fourth of those above in his Journal⁴. It is clear from verbal similarities that he used a then standard work, John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, first published in 1892 (the edition Yeats used⁵). Burnet was Professor of Greek at St Andrews University, and his book remained a standard source for English-speaking students for sixty years⁶.

Yeats did not publish this Journal, but the final phrase of the fragment, in the form 'dying the other's life, living the other's death', became an obsession with him in his middle years. One could say that it plays a comparable part in his thought to that of 'This also is Thou; neither is this Thou' in Williams⁷. It occurs in several different places and is alluded to in more, but since Williams specifically cites *A Vision*, let us look at that.

A Vision is Yeats's book of occult wisdom. It was first published in 1925, in an edition of 600 signed copies 'privately printed for subscribers only'. It was therefore not an easy book to find, and it is a testimony to Williams's interest in Yeats that he did obtain it, and praised it in his 1930 essay on Yeats as 'that learned and profound work'⁸. Yeats later revised it considerably, and the later version was published in 1937 in a normal edition. Yeats scholars distinguish the two editions as *Vision A* and *Vision B*. Williams reviewed *Vision B* when it appeared⁹, to Yeats's pleasure¹⁰, but it was *Vision A* which first engaged him¹¹.

The phrase which interested him occurs first in one of Yeats's characteristic discussions of gyres, those interpenetrating cones which occur only in discussions of Yeats, but there turn up all the time. After a particularly tangled and abstruse passage we come across:

It is as though the first act of being, after creating limit, was to divide itself into male and female, each dying the other's life living the other's death (*Vision A*¹², 130).

This was considerably revised in *Vision B*, but the phrase is used again, and this time is attributed:

Here the thought of Heraclitus dominates all: "Dying each other's life, living each other's death" (*Vision B*, 68)

The second occurrence is in the context of Yeats's exposition of his cyclical theory of history, where we find:

Each age unwinds the thread another age had wound, and it amuses one to remember that before Phidias, and his westward moving art, Persia fell, and that when full moon came round again, amid eastward moving thought, and brought Byzantine glory, Rome fell; and that at the outset of our eastward moving Renaissance Byzantium fell; all things dying each other's life, living each other's death (*Vision A*, 183= *Vision B*, 270-1).

Williams seems to have picked up the phrase, without engaging with the Platonic content of the first half of the sentence in the first version. With the second sentence all readers of the *Taliessin* poems will find resonances with Yeats's mention of Byzantine glory and the significance of Rome and, to a lesser extent, Persia, while noting that Yeats's cyclical theory of history makes no appeal to Williams as a Christian.

Since Yeats did not attribute the phrase to Heraclitus in *Vision A*, how did Williams know where it came from? It seems unlikely that 'Bors to Elayne' was written after 1937, when *Vision B* was published, given that *Taliessin through Logres* came out in 1938 and Anne Ridler dated most of the poems in it to 1934-

5¹³. One possibility is that he picked it up from Yeats's play *The Resurrection*, whose closing words, before a song, are:

Your words are clear at last, O Heraclitus. God and man die each other's life, live each other's death.¹⁴

However, I prefer to think that Williams simply asked Yeats, whom he knew personally¹⁵. This would account for his use of the variant spelling *Heracleitus*, which is slightly closer to the Greek.

To consider in detail the significance of this phrase to Yeats would take us too far afield, so one passage must suffice:

To me all things are made of the conflict of two states of consciousness, beings or persons which die each other's life, live each other's death. This is true of life and death themselves.¹⁶

The significance of the phrase to Williams is clear. It is a summary of the way of exchange. In 'Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins' it is spoken by the archbishop, so his acceptance of a Greek saying implies the acceptance by Christianity of what is good and true in paganism. We may compare St Paul's quotation of a line of the Greek poet Aratus¹⁷, and Williams would also be aware that he was thought to have quoted Euripides¹⁸.

Williams uses the line again in 'The Founding of the Company', again to summarize the way of exchange:

The Company's second mode bore farther
 the labour and fruition; it exchanged the proper self
 and wherever need was drew breath daily
 in another's place, according to the grace of the Spirit
 'dying each other's life, living each other's death'.
 'The Founding of the Company', 60-4

The most dramatic example of exchange in the poems is Blanchefleur, who, we know from Malory, 'died from a letting of blood to heal a sick lady' (Malory

XVII. 11). In 'The Last Voyage', her body accompanies Galahad to Sarras:

Before the helm the ascending-descending sun
 lay in quadrilateral covers of a saffron pall
 over the bier and the pale body of Blanchefleur,
 mother of the nature of lovers, creature of exchange;
 drained there of blood by the thighed wound,
 she died another's death, another lived her life.
 'The Last Voyage', 70-4

Furthermore, exchange may operate not only among the living, but also, with due qualifications, in respect of the dead. We remember Pauline Anstruther in *Descent into Hell*, and, more immediately, 'Taliessin on the Death of Virgil'.

By virtue of his fourth eclogue, which was considered to foretell the birth of Christ - and indeed did so, if we allow that poets may speak more wisely than they know - Virgil was considered a prophet, 'Maro, prophet of the gentiles.' But as a pagan, who had not faith, he did not know grace and his place in the after-life was in limbo, from which he is sent to rescue Dante, who was in an even worse predicament¹⁹. 'Others he saved; himself he could not save': this line from the gospel accounts of the Passion²⁰, which Williams uses to sum up Virgil's predicament in the poem, is also the starting point for his principal prose exposition of exchange²¹, and the first of his sentences 'For the Companions of the Co-inherence²². And Virgil's friends, that is, in principle, all of those who have recognized great poetry and followed the prophecy which he unwittingly made, can take part in Virgil's redemption by prayer across time and the barrier of death. Williams is here applying to Virgil himself the general law of the spiritual life which he used Heraclitus's words to enunciate, and which Dante's Virgil helped him to understand²³.

To conclude this discussion we can consider C. S. Lewis's brief mention of this passage, which comes in his discussion of that part of Williams's obscurity which he ascribes to Unshared Backgrounds. He compares Williams's requirements with those of T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, and starts by arguing that some of

each poet's expectations are wholly legitimate. He goes on:

When Mr. Eliot assumes that you know Miss Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, or Williams that you know Heraclitus as quoted by W. B. Yeats . . . the difficulties are becoming less obviously legitimate²⁴

This is a good debating point: the implication is that Williams has not only used a secondary source but one which may have distorted the original author's meaning. We should also remember that at the time Lewis was writing, Yeats's occult interests, as embodied in *A Vision* and elsewhere, did not have the fashionable New Age aura that attends similar interests now. It was then highly disreputable. For example, W.H. Auden wrote an obituary dialogue for Yeats in which he puts this jibe into the mouth of an imaginary Public Prosecutor:

In 1900 he [Yeats] believed in fairies; that was bad enough; but in 1930 we are confronted with the pitiful, the deplorable spectacle of a grown man occupied with the mumbo-jumbo of magic and the nonsense of India²⁵.

No, if one were going to quote Heraclitus, much better to do so from an unimpeachable source. Lewis may have remembered that, two years before *Taliessin through Logres* was published, Eliot had published 'Burnt Norton'²⁶, and had prefixed it with two epigraphs from Heraclitus - but these were in the original Greek, and quoted, not secondhand from Yeats, nor even from Burnet's handbook, but from the scholar's reference work, the German edition by Diels. Eliot's epigraphs are the last two of the seven passages I quoted at the beginning of this paper.

However, Lewis's is not more than a debating point: Yeats's version is perfectly accurate as far as the immediate sense of his original is concerned, and Burnet is a respectable source. What Heraclitus himself meant by it is anyone's guess - or rather, to put the same point more elegantly, it is a matter for controversy among scholars. Yeats seized on the passage, as poets do, and incorporated it into his own imaginative vision. So did Williams. The moral is clear: whereas scholars should try to convey the sense of their originals and not distort them, it is the poet's privilege to convert what they appropriate, and the test is not fidelity to the original but suitability to the new context. And Williams here uses Heraclitus's phrase to embody succinctly one of his central beliefs.

Notes

1 'Heaven and Hell in Charles Williams'; unpublished paper given on 21 June 2003 to the Charles Williams Society.

2 Heraclitus is the usual spelling by English scholars and I shall use it except in quotations.

3 The following fragments are given first with the number in Burnet's edition (see reference 5 below); then the standard Diel-Kranz references, each of which should be prefixed with DK22b. The translations have been slightly modified.

4 Yeats: *Memoirs*, transcribed and edited by Denis Donoghue, 1972, 216.

5 Harper and Hood demonstrate this convincingly in the notes to their edition (see reference 8 below), 32-3.

6 I have a 1952 reprint of the 1930 fourth edition. In 1957 it was superseded by G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven's *The PreSocratic Philosophers*, which, with revisions, is still standard.

7 E.g. *The Descent of the Dove*, 1939 (Faber 1950 edition), viii; *The Figure of Beatrice*, 1943, 8.

8 *Poetry at Present*, 1930, 58.

9 *Time and Tide* 4 December 1937. (I have not seen this.)

10 Foster, R. F.: *W. B. Yeats: A Life. II: The Arch-Poet*, 2003, 607.

11 *A Vision*, in either version, is notoriously obscure. To anyone wishing to study it in detail I recommend Northrop Frye: 'The Rising of the Moon', in *Spiritus Mundi*, 1976, and Graham Hough: *The Mystery Religion of W. B. Yeats*, 1984.

12 It was a great relief to Yeats scholars when Macmillan reissued *Vision A* with introduction and notes by George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood in 1978. The body of the book is a facsimile reprint of the original, with unchanged pagination.

13 Introduction to Williams: *The Image of the City*, 1958, lxiii, footnote.

14 Yeats: *Collected Plays*, 1952, 594. The play, in a version which includes this passage, was first published in 1931.

15 Hadfield: *Charles Williams: An Exploration of his Life and Work*, 1983, 31.

16 Yeats: *Letters*, edited Allan Wade, 1954, 917.

17 *Acts* 17.28.

18 Milton, Introduction to *Samson Agonistes*, citing *I Cor* 15.33

19 *Inferno*, opening

20 It occurs in all three synoptic gospels: *Matt.* 27.42; *Mark* 15.31; *Luke* 23.35.

21 *He Came Down from Heaven*, 1950 edition, 83. First published 1938, the same year as *Taliessin through Logres*.

22 Hadfield: *Charles Williams*, 174.

23 In Dante's own scheme Virgil is seen trapped in limbo and has no access to purgatory except as an observer. Williams sees exchange operating not only between the living and the dead but also backwards in time, as indeed it sometimes does in Dante too (Casella in *Purgatorio* II, Trajan in *Paradiso* XX). We must also remember that Dante's poem does not purport to give us a definitive account of the afterlife but a vision of it.

24 Williams and Lewis: *Arthurian Torso*, 1948, 189.

25 W. H. Auden: 'The Public v. the Late Mr. William Butler Yeats' in *The English Auden*, edited Edward Mendelson, 1977, 391.

26 'Burnt Norton' first appeared at the end of Eliot's *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, published 1936. When it was reissued as the first of *Four Quartets*, 1944, the epigraphs were transferred to prefix the whole cycle.

The Emperor and The Zodiac

Charles Williams

In the throne of the Emperor are the twelve zodiacal images,
each the generation of creation and each its consummation,
twelfefold to the world beyond Byzantium,
the affliction of benediction, since the Adam yearned
to share the knowledge and learned what they could bear,
in that creation, of what was also salvation
in flesh and intellect and soul, the twelve mysteries
that walked also with the shining Logos in Galilee.

The lord Taliessin saw the divine Emperor
set above peace and war, he saw the City
gathering itself in the twelve images in the throne
as later in Logres, scattering itself in stars,
hints of perfection, falling flashes of beatitude,
when he heard the thunder of the Emperor riding above him.
He saw in Logres the form of a man twelve-based,
the form of a woman, the empire reflecting the zodiac.

The workings of the sublime Emperor
attributed to the themes their qualities of cause and perseverance,
as the sacred sun, with all the spiritual planets
attending, wending through the grand zodiacal houses,
sheds in its light the influence of each on the earth:
light beyond the sun as Sarras beyond Carbonek
lying, as God beyond the operative Emperor;
and the myths in Broceliande as the powers dwell in the zodiac.

The body was bared and balanced in Libra;
Justice lay at the bottom, and in Caucasia (here the fragment cuts off)

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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.
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