CHARLES WILLIAMS:
POET OF THE AFFIRMATIONS

by

Christine Mary Hearn

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1970

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

April 1974

APPROVAL

Name: Christine Mary Hearn

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: Charles Williams: Poet of the Affirmations

Examining Committee:

Chairman: G. M. Newman

Dr. F. Candelaria
Senior Supervisor

J. Mills

Dr. M. Harris

B. Gifford
External Examiner
Department of Modern Languages

Date Approved: April 2, 1974

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis or dissertation (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Dissertation:

Charles Williams: Poet of the Affirmations

Author:

(signature)

Christine Mary Hearn

(name)

April 2, 1974

(date)

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses Charles Williams' two major volumes of poetry, Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars as Williams' statement of the Way of the Affirmation of Images. The poems are discussed with close attention to available critical material and to Williams' other work, particularly the theological books and the later novels.

A brief biographical study of Williams is followed by an outline of the landscape of the poems. This outline simplifies later discussion and provides a framework for consideration of the most important themes.

Chapter IV deals with the Way of the Affirmation of Images as one way to find God. The Way of the Affirmation and the Way of the Negation are considered in relation to each other and to the poems.

The way of love as a particular mode of the Way of the Affirmation of Images is discussed in Chapter V. Love provides a way to express and receive affirmation and thus is central to Williams' theology.

The final chapter is concerned with the image of the city as William's culminating image. The city is produced

by love and its elements and is Williams' fullest expression of his concept of order and exchange on earth.

Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars are concerned with the attempt to build the city. The experiment fails but the affirmations continue. Logres becomes mere Britain, but Galahad, Percivale, and Bors achieve the Grail.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Since Charles Williams' death a number of books and articles have appeared which deal with almost all aspects of his work. People who knew him, most notably Michal Williams, C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, W.H. Auden, and T.S. Eliot, have contributed personal reflections; [1] studies of Williams as novelist have been written by Antony Borrow, George Parker Winship Jr., Geoffrey Parsons, and Mark R. Hillegas; [2] Robert McAfee Brown, Glen Cavaliero, and George Every have discussed Williams as Christian writer; [3] Alice Mary Hadfield has written a biography with critical inserts; [4] general introductions to Williams, written by Anne Ridler, Mary McDermott Shideler, and John Heath-Stubbs have appeared; [5] Nathan Comfort Starr, Charles Moorman, and David Jones have discussed Williams' (and others') use of the Arthurian material; [6] and the concept of "the city" and Williams' relationship to the so-called "Oxford Christians" has been discussed by Charles Moorman and R.J. Reilly. [7] To date, however, only C.S. Lewis in Arthurian Torso [8] has attempted to discuss, as his major concern, Williams' last two volumes of poetry, Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars.

Lewis' article, which he calls "Williams and the Arthuriad", contains an explication of each individual poem based on recollections by the author of what Williams had said about the poems. Lewis gives as his reason for writing the article the explanation that:

> The lyrical cycle, is a difficult work which if left without a commentary, might soon become another such battlefield for competing interpretations as Blake's Prophetic Books. Since I had heard nearly all of it read aloud and expounded by the author and had questioned him closely on his meaning I felt I might be able to comment on it, though imperfectly, yet usefully.[9]

The article is invaluable because it outlines what Williams is talking about; it briefly explains each poem, identifies some people and some places, considers some of Williams' themes and religious ideas, and in general provides an overview of the cycle. Without it, reading Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars would be as difficult as reading Pound's Cantos without the annotated index--a sense of power and beauty would be realized, certain passages would stick in the mind, but little of the meaning would be clear.

What Lewis does not do, does not intend to do, is provide an analysis of the major themes found in the poems. This thesis will attempt to pick up where Lewis

left off; it will discuss the poems and illuminate them, where necessary, with references to Williams' other work, particularly the theological articles, the novels, and The Figure of Beatrice.

The Arthurian poems are Williams' statement of the Way of the Affirmation of Images as one way to find God. A particular mode of that Way is the way of love. In Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars, love and its elements produce the city and that city is Williams' main image in the poems. It is the attempt to create heaven on earth.

This thesis will attempt to deal with the Way of the Affirmation of Images, the way of love, and the image of the city, in order to explore Williams' conception of order and exchange on earth and thus his major themes.

NOTES

[1]See Michal Williams, "As I Remember Charles Williams", in Episcopal Churchnews, April 12, 1953; C.S. Lewis, "Introduction" to C.S. Lewis (ed.), Essays Presented to Charles Williams (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966) and C.S. Lewis, letter to "a lady", May 20, 1945, in W.H. Lewis (ed.), Letters of C.S. Lewis (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966); Dorothy L. Sayers, The

Poetry of Search and the Poetry of Statement (London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963); W.H. Auden, "Charles Williams: A Review Article", in Christian Century, May 2, 1956; and T.S. Eliot, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, All Hallows' Eve (New York, The Noonday Press, 1969).

[2]See Antony Borrow, "The Affirmation of Images" An Examination of the Novels of Charles Williams", in Nine: A Magazine of Poetry and Criticism, Summer/Autumn 1952; George Parker Winship Jr., "This Rough Magic: The Novels of Charles Williams", in The Yale Review, Winter 1950; Geoffrey Parsons, "The Spirit of Charles Williams", in The Atlantic Monthly, November 1949; and Mark R. Hillegas (ed.), Shadows of Imagination (Carbondale and Edwardville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1969).

[3]See Robert McAfee Brown, "Charles Williams: Lay Theologian", in Theology Today, June 1953; Glen Cavaliero, "The Way of the Affirmation: A Study of the Writings of Charles Williams", in Church Quarterly Review, January - March 1956; and George Every, Poetry and Personal Responsibility (London, SCM Press, 1949).

[4]Alice Mary Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, Robert Hale Ltd., 1959).

[5]See particularly Anne Ridler, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1959); Mary McDermott Shideler, The Theology of Romantic Love (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966); and John Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1955).

[6]Nathan Comfort Starr, King Arthur Today (Gainsville, University of Flordia Press, 1954); Charles Moorman, Arthurian Triptych (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960); and David Jones, "The Arthurian Legend", in Tablet, December 25, 1948.

[7]See Charles Moorman, The Precincts of Felicity

Gainsville, University of Florida Press, 1966) and R.J. Reilly, Romantic Religion in the Work of Owen Barfield, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J.R.R. Tolkien (Michigan State University, Ph.D., 1966).

[8]C.S. Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad", in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948).

[9]"Arthurian Torso", p. 1.

II. THE MAN AND HIS WORK

Charles Walter Stansby Williams was born September 20, 1886 in Holloway, a London suburb. [1] His parents, Walter and Mary Williams, were a hard-working, religious couple with literary interests. Walter was employed as foreign correspondent in a London firm and wrote short stores and verse for small magazines; Mary's brother, Charles Wall, published books about antiquities and castles. In 1894, Walter's firm went into liquidation. His failing eye-sight prevented him from getting another job, and the family decided to move to the country. They went to St. Albans where Mary set up a small artists' materials and stationery shop and struggled hard to make ends meet. Charles Williams' early years were shaped by the stability provided by his mother in supporting the family, long walks with his father in which they discussed literature, history, and religion, and the family's complete devotion to the Church of England.

There was little money for Williams' education, but he cleared a way for himself by winning a Junior County Scholarship to St. Albans Grammar School in 1898, and in 1901 a County Scholarship to University College, Gower Street. The scholarship did not cover everything,

and in January 1904 Williams' university career was cut off because his family could not longer afford to keep him there. He soon found work in a bookroom in Holborn and at the same time began attending classes at the Working Man's College.

While he was still in school, Williams wrote continuously. He contributed stories and dramas to a magazine run by one of the boys at St. Albans Grammar School, and his only close friend, George Robinson, says he kept "a sort of running drama, concerning one Prince Rudolph (Ruritania, of course, in the background), Princess Rosalind and a Baron de Bracey (!), a comic character in the Falstaff vein." [2] As Williams grew up he turned more and more to poetry and his religious awareness deepened. He apparently never went through a period in which he rejected his faith or turned away from his love of poetry; the two kept him going though other things failed.

When Williams was twenty-one and reading proofs at Oxford University Press, he had his moment of vision: he met Florence Sarah Conway. He reacted rather like the young Dante of La Vita Nuova, was profoundly shaken, and immediately began writing a series of eighty-four sonnets called The Silver Stair. It was not until

ten years later, 1917, that he married Florence, whom he immediately re-named Michal. Apart from the sonnet sequence, Williams wrote little about these early years. His account of his first sight of Michal and its effect on him is made clear in his sonnet written immediately after their first meeting:

> All breaking and all making of all laws
> Surely from one faith hath looked forth on me,
> Who have not uttered nor my heart hath known
> Desire of woman; surely Life withdraws
> Its burden from me while I walk alone,
> Silent, and musing on a memory. [3]

Michal recounted that moment in an article written shortly after Williams' death:

> For the first five minutes of our meeting I thought him the most silent, withdrawn young man I had ever met. For the next five minutes I thought him the nicest young man I had ever met. For the rest of the evening I thought him the most talkative young man I had ever met, and still the nicest. [4]

To judge from later accounts, that was the only time that anyone ever found Williams either silent or withdrawn.

Fred Page, a friend from Oxford University Press, introduced Williams to Alice and Wilfrid Meynell and through their influence The Silver Stair was published in 1912 in a limited edition of 250 copies. The

war came and went; Williams had been found unfit for active duty because of a lack of nervous co-ordination but most of his friends were fighting and two particularly close friends were killed. His anguish over the war expressed itself in his Poems of Conformity, published in 1917. Neither volume of poetry caused much comment, although Theodore Maynard attacked Poems of Conformity because he thought it proved that Williams was "a Satanist, a phallic worshipper in a Christian dress, making a cunning attack on Christian faith and morality by using Christian dogma and ritual as symbols of lust. . . . " [5] After meeting Williams, Maynard recanted his statements and later ranked Williams third (behind G.K. Chesterton and Alice Maynell) among living poets in Britain. There was little other criticism and only slight praise. [6]

The 1920's were years of settling into life. Williams continued to work at Oxford University Press and to write poetry, articles, and reviews, as well as private masques for the entertainment of those who worked at the Press. His only son, Michael, was born in 1922 and to earn extra money Williams began giving evening lectures. He lectured regularly at the L.C.C. Holloway Literary Institute and was one of the London

County Council's panel of Evening Institute Lecturers. In order to further supplement his income he began to write biographies, book reviews, and the first of his novels. He told Fred Page that he wrote his novels "to pay my son's school fees". [7] Although the novels and "pot boilers", as he called the biographies, often prevented him from getting on with the poetry and it is said that "Williams' one real grievance against his lot was that no one would pay him for writing poetry", there seems to have been little real conflict. [8] C.S. Lewis wrote:

> Everything he ever said implied that his prose fiction, his "pot boilers", and his poetry all went on concurrently; there was no "turning from" one to the other. He never said anything to suggest that he felt his themes "would not fit with ease into tales of modern life." [9]

Williams expressed his ideas as effectively in those things which he wrote primarily for money as in those he wrote because he wanted to. His books reviews often reveal far more about Williams than they do about the book being reviewed.

In spite of financial pressures, a heavy lecturing schedule, and his day to day work at the Press, Williams had three volumes of poetry published in this

decade. Divorce (1920), Windows of Night (1924),and A Myth of Shakespeare (1928) were received with little notice except by Theodore Maynard who said Divorce was the beginning of the period of transition before the coming of Williams' "supreme effort". [10] The poems in these volumes were written in a style that is much closer to the traditionalism of The Silver Stair than it is to Taliessin Through Logres. The rich imagery and complexity of thought that characterizes the later poetry is missing in these early works.

Between 1930 and 1939, Williams produced twenty-one books. In 1930 a collection of lectures was published as Poetry at Present. Williams here restricted himself to those poets alive when the lectures were written (1928 - 1930) and whose poetry "enlarged the boundaries of English verse." [11] The book provides an overview of the poetry of Thomas Hardy, A.E. Houseman, William Butler Yeats, John Masefield, T.S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, and Edmund Blunden, among others. This was followed by six of the seven novels: War in Heaven (1930), Many Dimensions (1931), The Place of the Lion (1931), The Greater Trumps (1932), Shadows of Ecstasy (1933), and Descent into Hell (1937); two other collections of lectures: The English

Poetic Mind (1932) and Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind (1933); two theological books: He Came Down From Heaven (1938) and The Descent of the Dove (1939); the first of the Arthurian cycle: Taliessin Through Logres (1938); and several biographies and plays. The lectures in The English Poetic Mind discuss the moment of schism and contradiction that Williams believed comes to all poets and how the poetry changed as each poet either confronted the crisis and moved forward, or evaded it and slipped back. Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind is concerned with the role that reason or intellect plays when faced with beauty which may or may not be truth. The theological books, along with the later What the Cross Means to Me and The Forgiveness of Sins provide the most thorough explication of what Williams believed. They outline his major thems of affirmation, co-inherence, exchange, and "the city", and are essential guides to the later novels and the Arthurian poems.

During the 1930's Williams worked full time at the Press, continued lecturing, contributed regular articles and reviews to such publications as Time and Tide, Week-End Review, and Theology, and gradually became known to writers outside the Oxford University Press Circle. In

1936 he wrote Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury for the Canterbury Festival. T.S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral had been the 1935 Canterbury Festival play and Williams and Eliot struck up a friendship which continued until Williams' death. [12] The young Dylan Thomas attended Williams' lectures in 1935 and around this time Williams met Dorothy Sayers who was interested in similar theological ideas, wrote detective fiction, religious plays, and was translating Dante. In 1936 C.S. Lewis' The Allegory of Love was published by Oxford University Press; Williams was on the point of writing to Lewis to congratulate him on his book when he received an enthusiastic letter from Lewis about his own The Place of the Lion. A friendship resulted which was strengthened in 1939 when Oxford University Press was evacuated from its London headquarters to Oxford for the duration of the war.

At Oxford, Williams was recognized as a scholar as well as a poet. He lectured at the University, acted as a tutor in St. Hilda's College, and was given an honorary M.A. degree. His skill as a lecturer seems to have depended as much on his own enthusiasm as upon what he said:

> He is an ugly man with rather a cockney voice. But no one ever thinks of this for 5 minutes after he

> has begun speaking. His face becomes almost angelic. Both in public and in private he is of nearly all the men I have met, the one whose address most overflows with love. It is simply irresistible. These young men and women were lapping up what he said about Chastity before the end of the hour. It's a big thing to have done. [13]

Anne Ridler remembers Dylan Thomas saying to him: "Why you come into the room and talk about Keats and Blake as if they were alive." [14] Williams was in demand as a lecturer to church groups, various societies, and other universities. There were plans to give him a permanent appointment at Oxford following his retirement from the Press in 1951.

Williams was a member of a small group of Oxford people called the "Inklings" who met twice a week to read and discuss what each had recently written. J.R.R. Tolkien read parts of his Lord of the Rings to the group, C.S. Lewis read The Problem of Pain and Perelandra (Voyage to Venus), and Williams read All Hallows' Eve. Attempts have been made to prove that these meetings greatly influenced the course of the work being done at this time, but C.S. Lewis minimizes this influence except with regard to himself and Williams:

> Charles Williams certainly influenced me and I perhaps influenced him. But after that I think you

> would draw a blank. No one ever influenced Tolkien--you might as well try to influence a bander-snatch . . . . To be sure, we had a common point of view, but we had it before we met. It was the cause rather than the result of our friendship. . . . [15]

Williams influence on Lewis is definately evident in That Hideous Strength, the third in the science fiction trilogy (Out of the Silent Planet and Perelandra are the first two volumes, but it is difficult to point out specific instances in which Lewis influence Williams.

In his last years Williams produced some of his most important work. An historical study, Witchcraft, appeared in 1941; then came a theological book, The Forgiveness of Sins (1942); a study of Dante, The Figure of Beatrice (1943); more Arthurian poems, The Region of the Summer Stars (1944); the most serious of his novels, All Hallows' Eve (1945); and a major play, The House of the Octopus (1945). Witchcraft is, to quote Williams, "a brief account of the history in Christian times of that perverted way of the soul which we call magic, or (on a lower level) witchcraft, and with the reaction against it." [16] The Forgiveness of Sins is a companion to He Came Down From Heaven; both deal with the fall of man through his desire to see as God and with the subsequent redemption of man through the Atonement.

In her translation of The Divine Comedy, Dorothy Sayers acknowledges her debt to Williams and The Figure of Beatrice with the dedication:

> TO THE DEAD MASTER
> OF THE AFFIRMATIONS
> CHARLES WILLIAMS
>
> E quent' io l'abbia in grado, mentre io vivo
> convien che nella mia lingua si scerna. [17]

The Figure of Beatrice must be considered one of the most important works of Dante scholarship of this century; it examines Dante from an individual perspective and thus opens up new areas for consideration. These later books, along with the earlier He Came Down From Heaven are marked by an increasing awareness of the power of God and a corresponding decrease in the power of darkness. The books of the 1930's, particularly the novels, have about them a sense of blackness and conflict that is absent from these books.

Through his life the main influences on Williams were his wife, his religion, and the Oxford University Press. Michal Williams encouraged her husband in all his pursuits; she collaborated with him on a book of Christian symbolism, listened to him as he read his books in progress, and advised him when she thought he had made a mistake. It is generally acknowledged that the first

chapter of All Hallows' Eve was completely re-written because Michal said it was wrong. The church gave Williams a foundation; his life and all his writings were based on its teachings. Oxford University Press appeared to Williams as a microcosm of order in an increasingly disordered Britain; he carried out its routine to the smallest detail and disliked any deviation from the set course. Order appeared to him as a reflection of the pattern set in Heaven; disorder was a rejection of that pattern.

Charles Williams died suddenly on May 15, 1945. He had written thirty-six books, countless articles, reviews, uncollected poems, and plays, as well as an unfinished prose history of Arthurian romance called The Figure of Arthur. [18] His death was a shock to all who knew him, particularly to C.S. Lewis who wrote:

> I also have become much acquainted with grief now through the death of my great friend Charles Williams, my friend of friends, the comforter of all our little set, the most angelic man. The odd thing is that his death has made my faith stronger than it was a week ago. And I find that all that talk about "feeling that he is closer to us than before" isn't just talk. It's just what it does feel like. . . . [19]

Even in death his presence was felt by those who knew him. These who did not know him, and have become familiar with

him only through his books and through the comments of his friends, can only guess at the power of the man.

NOTES

[1]Most of the biographical material in this chapter is from Alice Mary Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, Robert Hale Ltd., 1959). I will only annotate direct quotations from Hadfield and material from other sources.

[2]Ibid., p. 19.

[3]Charles Williams, The Silver Stair, as quoted in An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 31.

[4]Michal Williams, "As I Remember Charles Williams", in Episcopal Churchnews, April 12, 1953, p. 13.

[5]An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 47.

[6]Theodore Maynard, Our Best Poets (London, Bretano's Ltd., 1924), p. x.

[7]An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 76.

[8]Anne Ridler, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. xi.

[9]C.S. Lewis, letter to Charles Moorman, October 2, 1952, in W.H. Lewis (ed.), Letters of C.S. Lewis (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), p. 244.

[10]Our Best Poets, p. 41.

[11]Charles Williams, Poetry at Present (1930, rpt. Freeport, Books for Libraries Press, 1969), p. vii.

[12]T.S. Eliot, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, All Hallows' Eve (New York, The Noonday Press, 1969), p. x.

[13]C.S. Lewis, letter to Dom Bede Griffiths, December 21, 1941, in Letters of C.S. Lewis, p. 196.

[14]"Introduction" to The Image of the City and Other Essays, p. xx.

[15]C.S. Lewis, letter to Charles Moorman, May 15, 1959, in Letters of C.S. Lewis, p. 287.

[16]Charles Williams, Witchcraft (1941, rpt. New York, Meridian Books, 1969), p. 9.

[17]Sayers later translates this as "I am so grateful, that while I breathe air / My tongue shall speak the thanks which are your due." Dante, Hell (trans. Dorothy L. Sayers, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1949), XV. 86-87.

[18]This is found in C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948).

[19]C.S. Lewis, letter to "a lady", May 20, 1945, in Letters of C.S. Lewis, p. 206.

III. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ARTHURIAN POEMS

In any discussion of Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars it is important to determine first, who Taliessin is, and second, why Williams chose Taliessin and the Arthurian material. Williams introduces Taliessin in "The Calling of Taliessin":

> By some it was said that Taliessin
> was a child of Henwg the saint, bred in Caerleon,
> and thence come, miracle-commissioned; by some
> that he sprang from the bards, the ancient guards of
> the cauldron
> called of Ceridwen; she goddes or priestess,
> Tydeg Voel's wife, whose life was legend,
> and he if her son then so by magic: none
> knew; no clue he showed when he rode down the Wye
> coracle-cradled, and at the weir was seen
> by Elphin the son of Gwyddno and drawn to shore.
> The men with Elphin then could only stare
> at the bright forehead of the lonely river-fugitive
> the child coming from the wild Druid wood. [1]

The beginnings of Taliessin and thus the beginnings of poetry are shrouded in mystery. No one is certain where Taliessin comes from; D.W. Nash [2] offers six versions of the legend of Taliessin, including the one used by Williams, which is from The Mabinogion. Thomas Love Peacock also uses the story from The Mabinogion in his tale, The Misfortunes of Elphin. He describes the arrival of

Taliessin:

> The summer night was still and bright,
> The summer moon was large and clear,
> The frail bark, on the springtide's height,
> Was floated into Elphin's weir.
> The baby in his arms he raised;
> His lovely spouse stood by, and gazed,
> And, blessing it with gentle vow,
> Cried "TALIESIN!" "Radiant Brow!" [3]

According to Peacock this is the song of his beginnings that Taliessin [4] sang to the court of King Arthur at the Bardic Congress and Arthur was so pleased that he awarded him the highest honours and made him Chief Bard.

The legends agree that Taliessin (which does mean "radiant brow") was a most notable bard. The bards seem to have been possessors of all knowledge:

> In early-medieval Wales the Bards were a class by themselves--graduates in a particular art. To obtain admission into the ranks of this bardic hierarchy the candidate had to undergo a strict and definite literary training: he had to prove himself master of certain traditional lore. [5]

Taliessin is described as having been:

> a man who ranked among the principal wise men of the Cymric nation; and Taliesin, Chief of the Bards, was the highest of the most exalted class, either in literature, wisdom, the science of vocal song, or any other attainment, whether sacred or profane. [6]

Williams' Taliessin follows in this tradition; he is a

possessor of wisdom, both Druidic and Christian, and a maker of song.

Like the Taliessin of myth, Williams' Taliessin bursts into song the moment Elphin rescues him from the river. "The Calling of Taliessin" explains how the young poet grew and practised his art:

> In Elphin's house he grew and practised verse;
> striving in his young body with the double living
> of the breath in the lung and the sung breath in the
> brain,
> the growing and the knowing and the union of both in
> the showing,
> the triune union in each line of verse,

and:

> Yet then his heart, ears, and eyes were wise
> from Druid secrets in the twilight and the sun-dawn;
> his hearing caught each smallest singular cry
> of bird and beast; almost he talked their talk;
> his sight followed each farthest flight, each small
> insect-dance-pattern in the air; he knew
> correspondence and the law of similitudes; he had
> seen the cauldron
> of poetry and plenty. . . .

Taliessin knows poetry and all Druidic lore but it is not enough. He hears of Christianity and all that he knows grows pale and worthless without it:

> Dim and far came the myth to Taliessin
> over the dark rim of the southern sea.
> Poor, goetic or theurgic, the former spells
> seemed beside the promise of greater formulae;

> poor--control of compact--the personal mastery,
> the act of magic, or the strain of ancient verse
> beside the thickening dreams of the impersonal Empire
> and the moulded themes of the Empire; and they all
> from Gaul to Jerusalem enfolded in the infinite hall
> of the Sacred Emperor at operative Byzantium.
>
> ("The Calling of Taliessin")

Here the cycle begins; we see Taliessin knowing as much as poetry and paganism can teach him and realizing that he must know more. As the pagan Virgil (poetry) cannot save Dante without Beatrice (religion), so the pagan Taliessin cannot help set up the kingdom without Byzantium and the Emperor.

Williams uses Taliessin as a persona. Taliessin becomes an ideal, the poet who has known God and who, through his poetry, can help to show others the way. He takes us through Logres, shows us the building of the kingdom, the problems that beset it, and the eventual failure of the kingdom with the fight between Arthur and Mordred. Throughout it all Taliessin maintains his integrity; he is a poet of the Affirmative Way, by his example others finds the way to God and at the end he is one of the few survivors of the glory that was Camelot.

Taliessin is also, in a sense, poetry. His beginnings are obscure and it is not known who he really is. He answers Elphin's questions with a riddle:

My heritage is all men's; only my age is my own.
I am a wonder whose origin is not known.
I carried in battle a banner before Lleon of Lochlin,
and held in the sleeping-chamber a mirror for his queen.
I am more than the visions of all men and my own vision,
And my true region is the summer stars.
I suffered in dreams derision for the son of a virgin,
yet I stood in the Galaxy at the throne of the Distributor
and flew over the waves when the world was in flood.
I rose to the third heaven with her of the penitence
and was tangled through every sense by the hazel bush;
I was mangled for a night and a day by black swine,
yet my true region is the summer stars.
I was thrall to Ceridwen and free in the manager of an ass.
Before speech came to pass, I was full of the danger of loquacity.
It is a doubt if my body is flesh or fish,
therefore no woman will ever wish to bed me
and no man make true love without me.

("The Calling of Taliessin")

C.S. Lewis says that although these answers are adapted from The Mabinogion, they state Williams' own myth of the birth of poetic genius:

> The passage is thus to be read with a kind of double vision; with one eye on the Welsh legends about Ceridwen and her cauldron and the other on the cosmic history of the Heavenly Muse--a wonder whose origin is unknown, whose native region is the summer stars, who was a spectator of creation, and has shared (beyond or before time) in the travail of the Redemption. At the close we descend sharply to the poet, the individual human vehicle of the Muse. He is in this world an oddity; there is something about him too numinous for ordinary human flesh. . . . [7]

Robert Graves devotes The White Goddess to proving "that

the language of poetic myth anciently current in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe was a magical language bound up with popular religious ceremonies in honour of the Moon-goddess, or Muse. . . ." [8] He deals extensively with The Mabinogion's "Hanes Taliesin", the poem containing Taliessin's riddling answer, and concludes that it gives the letters of a secret bardic alpahbet providing clues to the origins of poetry. In the Williams' poems, Taliessin, as "the wonder whose origin is not known", is as elusive as the Muse. He is presented as the king's poet, but he is much more than that--he has been by Byzantium, he is one of the forces (along with Merlin and Brisen) charged with creating the kingdom. It is in this sense, as one of the creators of the kingdom, that he can be most easily seen as poetry, while at the same time he remains the poet Taliessin.

Williams uses Taliessin and the Arthurian myth as vehicles for his statement. It cannot be determined if the statement in part grew out of the myth, or if the myth was sought out to carry the statement. Charles Moorman indicates a belief in the second idea: "My contention, then is this: the metaphor of contemporary England could not hold Williams' theme; the metaphor of Arthurian Logres could. Ergo, Taliessin goes through Logres rather than

London." [9] C.S. Lewis supports the idea that statement and myth grew together in Williams' mind:

> There is no question here of a modern artist approaching the old material as a quarry from which he can chip what he pleases, responsible only to his own modern art. It is more a "dove-like brooding", a watching and waiting as if he watched a living thing, now and then putting out a cautious finger to disentangle two tendrils or to train one a little further towards the support which it had already almost reached, but for the most part simply waiting. [10]

Lewis' theory would seem to be supported by Anne Ridler's suggestion that the Arthurian poems were begun early in the nineteen twenties. [11] I would contend that Williams, with a knowledge of Malory dating back to childhood walks with his father and with the extensive knowledge exhibited in "The Figure of Arthur", again begun in the nineteen twenties, would have found his statement of the Affirmative Way growing naturally with the Arthurian myth. The myth, in one form or another, contains almost everything that Williams needed for his statement--the Grail is there, the attempt to set up a perfect secular kingdom, Galahad, Bors, Percivale, Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, and Morgause, the seeds of salvation and the seeds of destruction; all that was needed was for Williams to refashion the elements of the myth that were central to him.

The difficulties involved in studying Taliessin

Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars are many. Williams constantly re-wrote his poetry, changing scene, changing character, changing events, and in one case interchanging the names Dindrane and Blanchefleur with little indication that they refer to the same person. Williams worked on the poems in the cycle for more than twenty years, he wrote more than twice as much material as finally appears, and he re-worked everything countless times. Anne Ridler suggests that this created two problems for the reader:

> First, that the cycle does not achieve entire unity of style: the old has not always been quite transformed into the new. . . . Second: while the tightening of the form in the new versions was all to the good, the poet came to presuppose a certain knowledge in the reader which has nowhere been conveyed, and to leave out some necessary links in the story, simply because he had given them once. For in the original cycle some essential narrative had been included--as for instance, Taliessin's account of the Table and of the striking of the Dolorous Blow in his "Letter to the Princess of Byzantium". [12]

In addition to the problem caused by constant revision, it should be noted that these poems form only part of a long, unfinished cycle based on the Arthurian legend. Since the cycle is not complete, many of the individual poems seem to point to events and conclusions which do not appear.

It is not possible to outline what Williams planned to do in his Arthurian poems. Anne Ridler has a

notebook which gives extensive and contradictory outlines plus two lists of titles for further poems, contradictory both in subject and in chronology. [13] The Figure of Arthur, Williams' prose history of the Arthurian material is unfinished and ends just as Williams was getting into what he planned to do with the myth. We can only deal with what is actually in Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars, speculation about what he might have done can add little to the poems which were published.

Before proceeding to a brief outline of some of the more important poems in the cycle, it is interesting to note how Williams got his titles. Taliessin Through Logres was originally to have been called "The Advent of Galahad" but was changed in 1935. [14] Williams wrote of the final title: "I love that title; why? O it sounds romantic and vague and is almost classically exact." [15] The Region of the Summer Stars which was to have been called "Jupiter over Carbonek" [16] comes from the "Hanes Taliesin":

> Primary chief bard am I to Elphin,
> And my original country is the region of the summer stars; [17]

This is the song of Taliessin and it should be noted that

most of the poems in The Region of the Summer Stars are more directly concerned with Taliessin as subject than are the poems in the other volume.

The poems in Taliessin Through Logres seem to move in some sort of rational order. They do not follow a definite route giving every detail of a complex story, but a story can be gleaned by reading the poems carefully in the order in which they appear. With the introduction of The Region of the Summer Stars confusion arises--where do these poems fit in? They are not a continuation of the earlier poems, they seem to be an expansion of them. Williams tells us that they "generally, are incidental to the main theme", [18] A.M. Hadfield says that they are "concerned with a totally different geography from that of the struggling Empire", [19] and Anne Ridler says that they were never meant to be "more than Work in Progress." [20] But that does not help us with the poems unless we are to treat them as Hadfield suggests as two totally separate works. I would reject that approach because they are not concerned with different geographies; both deal with the founding of Arthur's kingdom, its small successes, and eventual failure because of human frailty. The Summer Stars poems are more complex and are richer in imagery than those in Taliessin Through Logres and contain much

information that adds to the understanding and enjoyment of the earlier poems. C.S. Lewis, with apologies for not knowing how Williams would have arranged them had he lived to complete the cycle, has established what he takes to be their chronological order. In my brief exposition of the poems I will follow Lewis' ordering. I think that it is as accurate as can be determined from the poems themselves and since Lewis had access to Williams' notebooks and papers and had discussed some of the poems with him, it is likely that the ordering is correct as far as the cycle was completed. Rather than detail Lewis' chronology here, I have outlined it in Appendix I.

When we left Taliessin he had just heard faint rumours about Christianity. Still in "The Calling of Taliessin" he seeks out those rumours. His way lies "Between the anarchy of yet unmade Logres / and the darkness of secret-swayed Broceliande". Logres is Arthur's kingdom, yet to be built; Broceliande is the dark wood of making and unmaking. Williams describes it as "somewhere round Cornwall and Devon, to the west of Logres. It is regarded both as a forest and as a sea--a seawood. . . . Mystically it is the 'making' of things." [21] It is also Dante's "selva oscura", for once one has been in any part of it he cannot again be the same. Those who enter "come rarely

again with brain unravished." In these poems it is at once a physical place and a state of mind, that state found when one steps outside the ordinary mode of consciousness.

As he passes near the forest Taliessin sees two shapes approaching him. Merlin and Brisen tell him that they are come "to build, as is willed, Logres, and in Logres a throne / like that other of Carbonek, of King Pelles in Broceliande." Taliessin is puzzled when Merlin tells him that they will meet again and that they will work together so that "the Empire and Broceliande shall meet in Logres." He sleeps and in a vision sees Merlin and Brisen rise and begin the ritual that will end in the building of Logres:

> The abstract gaze of Merlin overlooked
> his sister, as time space; the elementals became
> the magical continuum, where Merlin saw the place
> to prepare, and himself to face the preparation.
> He lifted the five times cross-incised rod
> and began incantation; in the tongue of Broceliande
> adjuring all the primal atoms of earth
> to shape the borders of Logres, to the dispensation
> of Carbonek to Caerleon, of Caerleon to Camelot to
> the union
> of King Pelles and King Arthur, to the sea-coming of
> Sarras
> which beneath the Throne is shown in the mosaics of
> Byzantium.

Taliessin sees all that is to come in Logres but he cannot understand it; he does not know if he has had a dream

or a vision or a nightmare.

We leave Taliessin on his road by Byzantium and go with Merlin in "The Calling of Arthur". Merlin meets Arthur in the dead of winter in the chaos of Logres. The pagan rulers of the land, symbolized by King Cradlemas, are at war. It is Eliot's wasteland only it is a land of deadly cold:

> The waste of snow covers the waste of thorn;
> on the waste of hovels snow falls from a dreary sky;
> mallet and scythe are silent; the children die.

Into this frozen landscape come Arthur and Merlin and it becomes spring, King Cradlemas is overthrown, and "Camelot grew."

While Camelot is growing, Taliessin is at Byzantium seeing "The Vision of the Empire". In his notes Williams says:

> The Empire then is (a) all Creation--with logothetes and what not as angels and such-- (b) Unfallen Man; (c) a proper social order; (d) the true physical body. . . . The Empire is the pattern; Logres the experiment. The Emperor is God-in-operation or God-as-known-by-man; (ii) Fate; (iii) operative force--as and according to the person concerned, but mostly here the God relation. [22]

The Empire is also "the city" and as such will be discussed in greater depth in a later chapter.

Taliessin sees the glory of God. He sees "the

scheme of Logres, the theme of the design of the Empire," all the beauty and good that is to be Logres and the world. Then suddenly the scene darkens:

> Why moves the Pope in the marches of the Empire?
> why do the golden palaces pale to the Papal
> vesture, flesh and bone of reparation?
> what was the crossing of the will of the Emperor?

Taliessin's vision shows him the Fall, he sees the Adam desiring to see as God:

> Does not God vision the principles at war?
> Let us grow to the height of God and the Emperor:
> Let us gaze, son of man, on the Acts in contention.

Then he sees Hell where "a headless figure walks in a crimson cope." The vision of the Fall is a portend to the end of Logres, because in a sense, the Fall is both responsible for, and repeats itself in, the failure of Logres.

Taliessin has now learned enough to go to Logres, taking with him the vision of the Empire and its order which must be imposed upon the chaos. Merlin and Arthur have begun to build the kingdom, but it is Taliessin, as the instrument of the Emperor, who is needed to bring life and order to Logres.

On his arrival in Logres Taliessin is made king's poet and also his "captain of horse in the wars." "Mount Badon" recounts the most decisive battle in the establish-

ment of the kingdom, with Taliessin responsible for the victory. The pagan hordes attack randomly; they are strong and ruthless, but they cannot overcome "the civilized single command." As Taliessin holds his troops back until the moment when they can best be used, he has a vision of Virgil subduing the chaos of language. That vision shows him where to strike in the battle and as a result the battle is won by Arthur's side:

> The tor of Baden heard the analytical word;
> the grand art mastered the thudding hammer of Thor,
> and the heart of our lord Taliessin determined the war.

This is an appearance of "the city":

> Virgil and Taliessin are in a sense doing the same thing; both are about to impose the city on chaos--Virgil to impose it on the chaos of thought and language by a great line of verse, Taliessin to impose it on the chaos of battle by a charge. [23]

The kingdom is established; what remains is the day to day working out of the pattern and it is here that the difficulty lies.

In the first poem of the established kingdom, "The Crowning of Arthur", we are given a scene of great jubilation--the pagans are overcome and all looks glorious for the kingdom. But away from the revelry Merlin foresees the seeds of the destruction of Logres: "Presaging intel-

ligence of time climbed, / Merlin climbed. . . ." He sees Morgause and Lamorack, "on a fess of argent rode a red moon," he sees Guinevere first entangled in Lancelot's mind, and he sees Arthur's fatal flaw of vanity, "the king made for the kingdom, or the kingdom made for the king?" Taliessin sees too: "At the door of the gloom sparks die and revive; / the spark of Logres fades, glows, fades. / It is the first watch. . . ."

In "Taliessin's Song of the Unicorn" we see one of the brief moments in the golden age of Logres when the poet is free to practise his art without having to worry about affairs of state. The unicorn is the poet and Taliessin explains the rule of virginity for genius and he also explains the exceptions to that rule. The unicorn will come "to a girl's crooked finger of the sharp smell / of her clear flesh--but to her no good." The poet tends to exploit love for his art and the woman woman will then turn to an ordinary man; it is as he states in "The Calling of Taliessin", "no woman will ever wish to bed me." The exception to this rule is the rare person who will endure all that the poet requires:

> yet if any, having the cunning to call the grand beast,
> the animal which is but a shade till it starts to run,
>
> . . . .

> . . . O she
> translucent, planted with virtues, lit by throes,
> should be called the Mother of the Unicorn's voice,
> men see
> her with awe. . . .

Still it is better if this relationship, as in the case of Dante and Beatrice, remains intellectual. Taliessin is singing of his own destiny.

"Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande" describes a different kind of love between a man and a woman. This poem will be examined at greater length later, but for the sake of continuity a brief outline will be given now. Bors is one of Arthur's lieutenants and Elayne is the woman he loves. He realizes he loves her when Taliessin sings of Broceliande: "his song meant all things to all men, and you to me." One his return to her, Bors gives her a fish. The fish is love, it is Christ, and it is also probably the salmon of wisdom. [24] They cannot define the fish:

> None but a zany, none but earth's worst fool,
> could suppose he knows; no name was thrown hence;
> some say a twy-nature only can utter the cry
>
> (what? how?) to bring it from the stirred stream,
> and if--inhumanly flashing a sudden scale,
> aboriginally shaking the aboriginal main.

They can only find out by becoming a twy-nature, that is by marrying. Elayne takes the fish and their experiment

is begun.

Still during the golden age of Logres we find "Taliessin in the School of the Poets". He sings a cryptic song of the glory of "the city" and of the physical body, but the apprentice poets do not understand. He realizes their bewilderment and explains "best they fathom the blossom / who fly the porphyry stair." That is, the glory and the unity cannot be understood until they have found God. In the Byzantine Empire body and spirit are one:

> Each moment there is the midmost
> of the whole massive load;
> impulse a grace and wonder a will,
> love, desert, and sight direction,
> whence the Acts of Identity issue
> in the Pandects and the Code. . . .

Everything is united and at one in the Emperor, but it is not so in Logres where "the nuts of the uncut hazel fall / down the cut hazel's way." There is division and contrast in Logres and Taliessin can but sing of the way of union of the Emperor.

"Taliessin on the Death of Virgil" shows the terror that comes upon one with the loss of the image. Virgil's vision of an idea city, Rome, is lost and Virgil falls "from the edge of the world." Poetry cannot save

him:

> The hexameter's fullness now could find no ground;
> his mind, dizzily replete with the meaningless sweet
> sound,
> could found no Rome there on the joys of a noise.

He is a pagan so he has only poetry; without religion the image is lost and there can be no redemption. "Others he saved; himself he could not save." Like Christ, Virgil cannot rescue himself, he remains to be rescued by those generations of poets who hear his voice:

> In that hour they came; more and fast, they sped
> to their dead master; they sought him to save
> from the spectral grave and the endless falling,
> who had heard, for their own instruction, the sound
> of his calling.
> There was intervention, suspension, the net of their
> loves.

The co-inherence of all poets in all times, past, present, and future rescues Virgil. This is the great example of co-inherence and exchange in the Arthurian poems and as such will be discussed extensively in the chapter on love.

Another pagan, Palomides, is introduced in "The Coming of Palomides". He is a Muslum and is thus firmly rooted in the doctrine of Islam--repudiation of the Incarnation plus a sharp division between the flesh and the spirit. Palomides too loses his vision: he has fallen in

love with Iseult but he cannot reconcile his vision with what he later sees to be the reality. There are two solutions to his love for Iseult: it can either be consummated in the flesh (but this is impossible because she sits between Tristram and Mark), or it can be translated into the type of love that Dante had for Beatrice. This last option is the only one really open to Palomides but he is not ready for this kind of experience so the vision turns sour:

> In the summer house of the Cornish king
> suddenly I ceased to sing.
> Down the arm of the queen Iseult
> quivered and darkened an angry bolt;
> and, as it passed, away and through
> and above her hand the sign withdrew.
> Fiery, small, and far aloof,
> a tangled star in the cedar roof,
> it hurt; division stretched between
> the queen's identity and the queen.
> Relation vanished, though beauty stayed.

Palomides flees the fallen image of the queen and hears:

> . . . the squeak of the questing beast,
> where it scratched itself in the blank between
> the queen's substance and the queen.

He has embraced his quest.

A vision of a different kind is seen in "Lamorack and the Queen Morgause of Orkney". Lamorack has chosen Morgause for his image; he does not like her, yet he

loves her and is fascinated by her evil: "Her hand discharged catastrophe; I was thrown / before it. . . ." In this poem are seen all the evils of Logres:

> Balin had Balan's face and Morgause her brother's.
> Did you not know the blow that darkened each from others?
>
> Balin and Balan fell by mistaken impious hate.
> Arthur tossed loves with a woman and split his fate.

Here are the specific reasons for the failure of Logres: Balin and Balan are responsible for the Dolorous Blow, in Malory the reason for the fall, and Arthur and Morgause produce Mordred:

> The eyes of the queen Morgause were a dark cavern;
> there a crowned man without eyes came to a carved tavern
>
> . . . .
>
> The shape of a blind woman under the shape of a blind man:
> over them, half-formed, the cipher of the Great Ban,
>
> . . . .
>
> The child lies unborn in the queen's womb;
> unformed in his brain is the web of all our doom
> as unformed in the minds of all the great lords
> lies the image of the split Table and of surreptitious swords.

The blindness of Arthur and Morgause is significant because it indicates a refusal to acknowledge the Emperor. Dante first sees the light of God reflected in the eyes of

Beatrice.[25] Williams says of this moment: "All things now are known in God, the eyes of the Image continue to light the Way, which in its turn confirms and deepens the beauty of the eyes of the Image. . . ."[26] Arthur and Morgause are willfully blind, in them nothing is known, and from their union can come nothing but destruction.

Bors and Elayne are used in "Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins" to show a small part of the ordinary life of the kingdom. This is another poem of exchange; everything lives from something not itself--Bors from Elayne, "I am come again / to live from the founts and fields of your hands" and we from Christ and from each other. Arthur has set up his mint so that coins can be a convenient medium of exchange. Kay, the king's steward, is pleased because now "The poor have choice of purchase, the rich of rents, / and events move now in a smoother control." Taliessin has doubts:

> Sir, if you made verse you would doubt symbols.
> I am afraid of the little loose dragons.
> When the means are autonomous, they are deadly; when words
> escape from verse they hurry to rape souls;
> when sensation slips from intellect, expect the tyrant.

Taliessin is aware of the power of symbols and knows how easily imaging functions can escape from the reality of that which they image. If the coins become autonomous

they lose all value as mediums of exchange. Bors and Elayne, the ordinary people, cannot decide who is right: "What without coinage or with coinage can be saved?"

In the increasing ruin of Logres something else is springing up. It begins in "The Star of Percivale" when a slave girl hears Percivale and Taliessin each singing. Taliessin's song wakens something in her:

> Languid, the soul of a maid, at service in the hall,
> heard, rose, ran fleetly to fall at his feet.
>
> Soft there, quiescent in adoration, it sang:
> Lord, art thou he that cometh? take me for thine.

The king's poet tells her that he is not to be worshipped, Christ is to be worshipped. This is the beginning of Taliessin's household, the success that comes out of the failure of Logres.

The same slave girl is the focus of the next poem, "The Ascent of the Spear". She has relapsed and become involved in a brawl in the kitchen; her soul is hardened and when Taliessin approaches she won't look at him. He talks to her and explains that not to ask for forgiveness is worse than the original sin. This is a poem of choice: the girl can choose either to ask for forgiveness, or not, she can accept Taliessin's grace and be released from the stocks, or not. She asks for forgive-

ness and accepts grace and is several steps further along the way to knowledge of the Emperor.

In "The Sister of Percivale", Taliessin meets Dindrane (or Blanchefleur as she is called in this poem) the sister of both Percivale and Lamorack. Taliessin is meditating upon a line when Dindrane appears "from the western gate." It should be noted that the summer stars are in the west [27] and that Percivale's star appears beyond "the magical western door" ("The Star of Percivale"). Sarras, the holy city, is also to the west of Logres. Taliessin is stricken by the sight of Dindrane, much as the young Dante was stricken by the sight of Beatrice in The Vita Nuova. He falls into a trance when he gazes of Dindrane's face and only comes out of it when chided by Percivale.

After this meeting the king's poet's household begins to grow:

> About this time there grew, throughout Logres,
> a new comapny, as (earlier) in Tabennisi
> or (later) on Monte Cassino or in Cappadocia
> a few found themselves in common; but this, less--
> being purposed only to profess a certain pointing.
> It spread first from the household of the king's poet;
> it was known by no name, least his own,
> who hardly himself knew how it was grown.
>
> ("The Founding of the Company")

They are brought together by a common love, any can join, "having no decision, no vote or admission, / but for the single note that any soul / took of its own election of the Way. . . ." Dindrane is a member of the company, as are the slave girl, Percivale, Dinadan the skeptic, Dubric the archbishop, and others, both lords and commoners.

In "Taliessin in the Rose Garden" we see one more element in the destruction of Logres. That element is the behaviour of Guinevere, the queen. Taliessin first sees Guinevere, Dindrane, and a slave girl, three kinds of women whom he briefly sees as three-in-one. Broceliande, the forest of making, deepens his vision and in the ruby on Guinevere's finger Taliessin sees that too much unrestrained passion (and wrongly directed love) "loosed a secular war to expand through the land / and again the shore of Logres." He sees "the Empire dark with the incoherence of the houses." There is chaos everywhere as the unity is split by passion. Guinevere ignores Taliessin's plea that she provide a proper example:

> Let the queen's majesty, the femine headship of Logres,
> deign to exhibit the glory to the women of Logres;
> each to one vision, but the queen for all.
> Bring to a flash of seeing the woman in the world's base.

She will not accept the responsibility that a queen must

bear, and as she leaves the garden she says to Taliessin,

> with the little scorn that becomes a queen of Logres:
> "Has my lord dallied with poetry among the roses?"

This statement is indicative of Guinevere's failing; she will only be the trite beautiful queen, a plaything for both Arthur and Lancelot. Her sin, of course, is that she love Lancelot, when, because she is married to Arthur and because she is queen, she should love him. She puts her own selfish pleasures before the good of the kingdom and as a result is partly responsible for its downfall.

As a contrast to Guinevere there is Dindrane. Percivale's sister, "who in a year and a day had grown dear / to the king's poet's household. . . ." is giving up herself to enter a convent. In "The Departure of Dindrane" we see, through the eyes of a slave, the moment of Dindrane's leaving of Taliessin. The slave is facing a similar moment of decision; she has served her seven years in Taliessin's household and can be given a sum of money for a dowery and remain in Logres, be given a sum of money and returned to her homeland, or return to servitude. The decision once made cannot be reversed. The girl sees Dindrane giving up everything for her lord the Emperor and realizes that:

> servitude and freedom were one and interchangeable.
> Servitude is a will that obeys and imaged law;
> freedom an unimaged--or makes choice of images.

Voluntary servitude becomes a rejection, a losing of the self for the good of the whole. The girl pledges herself to her lord:

> . . . "I will swear to what I serve,
> the household and its future; may God pluck it fair;
> for I give my heart to the luck of the hallows. . . ."

The girl has made her choice and has chosen to follow Taliessin on the path to the Emperor.

In "The Queen's Servant", the slave girl realizes the true meaning of voluntary servitude: "So. / freedom I see is the final task of servitude." The Lord only gives his gifts when we are empty enough to receive them. This slave girl has given up everything for her lord, and now her lord, Taliessin, clothes her in cloth of mystical roses and wool and sends her forth to be a free maiden to the queen.

A long poem, "The Son of Lancelot", marks the turning point in Williams' Arthurian cycle. From this moment (the birth of Galahad) on, everything rushes towards its inevitable conclusion. Galahad, Percivale, and Bors achieve the Grail, Taliessin's company survives as a

remnant of "the city", and the kingdom is destroyed through jealousy and schism. Up to this time there has been a sense of building; the kingdom was created, there was a brief golden age, and even though the events which caused the failure have happened, and that failure has been foretold, it is still sometime in the future. With this poem the sense of building peaks, and everything which has yet to happen begins to happen as the fulfilling of a pattern already clearly presented.

The moment of Galahad's birth opens the poem, but instead of considering that birth right away, we see Merlin creating three spheres of vision. In the first he views Logres as it is at that instant:

> sprinkled by the red glow of brute famine
> in the packed eyes of forest-emerging wolves,
> heaped fires in villages, torches in towns,
> lit for safety; flat, frozen, trapped. . . .

It is a return to the frozen wasteland, the pagan chaos before the coming of Arthur. The second sphere shows him:

> . . . the king
> dreaming of a red Grail in an ivory Logres
> set for wonder, and himself Byzantium's rival
> for men's thuribled and throated worship. . . .

This vision is symbolic of the cause of the condition of Logres; it is a picture of the king setting himself up as

more important than the Emperor. In the third sphere, Venus, the sphere of love, we see the preparations for the event which will transmute the disaster that is Logres into a partial success. In this sphere Merlin's vision is blessed with "the feeling intellect, the prime and vital principle." The term "feeling intellect" is used by Wordsworth in the last book of The Prelude to denote the expression of mind which is the best nature of man. Williams re-defines this as "the achievement of an intellect so swiftly capable of order its emotions that it may itself be said to 'feel'. It knows, and feels as it knows." [28] This is an achievement of love, and at the moment of its achievement, Galahad is born.

The conception of Galahad comes as the result of a magic potion which Brisen, Merlin's sister gives to Lancelot. Lancelot thinks he is with Guinevere but instead he lies with Helayne, daughter of Pelles the Wounded King, and Princess of the Grail. The basis of this story is in Malory but in his notes Williams explains why Galahad must be born of Lancelot:

> The Destined Knight is born of Lancelot who is (a) eighth in succession from Christ (8 is the number of the Christhood), and of his blood; (b) the strongest and greatest knight alive (person as distinguished from office); (c) much more than Arthur concerned

> with love as a thing of dolour and labour and vision. (Arthur at first just thinks Guinevere would be a convenient adjunct of his royalty.) Lancelot is then brought to Helayne. [29]

When Lancelot realizes he has been unfaithful to Guinevere his mind snaps:

> In the morning he saw; he sprang from the tall windows; he ran into a delirium of lycanthropy; he grew backward all summer, laired in the heavy wood.

He has regressed into a wolf, a sly preying beast who haunts the frozen wasteland of Logres, waiting for Galahad, his son, to be born.

The child is born and Merlin sees "over the Empire the lucid flash of all flesh, / shining white on the sullen white of the snow." Guinevere sees Lancelot "walking, a grotesque back, the opposite of a face / looking backward like a face. . . ." The rest see the wolf who "dragged his body nearer; he was hungry for his son." Each sees an element of the truth: Merlin sees the reality in the light of knowledge of the Emperor, Guinevere sees her own hell, the people see the outward face.

Lancelot is not allowed to get his son; Merlin turns into a white wolf (as opposed to Lancelot who is grey and ravening), in order to rescue Galahad and speed him to Almbesbury where he is to be looked after by

Dindrane. It is significant that Merlin turns himself into a wolf. He:

> becomes wolf of his own will and Lancelot against his will and beyond his understanding. Lancelot is the beast "that had lost the man's mind": Merlin is the man's mind using and controlling the beast's speed and strength. [30]

After his encounter with Merlin, Lancelot again becomes a man, but a wasted one, who lies in Carbonek "to be by Easter healed and horsed for Logres."

To cover the years between Galahad's birth and his coming of age we have only one poem: "Palomides Before His Christening". This poem gives a sense of long years of cold and nothingness. It covers all the time of the glory of Logres but it is the time as seen by Palomides for whom there has been no glory. Palomides says:

> I determined, after I saw Iseult's arm,
> to be someone, to trap the questing beast
> that slid into Logres out of Broceliande
> through the blank between the queen's meaning and the queen.
>
> Having that honour I would consent to be christened,
> I would come then to the Table on my own terms,
> bringing a capture by which Christendom might profit,
> which Pelles the wounded master could not recover.

Everything goes wrong, of course; Palomides does not understand that no one can come to the Table on his own terms.

He must, like the slave girl, give everything up, including his own vanity, before he can receive from the Lord.

After years of searching for the questing beast Palomides hides in a cave, and after years of hiding he realizes that everything, including his own ambition is nothing and he emerges from the cave:

> The sky had turned round; I could not think
> why I should not be christened in the city of astrologers.
> It was true I should look a fool before everyone;
> why not look a fool before everyone?

Dinadan had promised to stand godfather should Palomides ever wish to be christened so Palomides sets out for Caerleon, Dinadan, and Christianity.

In Malory, Palomides is christened on the day of Galahad's arrival at Caerleon. In Williams' cycle this would also seem to be the case for the action of the poem, "The Coming of Galahad" takes place in the evening. We are given little of the pomp and ceremony of Galahad's arrival; instead we see the scullery and the latrines, and Taliessin talking with Morgause's son Gareth, who is, "for cause of obedience set to the worst work", and a slave girl. They speak of choice, choice of good, which is choice of the way to the grace of God. The girl asks "yet has all food one taste? / felicity does not alter?" Taliessin

answers "Felicity alters from its centre. . . ." That is, that God gives His grace to whom He will, in the way that He will, yet it is up to each person to choose the Way to find the grace.

Gareth and the girl also ask Taliessin why the "Great Ban" has been lifted, why Galahad is allowed to see the Grail. Taliessin explains this in terms of "a double dance of a stone and a shell, / and the glittering sterile smile of the sea that pursues." This image is from Wordsworth's Prelude, the stone is geometry, the shell is poetry, and the sea is the flood of destruction. The explanation is:

> "To-day
> the stone was fitted to the shell," the king's poet said;
> "when my lord Sir Lancelot's son sat in the perilous sell,
> if he be Sir Lancelot's; in Logres the thing is done.

The union between geometry and poetry, between intellect and feeling (the "feeling intellect") has come about in Galahad. That which should have come about for all Logres has only been achieved in Galahad and the flood is the destruction that is coming for Logres; Galahad has saved the stone and the shell but nothing can save Logres now.

With the arrival of Galahad at the Table comes "The Departure of Merlin". The making and building is at an

end and all that remains is the ending of Logres. Merlin can do nothing now, so he withdraws to Broceliande:

> Well has Merlin spoken the last spell,
> worked the last image, gone to his own;
> the moom waxes and wanes in the perilous chair,
> where time's foster-child sits, Lancelot's son.

This version of Merlin's end is from Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse. [31] It removes Merlin and his magic from the kingdom, thus leaving Logres to find its own fate.

"The Death of Palomides" sums up the life of the Saracen turned Christian. He looks back over everything and realizes that every moment of his life has been a resting place on his way to God; even his failures--losing Isuelt, missing the questing beast, over-throwing Lancelot--have been important in his search for God. He dies, secured by the thought that "The Lord created all things by means of his Blessing."

The speaker in "Percivale at Carbonek" is Percivale, but the subjects are Galahad and Lancelot. The poem begins as Galahad sees the Grail:

> In the rent saffron sun hovered the Grail.
> Galahad stood in the arch of Carbonek;
> the people of Pelles ran to meet him.
> His eyes were sad; he sighed for Lancelot's pardon.

Galahad remembers the sorrow of his father, he kneels

under the arch around which Lancelot had run in frenzy as a wolf. He weeps and asks Bors "the kin of Lancelot" for forgiveness. Bors asks what his house should forgive. The answer:

> "Forgive Us," the High Prince said, "for Our existence;
> forgive the means of grace and the hope of glory.
> In the name of Our father forgive Our mother for Our
> birth."

Galahad cannot fully achieve the Grail until he has asked for forgiveness. Bors answers that only God can forgive, but that Lancelot will "assent to all." Then, "into the sun / Galahad followed Bors; Carbonek was entered."

In "The Meditation of Mordred" we turn from the achievement of the Grail to the destruction of the kingdom. The story, told from Mordred's point of view, is one of division and distrust. Arthur is in Gaul beseiging Lancelot, "lest having one illegal son by his sister my mother, / the king should be cheated with another by his wife the queen." The unbridled passion of Lancelot and Guinevere has resulted in Arthur's leaving the kingdom, a step which opens the way for Mordred, born of Arthur and Morgause's passion:

> London is become a forest; voice and arms
> throw a dementia of hands, tossed caps,
> towzled shouts, bare grinning leaves,
> a whole wood of moral wantons, whose spines

> are tree-stretched up towards me, their hope.
> Arthur had his importance; why not I?
> Like son, like father. . . .

All is again chaos. Logres is returned to its earlier state but it is worse than before because it is a country which had a chance to know the Emperor.

Mordred ridicules the Grail, "but I can manage without such fairy mechanism", and therefore the kingdom. He says he "would be glad of such a cauldron of Ceridwen", but he wants it only for the magic it can bring to him. He envies the headless, handless emperor of P'o-l'u (Hell) and says:

> Here, as he in the antipodean seas,
> I will have my choice, and be adored for the having;
> when my father King Arthur has fallen in the wood of his elms,
> I will sit here alone in a kingdom of Paradise.

Instead of choosing and adoring, Mordred insists on choosing and being adored. It is symbolic of his self-centredness.

Mordred is total selfishness; he is the result of Arthur and Morgause (brother and sister) turning inward in their act of passion, and as their child nothing matters to him but himself. He is obsessed with power, cares nothing for what happens to others, in fact seems to

get pleasure from the idea of Arthur fighting his former best friend, Lancelot, and the queen hiding at Almesbury among the nuns. His tone is that of a gleeful, malicious child plucking the feathers from a live bird; all that matters is that "I will have my choice." It is a frightening case of the kingdom being for the king, rather than the king being for the kingdom.

After the achievement of the Grail, Bors, Percivale, and Galahad, the three who received it, are taken in the Ship of Solomon for "The Last Voyage". The ship takes them "beyond the shapes of empire, the capes of Carbonek, / over the topless waves of trenched Broceliande;" they are driven with "no mind's sail reefed or set;" past "unseen shores." They are "the City sped to the City;" they are the earthly manifestation of glory speeding to glory. With them is Dindrane:

> mother of the nature of lovers, creature of exchange;
> draining there of blood by the thighed wound,
> she died another's death, another lived her life.
> Where it was still to-night, in the last candles of Logres,
> a lady danced, to please the sight of her friends;
> her cheeks were stained from the arteries of Percivale's sister.

Dindrane has performed the final sacrifice; as Christ did, she has given her life for another, and it does not matter

who that other is.

In the meantime, the destruction of Logres proceeds. We learn that Dinadan died in the "deep schismatic war," that Lamorack was shot in the back by the sons of Morgause, that Arthur is dead, and Mordred overthrown. The war of division has continued until, of the lords, only Lancelot, returned from Gaul, and Taliessin, meeting him with news of Arthur's death, are left. "Logres was withdrawn to Carbonek; it became Britain." The experiment as a whole has failed; Logres has been offered the Grail but, aside from a few individuals, has proved itself unworth, it now becomes merely Britain.

"The Prayers of the Pope" opens with the young Pope, Deodatus, preparing for the feast of Christmas. He has heard news of Logres:

> A tale that emerged from Logres surged in Europe
> and swelled in the Pope's ears; it held nothing
> of fulfillment of prophecy and the sea-coming of the Grail
> but only of bleak wars between Arthur and Lancelot,
> Gawaine set to seek his heart's vengeance,
> the king's son gone whoring with fantasy,
> and mobs roaring through Camelot. . . .

He has heard only the bad from Logres, he has not heard of the achievement of the Grail by Galahad, Percivale, and Bors, nor of the remnant of "the city" that is Taliessin's

company. The Pope prays for Logres and for the rest of the Empire.

With the destruction of Logres, other provinces of the Empire fail:

> They rejected the City; they made substitutes for the City;
> mutes or rhetoricians instead of the sacred poets,

"Evil wizards", sorcerers, and "seers of the heathen" work their magic; they raise the dead and "the hordes of the heathen followed the corpses to battle." The Empire is beseiged by the living and the dead, it is divided:

> Against the rule of the Emperor the indivisible
> Empire was divided; therefore the Parousia suspended
> its coming, and abode still in the land of the Trinity.
> Logres was void of Grail and Crown. . . .

The Hallows have withdrawn; Christ will not return at this point.

As the Pope prays in Lateran, events in Logres are drawing to a close. Taliessin dissolves the outer bonds of his company, but declares "the Company still / fixed in the will of all who serve the Company." The Company will go on in each person as long as any member of it shall live. Percivale, Bors, and Galahad end their voyage, "beyond Jupiter. / beyond the summer stars, deep

heaven / centrally opened within the land of the Trinity." Now Hell, like a giant octopus, "sinking and slinking / and spreading everywhere along the bottom of the ocean," moves towards what was the Empire.

But Hell does not win completely: the experiment of the Grail has failed, but the Pope and other parts of "the city" remain. The roots of Broceliande fasten on the octopus, halting its movement, the Pope still prays ("prayer is substance'), and hope springs up:

> . . . consuls and lords within the Empire,
> for all the darkening of the Empire and the loss of Logres
> and the hiding of the High Prince, felt the Empire
> revive in a live hope of the Sacred City.

Logres and the Grail are not gone forever, they have removed themselves but hope is given for their return.

The cycle does not end here, there is one more affirmation: "Taliessin at Lancelot's Mass". Lancelot performs the ritual of the Mass and "all the dead lords of the Table were drawn from their graves," "the wounded and dead king / entered into salvation to serve the Holy Thing," over the altar appears Galahad, the Table ascends, "that which had been Taliessin made joy to a Joy unknown," and "Lancelot's voice below sang: Ite; missa est." The Mass, the highest affirmation, the ritual manifestation

of the spirit made flesh, and that which outwardly binds "the city", closes the cycle. Those who are left of Taliessin's company are reminded to pray for the kingdom and the return of Our Lord: "if skill be of work or of will / in the dispersed homes of the household, let the Company pray for it still."

Williams has used the Matter of Britain to present one central point: that the kingdom must be prepared so that it can become "the city" and thus be ready for the Grail which can be seen as the coming of Christ or the coming of the grace of God. Williams has made the preparation of the kingdom for the Grail his major affirmation:

> The problem is simple--is the king to be there for the sake of the Grail or not? It was so the Middle Ages left it; but since then it has been taken the other way . . . . If it is to be more, it must take the central place. Logres must then be meant for the Grail . . . . This indeed must be the pure glory of Arthur and Logres. . . . It is the central matter of the Matter of Britain. . . . For the Grail, so understood, must itself be . . . . understood in all its meanings and relationships. It is the tale of Galahad; it is the tale of the mystical way; but it is also the tale of the universal way. It is not as in Tennyson, only for the elect; it is for all.[32]

In Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars, Logres is meant for the Grail, and Logres as "the city" is the key image of affirmation.

NOTES

[1]From here on I will identify (in cases where the context is not clear) quotes from Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars with the title of the poem in brackets after the quote.

[2]D.W. Nash, Taliesin; or, The Bards and Druids of Britain (London, John Russell, 1858).

[3]Thomas Love Peacock, The Misfortunes of Elphin, in The Novels of Thomas Love Peacock, Vol. II, (London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), p. 633.

[4]It may be noted that Taliessin is spelled both "Taliesin" and "Taliessin". "Taliessin" is a spelling first used by Tennyson and then adopted by Williams. For convenience I will use this later spelling except when quoting earlier material.

[5]R. Williams, "Introduction" to Lady Charlotte Guest, The Mabinogion (London, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1906), p. 1.

[6]The Mabinogion, p. 426.

[7]C.S. Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad", in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 98.

[8]Robert Graves, The White Goddess (New York, The Noonday Press, 1966), p. 9.

[9]Charles Moorman, Arthurian Triptych (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960), p. 99.

[10]"Williams and the Arthuriad", p. 95.

[11]Anne Ridler, "Introductory Note to the Arthurian Essays", in Charles Williams, The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 169.

[12]Anne Ridler, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. lxiv.

[13]"Introductory Note to the Arthurian Essays", p. 174.

[14]Ridler, "Introduction", p. lxii.

[15]Ibid., p. lxiii.

[16]"Introductory Note to the Arthurian Essays", p. 174.

[17]The Mabinogion, p. 273.

[18]Charles Williams, "Introduction" to The Region of the Summer Stars (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. vii.

[19]Alice Mary Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, Robert Hale Ltd., 1959), p. 147.

[20]"Introductory Note to the Arthurian Essays", p. 174.

[21]Charles Williams, "Notes on the Arthurian Myth", in The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 179.

[22]Ibid., p. 178.

[23]"Williams and the Arthuriad", p. 111.

[24]The White Goddess, p. 75.

[25]Dante, Paradise (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1962), XXXVIII . 145.

[26]Charles Williams, The Figure of Beatrice (London, Faber and Faber, 1943), p. 205.

[27]The White Goddess, p. 91.

[28]Charles Williams, "The Image of the City in English Verse", The Dublin Review (July 1940), p. 50.

[29]"Notes on the Arthurian Myth", p. 176.

[30]"Williams and the Arthuriad", p. 162.

[31]Algernon Charles Swinburne, Tristram of Lyonesse, in The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne,

Vol. IV (ed. Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1925).

[32]Charles Williams, "The Figure of Arthur", in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 83.

IV. THE WAY OF THE AFFIRMATION OF IMAGES

In order to understand Williams' image of the city and its importance to Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars, it is necessary to discuss two modes of seeking God: one which has been called the Way of the Affirmation of Images (Positive Way) and the other which has been called the Way of the Rejection of Images (Negative Way). As far as Williams is concerned, each way is equally good as a method of finding God, it is up to the individual to determine which way works best for him.

Historically, the Way of the Rejection has been more often documented as a specifically religious way. It was the way followed by Dionysius the Aereopagite, St. John of the Cross, the author of The Cloud of Unknowing, and most other western mystics. Williams states that this way "consists, generally speaking, in the renunciation of all images except the final one of God himself, and even--sometimes, but not always--of the exclusion of that only Image of all human sense." [1] It is a way of reduction which sees God as something undefineable, but not unknowable. Dionysius the Aereopagite, an early practitioner of the Negative Way, provides an excellent example of the

thinking of this Way when he speaks of God:

> Once more, ascending yet higher, we maintain that It is not soul, or mind, or endowed with the faculty of imagination, conjecture, reason, or understanding; nor is It any act of reason or understanding; nor can It be described by the reason or perceived by the understanding, since It is not number, or order, or greatness, or littleness, or equality, or inequality, and since It is not immovable nor in motion, or at rest, and has no power, and is not power or light, and does not live, ans is not life; nor is It personal essence, or eternity, or time; nor can It be grasped by the understanding, since It is not knowledge or truth; nor is It kingship or wisdom; nor is It one, nor is It unity, nor is It Godhead or Goodness; nor is It a Spirit as we understand the term, since It is not Sonship or Fatherhood; nor is It any other thing such as we or any other being can have knowledge of; nor does It belong to the category of nonexistence or to that of existence; nor do existent beings know It as It actually is, nor does It know them as they actually are; nor can the reason attain to It to name It or to know It; nor is It darkness, nor is It light, or error or truth; nor can any affirmation of negation apply to It; for while applying affirmations or negations to those orders of being that come next to It, we apply not unto It either affirmation or negation, inasmuch as It transcends all affirmation by being the perfect and unique Cause of all things, and transcends all negation by the pre-eminence of Its simple and absolute nature--free of every limitation and beyond them all. [2]

The above quote attempts to state everything that God could possibly be, so that it can prove that God is not any of these things. It is a case of saying that God is God and He does not manifest Himself in anything other than Himself, and since He cannot be defined, man should

cease trying to imagine Him, and concentrate on "knowing" Him.

As a practical guide to salvation, the Way of Rejection insists that since God is not visible in outward things, any contemplation of outward things prevents the knowing of Him:

> Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.
> For they that follow their sensuality, do stain their own consciences, and lose the favour of God. [3]

Any outward looking is a sensuality and a weakness that can only lead away from God. As The Cloud of Unknowing points out, even thoughts of the good are distractions on the Way of the Rejection of Images:

> Similarly, just as it would be an improper thing, and a handicap, for a man engaged in meditation to consider his "exterior works"--what he had done or ought to do, however holy these works might be--so surely it is just as much improper and a handicap for a man who ought to be working in divine darkness, and in this cloud of unknowing, whose love is moving out to God himself, to allow any thought or meditation of God's wonderful gifts, or kindness, or any of his created works, physical or spiritual, to obtrude itself between him and his God--however pleasant and inspiring these thoughts may be.
> It is for this reason that I say you are to suppress these insidious thoughts, and cover them up with a thick cloud of forgetting, even when they are holy and promise well to achieve your object. [4]

The contemplative must turn all his thoughts inward until the only thing left is nothingness, and it is in that nothingness that God will appear. There must be a long "dark night of the soul" and a giving up of everything, including the self, before the Way of the Rejection can lead to God.

This Way is the Way of nuns, priests, monks, and others who take holy orders. The Church sees this as the highest way, even Dante, poet of the Affirmative Way, follows Church teaching and places the contemplatives in the Heaven of Saturn, higher than the Heaven of the Sun in which he places St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other teachers who did not follow the Way of the Rejection of Images.

The other Way, the Way of the Affirmation of Images, holds that God is manifest in many things and can be known through these things. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." This is the way of the poets--Dante, Traherne, Blake, Wordsworth, and Charles Williams--who express their statements about God through the use of images, or through one particular image. For Dante that image is Beatrice, for Wordsworth it is nature, and for Williams it is the image of the city.

St. Bonaventure, one of the few theologians to deal with the Way of the Affirmations, says:

> All creatures of this sensible world lead the soul of the wise beholder toward the eternal God. They are the shadow, echo, image, vestige, likeness and representation of that most good, most wise, and most powerful First Principle. . . . [5]

and "the created universe itself is a ladder leading up toward God. Some created things are His traces; others His image. . . ." [6] God is the creator of everything, and for Bonaventure and others who follow the Affirmative Way, everything God created, and therefore the entire world, bears His likeness and can be used as a means of finding Him.

Dante's most direct expression of Affirmation appears in St. Thomas Aquinas' discourse in the Heaven of the Sun:

> All that which dies and all that dieth not
> Is nought but splendour of the Idea that knows
> The Father's Love whereby it is begot;
>
> Because the living Luminance that flows
> Forth of Its luminant, yet parts not thence,
> Nor from the Love that aye in-trines with Those,
>
> Doth of Its grace, converge Its radiance,
> Glassed as it were, in nine subsistences,
> Itself still One, eterne in permanance;
>
> Which radiance thence to the last potencies
> Descends, from act to act, becoming even
> Such as to make mere brief contingencies--

> An epithet, as I conceive it, given
> To things engendered, formed, as requisite,
> From seed, or seedless, by the moving Heaven. [7]

Everything that exists exists through the grace of God and in some measure displays Him. There is no question of making the mind blank so that God can enter in, everything is viewed as part of Him and thus everything can be (but need not be) used to help find knowledge of Him.

Although they appear to be opposites, each Way retains elements of the other:

> No Affirmation could be so complete as not to need definition, discipline, and refusal; no Rejection so absolute as not to leave necessary (literally and metaphorically) beans and a wild beast's skin and a little water. Those who most rejected material things might cling the more closely to verbal formulae; those who looked most askance at the formulae might apprehend most easily the divine imagery of matter. [8]

Each Way must depend on the other Way to a certain extent; there cannot be complete division of one Way from the other. The Ways complement each other, each is the key to the other, and each person, although he may follow one Way more than the other, and thus be said to be embarked on either the Way of the Affirmation of Images or the Way of the Rejection of Images, has elements of both Ways in his being. He may follow one Way at one time and the other

at another time, or he may chose one Way and stick to it throughout; it does not matter which he does because as long as he is involved on one of the Ways the end is the same--the grace of God.

Williams saw the two Ways as co-existing and co-inhering. He seems to think that they are two modes of the same process and that while following one Way, the other Way and all its elements should be kept in mind because in the end they become one:

> I do think that the double challenge of "This also is Thou" and "Neither is this Thou", carried into everything, probably as much as any formula, assist the soul. They are an example of my momentarily pet obsession of asymptotes, and the point at which they do meet would be the Spiritual Marriage, after which (they say) is the Beatific Vision. [9]

This union comes just before one finds God, and He, no matter which Way is followed, is perhaps the greatest affirmation. "After the affirmations we may have to discover the rejections, but we must still believe that after the rejections the greater affirmations are to return." [10] Williams explains this by saying that Christ told his disciples to give up everything but him, yet at the same time promised them "a hundred times what they had abandonded." [11] In Heaven, as the rejections and the affirmations become one, as the union in God becomes reality,

it will be realized that what is important is not which of the Ways one has chosen, but rather how carefully the Way (or Ways) is followed.

In Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars, Dindrane, Percivale, and the slave girl image the Way of Rejection. Dindrane is Williams' main example of this Way; there are others--Chloe Burnett in Many Dimensions and Lester Furnival in All Hallows' Eve come to mind--but Dindrane is the one who Williams refers to specifically as a follower of the Negative Way. She gives up all she loves in order to become a nun at Almesbury:

> Her nature was sweet to all; no call in vain
> reached her, but these two she loved--these,
> the mistress of a household and the master of verse--
> held
> her heart's world's testimony; her best arts
> changed toils with Elayne and studies with Taliessin.
> These, her labours and neighbours, brought her that day
> to the court of separation, affirmation into rejection.
> ("The Departure of Dindrane")

Everyone, including Taliessin, master of images, and Elayne, who participates in the affirmation of marriage, must be given up: "the shell of her body / yearned along the road to the cell of vocation." Dindrane gives up the people she loves to devote her life to God. As part of that devotion she looks after Galahad, and when he no longer

needs her, she gives up her own life to save another: "she died another's death, another lived her life" ("The Last Voyage"). At the end her body is on the Ship of Solomon, sailing to Sarras, the Holy City, with Bors. Galahad, and Percivale. As Taliessin is Affirmation, so Dindrane is Rejection; each has chosen his own Way to God.

Of the three who achieve the Grail, we are given least information about Percivale, the representative on the Quest of the Way of the Rejection. He is the "virginal lover," he harped, but "added no voice" ("The Star of Percivale"). We are not shown his rejection of the images as we are his sister's, but it is clear that he has rejected them. He does not retreat from the world to pursue his Way, rather he follows it in the middle of the Affirmations, and does find the Holy Grail.

The slave girl embraces the Way of the Rejections as a result of the example of Dindrane; however, she is first brought to a knowledge of God by Taliessin's song, by the Way of the Affirmation of Images:

> Taliessin stood in the court; he played
> a borrowed harp; his voice defined the music.
> Languid, the soul of a maid, at service in the hall,
> heard, rose, ran fleetly to fall at his feet.
>
> ("The Star of Percivale")

The images first bring her to God, but it is by their rejection that she finally knows Him. When the girl watches Taliessin part from Dindrane she chooses to give up her own freedom and remain in bondage to Taliessin, much as Dindrane is binding herself to her Lord. She gives up everything to remain in service, but after this rejection come the greater affirmations:

> The roses climbed round her; shoulder to knee,
> they clung and twined and changed to a crimson kirtle.
> The wool rose gently on no wind,
> and was flung to her shoulders; and behind her, woven
> of itself,
> it fell in full folds to a gold-creamed cloak;
> hued almost as the soft redeemed flesh
> hiding the flush of the rich redeemed blood
> in the land of the Trinity, where the Holy Ghost works
> creation and sanctification of flesh and blood.
>
> ("The Queen's Servant")

She is clothed in the glory of God and is set free to serve the Queen.

The example of the slave girl makes the Way of the Rejection very clear; instead of it being a vague mystical Way, followed by saints and other distant creatures, it becomes a real option, something that can be followed by anyone who desires to begin upon that Way. The girl's moment of choice expresses a conflict familiar to most people; she cannot determine which of the three options is best as she goes over them and over them in her mind.

When she does decide what to do it seems that she has chosen the hardest and most unpleasant way, yet in the end, this Way leads from the bondage of being a slave to the mystical experience of the rose and the wool.

Bors and Elayne, Lancelot, and Taliessin are the people in Williams' Arthurian cycle who are embarked on the Way of the Affirmations. Taliessin, as the king's poet, deals in images; his song leads the slave girl to God; another song makes Bors realize how much he loves Elayne. He has been to Byzantium and his purpose in the building of Logres is to sing of the Emperor and of the city so that others may know of it. The poet speaks in images; Taliessin sings in the school of the poets, "within verse they were teased by verse;" he sings of Phoebus but his song means much more. The young poets can only grasp part of the meaning of his image:

> Breathless explorers of the image,
> innocent, lucent-eyed,
> the young poets studied precision.
>
> ("Taliessin in the School of the Poets")

They realize, however, that it is pointing the way towards something greater than would first appear. The poet, Taliessin, is using his function to lead others to a knowledge of the Emperor.

Taliessin and Dindrane, are, in a sense, lovers. As will be seen later Dindrane is a God-bearing image for Taliessin. He loves her as Dante loved Beatrice, and like Dante and Beatrice that love is never consummated in the flesh. It remains a spiritual affinity, but this does not make their parting any easier. The slave girl "guessed the sword of schism that pierced her lord" ("The Departure of Dindrane"). Taliessin is torn apart by Dindrane's decision to go to the convent, but he knows that this decision is the one she must make. He loves her so he must let her go, yet he feels as Dante felt at the death of Beatrice: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow!" [12]

In their conduct Taliessin and Dindrane image the Way of the Affirmation of Images and the Way of the Rejection of Images:

> As the slave's horse moved beneath her, she saw the lords
> riding before her, the Ways upon the Way,
> cloaked in the dim day, on the highroad of the hazel
> between city and convent, the two great vocations,
> the Rejection of all images before the unimaged,
> the Affirmation of all images before the all-imaged,
> the Rejection affirming, the Affirmation rejecting, the
> king's poet
> riding through a cloud with a vowed-novice,
> and either no less than the other the doctrine of
> largesse.
>
> ("The Departure of Dindrane")

Taliessin is Affirmation and Dindrane is Rejection, yet the two go together. Each follows his own Way, and each goes to God. Although the two separate and follow different paths, each promises to consider and remember the other's Way. Dindrane says:

> I will affirm, my beloved, all that I should."
> And he: "I will reject all that I should--
> yes, and affirm; the term of Camelot, my adored,
> lies in the term of Almesbury. . . .
>
> ("The Departure of Dindrane")

The Ways are different, yet each has elements of the other and must exist with it and in it, and each Way leads to a knowledge of God.

Bors and Elayne, two other lovers, also image the Affirmative Way. Their love differs from the type of love experienced by Taliessin and Dindrane in that it is consummated; it becomes Williams' most important expression of married love, what he calls the "twy-nature". This twy-nature is the joining together of two separate beings into one organism. Williams believes that this is what marriage is and that married people are "a living symbol of the grand Twy-Nature, Christ (the union of God and Man in one Person) who alone can utter celestial, as they utter earthly, love." [13] The twy-nature goes two

ways:

> Double tracks then their dazzled eyes seem
> to follow: one, where the forked dominant tail
> flicks, beats, reddens the smooth plane
>
> of the happy flesh; one, where the Catacomb's stone
> holds its diagram over the happy dead
> who flashed in living through the liquid wish.
>
> ("Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande")

It ends with the flesh and physical love in one direction, and in the other it ends with an anagram of Christ over a grave in the catacombs.

Married love and a consummation of that love in the flesh is a mode of the Affirmative Way that can lead to God just as celibacy can lead to God; it is a Way followed by more people than other Ways, not because it is easier, but because for most people love must be mediated through the flesh. "Flesh knows what spirit knows" ("Taliessin in the Rose Garden"). This Way is not for everyone; Taliessin (the poet is also a twy-nature) must follow a different mode of the Affirmative Way and Dindrane and Percivale must follow the Negative Way, but Bors follows this Way and achieves the Grail. On the Ship of Solomon speeding to Sarras Bors prays:

> Bors, mailed in black, completing the trine,
> their action in Logres, kneeling on the deck to their
> right,

> the flesh of fatherhood, unique as they in the Will, prayed still for the need and the bliss of his household.
>
> ("The Last Voyage")

His responsibility as a married man is his family, and he remembers them and prays for them because they are part of himself.

Lancelot also follows the Way of the Affirmation of Images; he is a true lover and is faithful to Guinevere except when tricked out of that fidelity by Merlin and Brisen and the magic potion. When he discovers that he has been unfaithful he goes mad, grows backwards until he is a wolf. His love for Guinevere is an affirmation uncontrolled by intellect. It is Williams' clearest example of the dangers of the flesh. Had Lancelot and Guinevere been content, as Taliessin and Dindrane were content, with an intellectual love, that love could have led them to God. As it is, they insist on physical love even though Guinevere is Arthur's wife and Arthur is Lancelot's best friend. That insistence prevents Lancelot from attaining the Grail. He is serious about his love for Guinevere, he sees "love as a thing of dolour and labour and vision," [14] but he will not give up the desires of the flesh in order to follow right directed love. His failure lies, not in ignoring the seriousness

of love (that is one of Arthur's failures), but rather in determining to follow that serious love through to a wrong conclusion.

The High Prince, Galahad, is the person of the union. He is the one in whom the stone (geometry and also the Way of the Rejections) and the shell (poetry and the Way of the Affirmations) are joined:

> "To-day
> the stone was fitted to the shell," the king's poet said;
> "when my lord Sir Lancelot's son sat in the perilous sell,
> if he be Sir Lancelot's; in Logres the thing is done.
>
> ("The Coming of Galahad")

The union that was to have been for all Logres has taken place only in Galahad. Galahad is the child of both Ways:

> He has no concern with any mortal affirmations, and yet he is the child and climax of the greatest of mortal affirmations, of a passionate, devout, and tragic double love. He owes his very existence to Lancelot, and he never forgets his father. "Fair lord, salute me to my lord Sir Lancelot my father." The absurd nonsense that has been talked about his being "unhuman and unnatural" misses altogether the significance of that chamber where, as in the Dark Night of the soul, "all the windows and holes were stopped that no manner of day might be seen"; and where the princess of the Grail abandonded her virginity, so that the two great Ways might exchange themselves for the begetting of Galahad. The High Prince has remained as an intense symbol of the two Ways; he is not one them, but they are both in him. [15]

He is the Affirmations and the Rejections coming together in the union with God, and he is one of the three who find the Grail. Percivale is Rejection, Bors is Affirmation, and Galahad is the union between the two Ways: "By three ways of exchange the City sped to the City" ("The Last Voyage").

Keeping the Way of the Rejection of Images and its links with the Way of the Affirmation of Images carefully in mind, we can now examine Williams as poet of the Affirmative Way and as one who writes about that Way. As noted previously, the Way of the Affirmation is usually the Way of the poets rather than of the theologians. There have been many who have followed it, but, unlike the Negative Way, few who have examined it and written about it. It is difficult to determine why it has not been extensively studied; perhaps those who are following it are so busy living that they do not have time to outline it, perhaps because it can be followed by many different types of people in many different ways it is harder to analyse. Dorothy Sayers, who advocates that more people study the Affirmative Way and those who have followed it, says:

> The Way of the Affirmation, if it is a mystical way at all, has received little attention from the theologians. This is perhaps just as well, for it is

> pre-eminently the way of the poets, and few poets are as patient as Dante of theolgical analysis. . . . Yet the Way, though neglected and overgrown, has not been left wholly uncharted. Dante is its pioneer, Blake its prophet; Traherne has supplied it with a manual of devotion; Williams has outlined its theology. [16]

Until Williams, few had examined it as a mystical way, and no one had done an intensive examination of it as a mystical way expressed more often in literature than in theological writing.

It is necessary at this point to determine what Williams means by the term "image". Dorothy Sayers writes that when he speaks of an image he is talking of what has traditionally been called a "natural symbol", something which "is not an arbitrary sign, but a thing really existing which, by its very nature, stands for and images forth a greater reality of which it is itself an instance." [17] Williams defines an image in similar terms, but not so succinctly. He says he uses the word "image" because he does not think "symbol" is a vivid enough expression of what he means; he also indicates that most definitions of "symbol" are too restrictive.

Using Williams' definition, we note that the person or thing exists independently of what it images; if it ceases to image a particular thing it does not stop being, or if it does not image anything other than what it is, it

does not stop being. For Williams the Grail story images a search for a way to God, for some it images a pagan fertility rite, for some it images nothing at all; yet it is still a good story.

An image is a very personal thing; the same object can image any number of different things to any number of people and it is this function that is of such great importance to Williams:

> Taliessin sang of the sea-rooted western wood;
> his song meant all things to all men, and you to me.
>
> ("Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande")

Taliessin sings the same words to all who are there, but the words mean something different to each individual--to Bors they mean Elayne. The listener (or reader) is not bound to see the same things in the image that the poet does. The poet's task, if he uses images, is to present an image that will evoke the response that he desires, even though that image will probably not touch any two people in exactly the same way. The young poets do not all see the same things when Taliessin sings to them:

> dimly the gazing postulants saw
> patterns of multilinear red
> sprinkled and spreading everywhere,
> and spaced to one design.
>
> ("Taliessin in the School of the Poets")

They see dim shapes which image different things, but produce one over-all impression. This is the function of imagery.

Williams distinguishes five principle images which occur in poetry. John Heath-Stubbs, who was present at the lecture in 1943 when Williams outlined them (they are not specifically listed anywhere in Williams' writing) gives them as:

> (a) The Religious experience itself. Having posited this, Williams proposed to say nothing further about it. Obviously, in a sense, it is in a category apart, and includes the others.
>
> (b) The Image of Woman. Dante's Divine Comedy is the fullest expression of this mode, and its potential development.
>
> (c) The Image of Nature. Of this Wordsworth in The Prelude (the actual subject of the lecture he was giving) was the greatest exponent.
>
> (d) The Image of the City. Had Williams not been addressing an audience composed to English Literature students, I have no doubt he would have cited Virgl, in the AEneid, as the greatest exponent. As it was, he pointed to "what were, until recently known as our younger poets" as expressing, in their vision of the Unjust City, a negative aspect of this experience.
>
> (e) The experience of great art. Of this, Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn was a partial expression. [18]

These images may lead one to God or they may not. They are, however, the images Williams considered most likely to

create the shock of recognition at which point one must choose either to follow the image or not to follow the image. Damnation lies in not choosing.

That shock of recognition is the beginning of the religious experience itself. It is that moment after which nothing can ever again be the same. It is Dante seeing Beatrice and being so stricken that he trembles all over and his vital spirit says: "Behold a god more powerful than I who comes to rule over me";[19] it is Taliessin seeing Dindrane and sitting silent, "rapt on the just glory of the sacred Throne, / the lore of the Emperor patterned in the blast and the bone" ("The Sister of Percivale"); and it is Charles Williams seeing Florence Sarah Conway (Michal), being silent for one of the few times in his life, and rushing home to begin writing eighty-four sonnets. It is a moment which can come to anyone, the problem is to recognize that moment for what it is.

It is significant that the examples I have given of the religious experience are also examples of the image of woman. Although Williams distinguishes five main images, it is the image of woman and the moment of falling in love (the moment he often calls the "romantic experience") that he writes about most. He charts

the romantic experience in Dante in The Figure of Beatrice and in Religion and Love in Dante, and in Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars he charts that experience as followed by several pairs of lovers. In his poems, as in Dante's, the religious experience becomes a particular mode of the larger and more complex image of the city. The city is Williams' most important statement of the Affirmative Way; it images mankind's highest potential (as the romantic experience, properly followed, images an individual's highest potential) and as such becomes a type of heaven on earth.

The image of nature and the image of great art are both almost entirely absent in Williams' work. Although he admires Wordsworth and writes sympathetically about him in Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind and in "The Index of the Body", he does not examine in any depth Wordsworth's use of nature. He does note it, however, so must have been aware of its importance. In his own work the forest of Broceliande is the only major image of nature. Once one has experienced it one can never again be the same:

> but those fewer, now as then, who enter
> come rarely again with brain unravished
> by the power of the place. . . .
>
> ("The Calling of Taliessin")

It is in this forest that Taliessin meets Merlin and Brisen and sees what is to come in the building of Logres; Lancelot passes through Broceliande on his way to Carbonek and lives there with ravished brain when he becomes a wolf. It is the wood of making where anything can happen.

The image of great art is only present in the mosaic in the floor in "Taliessin in the School of the Poets". It gives Taliessin a moment of insight into the glory of the Empire and the failure that is Logres, and serves as a religious experience for the apprentice poets who listen to Taliessin's song.

It must not be supposed that because it does not require the giving up of all outward things, the Way of the Affirmation of Images is easier than the Way of the Rejection of Images. Williams warns us that both Ways are difficult. When Dante approaches St. Peter's Gate in Purgatory, the angel shows him two keys:

> One golden and one silver key he had;
> With the white first, the yellow afterward,
> He wrought so with the gate that I was glad.
>
> "Should one or other of the keys stick hard,
> Turning askew so that the tumblers block,"
> He said, "this wicket cannot be unbarred.
>
> One's costlier; the other needs good stock
> Of with and skill to get the bolt to stir,
> For that one grips the wards and frees the lock. [20]

Williams says that this is a sacrament of penance and the keys are also "the methods of Rejection and Affirmation. Rejection is a silver key, which is 'more dear'; Affirmation is a golden key, more difficult to use." [21] The silver key is perhaps harder won, but is easier to use because there are not so many moments where one can stray from the Way. The golden key is found easily, but once found, must be used with the greatest care if it is to be effective.

One of the most common pitfalls in the Way of the Affirmations happens with the loss of the image. The loss can occur through death, as with Beatrice, or because the image no longer appears as it once did. The loss of the image itself is not the problem; it is how one reacts to that loss that can lead to damnation. The soul begins its Way with a moment of vision, a moment when the beloved is seen as God sees him or her:

> By assimilation to the divine being and participation therein the blessed spirit sees God as he sees himself, and sees all things and all beings as God sees them: in their perfect and untarnished truth and beauty. [22]

The important thing is that the creature is seen as perfect because that is how God made him. This is most clearly expressed by Williams in Shadows of Ecstasy,

when young Philip Travers sees truth in the outstretched arm of his fiancee, Rosamond Murchison:

> Well, after all, Rosamond was only human; she couldn't be absolutely perfect. And then as she stretched out her arm again he cried out that she was perfect, she was more than perfect; the movement of her arm was something frightfully important, and now it was gone. He had seen the verge of a great conclusion of mortal things and then it had vanished. Over that white curve he had looked into incredible space; abysses of intelligence lay beyond it. [23]

The moment appears and is gone, but for that moment Philip has seen Rosamond as God sees her, not as she is seen by anyone else.

The vision itself disappears; this loss would seem a necessary step in the Way. Dante retained the image of Beatrice until her death but then he loses her image and she is replaced by the Lady in the Window. In the Convivio he identifies this Lady with Philosophy and makes of her a second god-bearing image. This does not mean that the first image, the image of Beatrice is anything less than it appeared:

> The First Image is the true image; when it is lost to intuition, the return must be made by means of the Second Image and the intellect; "the way forwar is the way back." And the Last Image will be the First Image, but known differently: there is to be no denying of that immediate insight into divine reality of the visible things. From the affirm-

> ation of the First Image, there follows the affirm-affirmation of all the images. . . .[24]

Beatrice remains Beatrice and also something greater than Beatrice if the first vision is recognized for what it is and the Affirmative Way embarked upon. If the vision is not recognized, or is lost and not replaced, she has not changed, our perception of her has changed and it is this change that creates the problem. The intellect must operate at every step of the Way in order for one to recognize the first image of what it is and then to realize that all other images come from the intuition of that first image.

If the intellect does not operate, the image can be lost forever. This is what happens to Virgil and to Palomides. Virgil has no choice; he is not a Christian so no degree of intellect can save him. His vision is of Rome as the perfect earthly city; this is a vision he has expounded in his poetry, but neither poetry or Rome is enough to prevent the loss of the image:

> Virgil fell from the edge of the world,
> hurled by the thrust of Augustus' back; the shape
> he loved grew huge and black, loomed and pushed.
> The air rushed up; he fell
> into despair, into air's other.
> The hexameter's fullness now could find no ground;
> his mind, dizzily replete with the meaningless sweet
> sound,

could found no Rome there on the joys of a noise.

("Taliessin on the Death of Virgil")

When the vision disappears it is not replaced by anything else and Virgil falls into Hell. Rome and August have become huge ugly shapes, poetry has become a "meaningless sweet sound." He does not see them as he has seen them because he does not have Christianity to help him sustain the vision. The problem of the virtuous pagan was a real one for Williams as it was for Dante; through his poetry Virgil had set an example for so many later writings, but he could not save himself because he was not a Christian.

Palomides, the Saracen knight who has come to Logres in search of Christianity, also loses the image. His moment of vision comes when he sees Iseult stretch out her arm:

> Blessed (I sang) the Cornish queen;
> for till to-day no eyes have seen
> how curves of golden life define
> the straightness of a perfect line,
> till the queen's blessed arm became
> a rigid bar of golden flame
> where well might Archimedes prove
> the doctrine of Euclidean love
> and draw his demonstrations right
> against the unmathematic night
> of ignorance and indolence!

("The Coming of Palomides")

In Iseult's arm he sees a perfection of order rarely revealed to man. Everything is in its place and he sees a unity which points to God; mind and body become obedient to a single will and that is the will of God. This is a true moment of vision; Iseult is seen by Palomides as God sees her, Mark and Tristram who are also present, do not see the vision. As Palomides gazes, caught up in his vision, that vision changes:

> In the summer house of the Cornish king
> suddenly I ceased to sing.
> Down the arm of the queen Iseult
> quivered and darkened an angry bolt;
>
> . . . .
>
> division stretched between
> the queen's identity and the queen.
> Relation vanished, though beauty stayed.
>
> ("The Coming of Palomides")

Palomides sees the discrepancy between his vision of Iseult and her base behaviour as she sits between Mark, her husband, and Tristram, her lover. Palomides no longer sees union, he sees division; this is the moment of the Fall. Palomides hears "the squeak of the questing beast, / where it scratched itself in the blank between / the queen's substance and the queen." The questing beast, whether it is jealousy or pride, is to take Palomides in

circles through the wilderness while the few golden days of Logres exist. The beast appears as a direct result of the loss of the image, and in a sense replaces it. Had Palomides been able to sustain the vision, he would have found God when he first came to Logres; but he loses the image and spends years in a wasteland where "the rocks are too hard to give any roots room " (Palomides Before His Christening). The Beatrician moment gone wrong is responsible for delaying the Christening of Palomides for more than twenty years.

The image which can lead one to God exists in its own right, separate from its imaging function. It must be realized that this is so, and the god-bearing image must be a "true other". It cannot be oneself that is the image, this is just vanity, nor can it be a projection of oneself. One cannot see the image as a reflection of one's inner moods or needs; if one does, that becomes a perversion of the image.

In Descent into Hell Lawrence Wentworth succumbs to jealousy and ceases to recognize the true other. Wentworth falls in love with a young girl, Adela Hunt, wants to possess and own her, and when he sees her with another man falls into a jealous rage. He broods over this injury to himself, decides to reject Adela, and then sees a form

that he thinks is Adela. He decides:

> that Adela was not enough, that Adela must be something different even from Adela if she were to be satisfactory to him, something closer to his own mind and farther from hers. She has been in relation with Hugh, and his Adela could never be in relation with Hugh. [25]

Adela as she really is is not enough. He has conjured up a succubus: "The shape of Lawrence Wentworth's desire had emerged from the power of his body." [26] He meets with the false Adela every night for weeks and when he finally again sees the real Adela he cannot stand her. She is not the perfection that he has invented: "With relief he realized it was not <u>his</u> voice--so he called it, admirably exact; this was not the voice of <u>his</u> mistress, and his mistress was most particularly he." [27] Wentworth has turned inward until only that which issues from himself is worthy of his notice. It is a major perversion of the image and a first step toward Hell.

Arthur also does not recognize a true other. The horror of his affair with Morgause is that she is his sister; the act of love becomes a giving back to oneself rather than a giving to another. Arthur goes "without eyes" to a dark cave; he makes himself blind, refuses to see:

> Through the rectangular door the crowned shape went
> its way;
> it lifted light feet; an eyeless woman lay
> flat on the rock; her armswas stretched to embrace
> his own stretched arm; she had his own face.
>
> The shape of a blind woman under the shape of a blind
> man.
>
> ("Lamorack and the Queen Morgause of Orkney")

Out of this giving back to himself Arthur begets Mordred, and with Mordred comes the failure of Logres. Arthur's self-importance (which is the refusal to acknowledge a true other) is the cause of the failure of the city. It is an image of Adam and Eve and the first Fall; it is also Balin and Balan and the Dolorous Blow, which in Malory prevents the coming of the Grail for all Logres. It does not matter that Arthur does not know Morgause is his sister, had he been chaste he would not have been with her and the problem of not recognizing her would not have come up.

The Way of the Affirmation of Images has its dangers, but it is the Way followed by Williams. In his poetry, his criticism, and his marriage, the Affirmations make their appearance. His major critical contribution is the charting of the Way of Love as a mode of the Way of the Affirmations; this mode is the basic component of his image of the city which is the central theme in Taliessin

Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars. I will turn here to a study of Love as that behaviour on which the city is based.

NOTES

[1]Charles Williams, The Figure of Beatrice (London, Faber and Faber, 1943), p. 8.

[2]C.E. Rolt, Dionysius the Aereopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology (London, The Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 200.

[3]Thomas A Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ (London, Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1899), p. 20.

[4]Clifton Wolters (Trans.), The Cloud of Unknowing Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books, 1961), p. 64.

[5]St. Bonaventure, Mystical Opuscula (Trans. Jose de Vinck, Paterson, New Jersy, St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960), p. 26.

[6]Mystical Opuscula, p. 9.

[7]Dante, Paradise (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books, 1962), XIII.52-66.

[8]Charles Williams, The Descent of the Dove (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 58.

[9]Charles Williams, letter to Anne Ridler, October 1933, quoted in Anne Ridler, "Introduction" to Charles Williams, The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. xi.

[10]The Figure of Beatrice, p. 10.

[11]Ibid., p. 10.

[12]Dante, La Vita Nuova (Trans. Barbara Reynolds, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books, 1969), p. 79.

[13]C.S. Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad", in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 116.

[14]Charles Williams, "Notes on the Arthurian Myth", in The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 176.

[15]The Descent of the Dove, p. 116.

[16]Dorothy L. Sayers, The Poetry of Search and the Poetry of Statement (London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963), p. 68.

[17]Dorothy L. Sayers, "Introduction" to Dante, Hell (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books, 1949), p. 13.

[18]John Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1955), p. 18.

[19]La Vita Nuova, p. 30.

[20]Dante, Purgatory (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books, 1955), IX.118-126.

[21]The Figure of Beatrice, p. 157.

[22]Philip Wicksteed, From Vita Nuova to Paradiso (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1922), p. 24.

[23]Charles Williams, Shadows of Ecstasy (London, Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 56.

[24]The Poetry of Search and the Poetry of Statement, p. 60.

[25]Charles Williams, Descent Into Hell (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 82.

[26]Ibid., p. 126.

[27]Ibid., p. 140

IV. THE WAY OF LOVE

The Way of the Affirmation of Images expresses the idea that everything visible is an image of God and can be used to lead man to Him. This is often linked with the belief that every action, whether good or bad, issues from love and is a part of it. That which is good is rightly directed love and that which is bad is a perversion or distortion of love. David Lindsay says "Without love, there would be no sympathy--not even hatred, anger or revenge would be possible. These are all imperfect and distorted forms of pure love." [1] Dante expresses a similar idea:

> Bethink thee then how love must be the seed
> In you, not only of each virtuous action,
> But also of each punishable deed. [2]

Williams says "Deep, deeper than we believe, lie the roots of sin; it is in the good that they exist; it is in the good that they thrive and send up sap and produce the black fruit of hell." [3] Love ("the good") is at the bottom of everything and mankind can either follow its way or change that way and thus turn it into evil.

Heaven is love and Hell is a perversion of love; earth can be either Heaven or Hell. C.S. Lewis says "I

think earth, if chosen instead of Heaven, will turn out to have been all along, only a region in Hell; and earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been from the beginning a part of Heaven itself." [4] It is up to each person to choose whether to follow the way of love or whether to follow its perversion, whether to make earth Heaven or make it Hell.

Charles Williams uses St. Bonaventure's statement "Love is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" to illustrate the choice: "The alternative to being with Love at the centre of the circle is to distort the circumference for our own purposes." [5] The moment of choice comes when one first sees one's own god-bearing image; at that moment the decision must be made either to try to be with Love at the centre of the circle or not. If one decides not to try for the centre, or refuses to make the decision, one ends up disordering the circumference, perverting love, and choosing Hell. "From every gate to hell there was a way to heaven, yes, and in every way of heaven there was a gate to deeper hell." [6] The choice must be made and followed carefully through to the end.

When the lover first sees the image he is often filled with caritas. The young Dante is prepared to love and forgive everyone when he is near Beatrice:

> Whenever and wherever she appeared, in the hope of receiving her miracles salutation, I felt I had not an enemy in the world. Indeed, I glowed with a flame of charity which moved me to forgive all who had ever injured me; and if at that moment someone had asked me a question, about anything, my only reply would have been: "Love", with a countenance clothed with humility. . . . Anyone wanting to behold Love could have done so then by watching the quivering of my eyes. . . . So it is plain that in her greeting resides all my joy. . . . [7]

This state of caritas is a state of pure love in which the lover is filled with good will toward everyone. It is love as God loves; a love for something because it is, not because of what it is. It is the highest state of love because it is undirected and is there equally for everyone. This pure love is often awakened by the first sight of the image; Taliessin realizes this love when the glory of the Emperor appears in Dindrane's reflection in the pond.

The lover has, for the moment, become one with love and must now strive to get to the centre and remain there with love:

> Dante has to become the thing he has seen. He has to become, by his own will, the caritas which was, by God's will awakened in him at the smile of Beatrice; he has to be faithful to that great communication in the days when Beatrice does not smile. [8]

When the image itself has gone, the awareness created by that image must remain in order that the lover may proceed

along the Way. "The appearance of the glory is temporary; the authority of the glory towards pure love is everlasting; the quality of the glory is eternal, such as the Heavens have in Christ." [9] There must be continual striving and the intellect must attend at every step in order for the first appearance of glory to turn into the glory that is the city.

The intellect, or reason, is essential to the way of love; without it the lover is doomed to Hell where dwell "Those who have lost the good of intellect." [10] Dante is aware of the importance of the intellect in his relationship with Beatrice:

> Though her image, which was always present in my mind, incited Love to dominate me, its influence was so noble that it never allowed Love to guide me without the faithful counsel of reason. . . . [11]

Without reason to act as guide, the way of love can easily become false romanticism which eoncompasses lust, envy, jealousy, selfishness, and sentimentality, and this will destroy the value of experience and pervert love itself:

> Given the will, then the greater the analysis the greater the love, as has elsewhere been said: "Love is the chief art of knowledge and knowledge is the chief art of love." [12]

Love and the intellect must work together if the image and

the experience are not to be mistaken for something other than what they are.

The loss of intellect, even if only temporary, can cause the lover to believe that the romantic experience in itself is enough. The lover believes that the beloved is an end rather than a beginning. It is a refusal to acknowledge the image for what it is--something which can reveal God and thus begin the lover on the way toward God. In Dante's Hell, Francesca and Paolo have treated their love as an end in itself. Williams says that their sin is:

> lussuria, luxury, indulgence, self-yielding. . . . The persistent parleying with the occasion of sin, the sweet prolonged laziness of love, is the first surrender of the soul to hell--small but certain. The formal sin here is the adultury of the two lovers; the poetic sin is their shrinking from the adult love damanded of them, and their refusal of the opportunity of glory. [13]

Francesca and Paolo were reading about Lancelot and Guinevere and as they read their eyes met and they succumbed:

> But just one moment overcame us--when
>
> We read of the smile, desired of lips long-thwarted,
> Such smile, by such a lover kissed away,
> He that may never more from me be parted.
>
> Trembling all over, kissed my mouth. . . .[14]

They lose the good of intellect, temporarily yield, and

take the first step to Hell. It is likely that Lancelot and Guinevere began their sin in the same way and as a result of this apparently harmless moment they refuse the glory, see each other as the end rather than the means, and the vision is perverted until "Lancelot's gaze at the Host found only a ghost of the Queen" ("The Star of Percivale"). Instead of Guinevere bearing an image of God, that which is the earthly image of God now bears an image of Guinevere. It is a total distortion of the function of the image; it is a temporary loss of intellect leading to lust, rather than the image and the intellect together leading to God. It is also an exclusiveness; Guinevere and Lancelot want each other to the exclusion of all else, the next step is Arthur making love to himself in the person of Morgause.

Joined with the idea that the romantic experience is an end in itself is the idea that love is made for lovers rather than they for it. This is another form of selfishness; it is a taking in of a great force from outside and internalizing it until it becomes merely personal. Love must be recognized as an autonomous force and the individual must obey love rather than expect love to obey him. "Submission to love not only results in freedom; it is the only means by which freedom can be wholly attained. . . ." [15] Dindrane, and by her example, the

slave girl realize that submission and obedience to love result in freedom:

> She measured herself against her, in a suddenly now
> new-treasured servitude; she saw there
> love and a live heart lie in Dindrane
> and all circumstance of bondage blessed in her body
> moving to a bondage. . . .
>
> ("The Departure of Dindrane")

Each submits to the will of love and finds that in love "servitude and freedom were one and interchangeable" ("The Departure of Dindrane"). They have made themselves for the experience of love, rather than expecting it to be for them.

All acts of love are, in some degree, acts of exchange. They are a mutual giving and receiving that unite people and, if carried through to the highest point, unite all in a co-inherent web of exchange which Williams calls the city. The city is "love renewing itself in a mutual and exchanged knowledge"; [16] it is all mankind acting together for the general good in obedience to the will of God.

Bors and Elayne are creatures of exchange. Bors gives Elayne the fish, yet she must open her hand and accept it:

> Will you open your hand now to catch your own

> nova creatura? through stream and cataract sped,
> through shallow and depth? accipe, take the fish.
>
> ("Bors to Elayne: The Fish of Broceliande")

There must be this giving and receiving in any relationship and as Elayne accepts the fish, Bors sees that exchange is the beginning of glory: "everywhere the light through the great leaves is blown / on your substantial flesh and everywhere your glory frames." The theme of exchange between Bors and Elayne is further shown in "Bors to Elayne: On the King's Coins". Everything lives from something not itself and Bors lives from Elayne: "I am come again / to live from the founts and fields of your hands." He sees the city in her hands:

> for the hall is raised to the power of exchange of all
> by the small spread organisms of your hands; O Fair,
> there are the altars of Christ the City extended.
>
> . . . .
>
> O lady, your hand held the bread
> and Christ the City spread in the extensor muscles of
> your thumbs.

This is an expression of love as developed exchange. Bors and Elayne live from and in each other in the twy-nature that Williams says is the image of Christ.

The subject of "Bors to Elayne: On the King's Coins" is exchange in its many levels. Arthur has set up

a mint to make coins that will "scuttle and scurry between towns and towns, / to furnish dishes and flagons with change of good." At first this would appear to facilitate personal exchange; it will be easier for people to exchange goods and services and thus communicate with one another. Sir Kay says: "Money is the medium of exchange." Taliessin and Bors, both followers of the Affirmative Way and thus familiar with images and their use and danger, have doubts. Bors says: "but I came through the night, and saw the dragonlets' eyes / leer and peer. . . .", and Taliessin says:

> Sir, if you made verse you would doubt symbols.
> I am afraid of the little loosed dragons.
> When the means are autonomous, they are deadly; when words escape from verse they hurry to rape souls;
> when sensation slips from intellect expect the tyrant.

Both are afraid that the coins will become something other than a means of exchange, they will become ends in themselves and thus perverted images. The Archbishop says that this may happen, "Might may take symbols and folly make treasure, / and greed big God. . . . / . . . hide himself essentially. . . ." These are risks that must be taken because "Money is a medium of exchange." The way may be perverted, and it is not the only way, but it must be pursued in spite of the risks because it is one of the

ways.

Exchange, at a higher level, can be a means of bearing another's burdens for him. Williams terms this "substitution". It is a rather difficult concept to understand, but it would seem to be a furthering of the idea of giving all your problems of God and he will take care of them. In Williams' examples the burdens are given to someone else, someone who has volunteered to bear them. The ability to do this comes with the realization that "there is no such thing as one's own cross; the troubles that one thinks of and too often resents as one's own may well be really another's, and once this is realized they become tolerable." [17] This becomes an act of sharing and exchange that goes far in making up the city.

Williams' most comprehensive example of substitution occurs in his novel Descent into Hell, where Pauline Anstruther has a terrible fear that she will meet herself, a doppelganger, coming along the street. The fear is so strong that she is afraid to walk alone and it begins to torment her every moment. Peter Stanhope, a playwrite, and a persona of Williams (he had several articles published under that name), persuades her to tell him what is bothering her and when she does he offers to

bear that fear for her:

> Listen--when you go from here, when you're alone, when you think you'll be afraid, let me put myself in your place, and be afraid instead of you" . . . . "It's so easy," he went on, "easy for both of us. It needs only the act. For what can be simpler than for you to think to yourself that since I am there to be troubled instead of you, therefore you needn't be troubled? And what can be easier than for me to carry a little while a burden that isn't mine?"
>
> She said, still perplexed at a strange language: "But how can I cease to be troubled? Will it leave off coming because I pretend it wants you?" [18]

She is unbelieving and confused, as we all are, but she says she will try to let go of the fear (It is perhaps harder to let someone bear our burdens than it is to bear burdens for someone else), and she does: "She wouldn't worry; no, because she couldn't worry. That was the mere truth--she couldn't worry. She was, then and there, whatever happened later, entirely free." [19] The freedom from her own burden enables Pauline to bear the burden of another person, and her begins the web of the city: each person substituting for another in the sharing of problems and of the rewards. This is exchange at its highest good, co-inherence.

It is important here to have some idea of what Williams meant by the term "co-inherence". One one level it means that each individual is part of a larger unit and that unit is the human race. In Taliessin Through Logres

and The Region of the Summer Stars, that unit is imaged by the human body. "The organic body sang together" ("The Vision of the Empire"). The body is composed of many separate parts which Williams calls identities, but these are all part of the larger whole. Humanity is in a similar position; as the hands are part of the body, so each individual is part of the human race. We have no choice, we are all involved, at least minimally, in the co-inherence by our very existence.

We can, however, choose about our participation in the greater form of co-inherence which is the city. This form requires positive acts and much effort along every step of the way from the first appearance of the image. Mankind must joyfully embrace the idea of God, participate in every opportunity for exchange, love and accept love and become one with Christ. We must live in and from each other, and all of us in Christ. This is an extension of the bearing of one another's burdens. The martyr Felicitas said: "Now I suffer what I suffer; then another will be in me who will suffer for me, as I shall suffer for him." [20] It is an exact statement of co-inherence.

Williams says that it is not possible at this time for people to physically co-inherence; this is as a result of the division between flesh and spirit because

of the Fall, but he does not see why it couldn't be possible at some time.[21] Physical life begins with substitution and co-inhering: the man and the woman join together to produce a new life and "The child itself for nine months literally co-inheres in its mother. . . ."[22]

Exchange, substitution, and co-inherence operate simultaneously throughout all times. Past, present, and future are at once in the city. This enables Pauline Anstruther to take up the burden of an ancestor who had been burned at the stake:

> She herself was offered, in a most certain fact, through four centuries, her place at the table of exchange. The moment of goodwill in which she had directed to the City the man who had but lately died had opened to her the City itself, the place of the present and all the past. He was afraid, this martyr of her house, and she knew what to do. . . . She knew that the horror of the fire had overcome him. He was in the trap in which she had been. . . .[23]

The fear nearly overwhelms her but she knows what she must do and she speaks:

> "Give it to me, John Struther." He heard it, in his cell and chains. . . . He stretched out his arms again: he called: "Lord, Lord!" It was a devotion and an adoration; it accepted and thanked.[24]

Through the ages Pauline's act of substitution echoes until it reaches the martyr, and echoes back his knowledge of salvation. All times and all places have become one

moment within the city.

A similar act of substitution and co-inherence occurs in Taliessin Through Logres when all the poets, dead, alive, and as yet unborn unite to save Virgil from Hell:

> Others he saved; himself he could not save.
> In that hour they came; more and faster they sped
> to their dead master; they sought him to save
> from the spectral grave and the endless falling,
> when had heard, for their own instruction, the sound
> of his calling.
>
> . . . .
>
> Virgil was fathered of his friends.
> He lived in their ends.
> He was set on the marble of exchange.
>
> ("Taliessin on the Death of Virgil")

The exchange works both ways; they "live, and would, by his hexameters." He has, in a sense, saved them by teaching them the way of poetry, a way which can lead to God through its affirmation of images; they in turn must save him because he could not, as Christ could not, save himself.

Williams says that before the Fall mankind was totally co-inherent and had no need for acts of substitution and exchange to bring about a co-inherence. "The state of man's co-inherence was then so intense that the whole original body was desperately affected by the act of its primal member." [25] Everyone, through all time, partici-

pates with the Adam in the Fall. The division is repeated again and again as every individual becomes aware of evil:

> The tree about them died undying,
> the good lusted against the good,
> the Acts in conflict envenomed the bloody,
> on the twisted tree hung their body wrying.
>
> Joints cramped; a double entity
> spewed and struggled, good against good,
> they saw the mind of the Emperor as they could,
> his imagination of the wars of identity.
>
> ("The Vision of the Empire")

The body itself has become divided by the knowledge gained from desiring to know as God knows. Flesh and spirit have become separate entities, good is known as evil, and the human race has set parts of itself against other parts of itself. The original co-inherence has been sundered and a new co-inherence can only come about as a result of an act of exchange and substitution.

This act is the Incarnation:

> In their victimization and therefore in his, he proposed to effect an escape from the victimization. They had refused the co-inherence of the original creation, and had become (literally) incoherence in their sufferings. He proposed to make those sufferings themselves co-inherent in him, and therefore to reintroduce them into the principle which was he. The Incarnation was to be a Redemption as well. He became flesh for our sakes. . . .[26]

Incarnate God (Christ) proposes to take the sufferings in-

to himself; he will bear the burden that mankind has been carrying as a result of the Fall. With the crucifixion God gives man the opportunity to return to the co-inherence which is the city. The soul must move toward God by its own free will, but now the opportunity exists. Christ has become forgiveness and as a result of that forgiveness mankind can now be reunited in co-inherence, flesh and spirit can become one, and everything become known again as an element of the good. The way to God and to salvation has been opened up and mankind must accept the opportunity:

> The condition of forgiving then is to be forgiven; the condition of being forgiven is to forgive. The two conditions are co-existent; they are indeed the very point of co-existence, the root of the new union, the beginning of the recovery of the co-inherence in which all creation had begun. Out of that point of double submission the City of God was to rise. [27]

We must ask for pardon and then accept it in an act of exchange that is the first step toward the city.

Christ sacrifices himself for mankind. "He so forgave that he exchanged his love for man's loss; he received the loss and gave the love." [28] In return he demands that we give our lives for the sake of each other. "It is right for a man to take up the burden for them who are near to him. . . . For thus it is written <u>We are all one body</u>. . . ." [29] This giving and receiving makes up the

web of the city.

The Eucharist is the symbol of exchange and co-inherence. When we eat the bread and the wine we are symbolically eating the flesh and blood of Christ. "It is therefore that the Eucharist is also that forgiveness of his flesh, and that we literally feed on forgiveness." [30] Christ is then in us as we are in Him. In the Eucharist

> "to effect the mystery of unity, we ourselves receive of that which is His what He himself received of that which is ours." So the Fourth Council of Lateran decreeing in the highest things of earth the same doctrine of exchange. . . . [31]

This is the highest earthly affirmation of the way of love and is the result of the first affirmation, the appearance of the image. The joining together of all moments of exchange and substitution in all times makes up the co-inherence which is the city.

NOTES

[1]David Lindsay, A Voyage to Arcturus (New York, Ballantine Books, 1963), p. 213.

[2]Dante, Purgatory (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1955), XVIII.103-105.

[3]Charles Williams, The Descent of the Dove (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 108.

[4]C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce (London, Geoffrey Bles, 1945), p. 180.

[5]Charles Williams, The Figure of Beatrice (London, Faber and Faber, 1943), p. 48.

[6]Charles Williams, "Et in Sempiternum Pereant", The London Mercury, December 1933, p. 157.

[7]Dante, La Vita Nuova (Trans. Barbara Reynolds, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1969), p. 41.

[8]Charles Williams, Religion and Love in Dante (Westminster, Dacre Press, 1941?), p. 13.

[9]Charles Williams, He Came Down From Heaven (London, Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 79.

[10]Dante, Hell (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1949), III.18.

[11]La Vita Nuova, p. 30.

[12]Charles Williams, "Staring at Miracle", Time and Tide December 4, 1937, p. 1676.

[13]The Figure of Beatrice, p. 113.

[14]Hell, V.132-136.

[15]Mary McDermott Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 28.

[16]Charles Williams, The Forgiveness of Sins (London, Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 116.

[17]W.H. Auden, "Charles Williams: A Review Article", Christian Century, May 2, 1956, p. 522.

[18]Charles Williams, Descent into Hell (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eermands Publishing Co., 1970), p. 98.

[19]Ibid.,p. 104.

[20]The Descent of the Dove, p. 28.

[21]He Came Down From Heaven, p. 90.

[22]The Descent of the Dove, p. 234.

[23]Descent into Hell, p. 169.

[24]Ibid., p. 170.

[25]The Forgiveness of Sins, p. 124.

[26]Ibid., p. 152.

[27]Ibid., p. 157.

[28]Ibid., p. 156.

[29]The Descent of the Dove, p, 55.

[30]The Forgiveness of Sins, p. 188.

[31]Charles Williams, "The Redeemed City", The Dublin Review, October, 1941, p. 121.

V. THE IMAGE OF THE CITY

The Way of the Affirmation of Images and its mode, the way of love, lead to co-inherence and thus to the city. The city in one sense is heaven, in another it is the perfection of society on earth:

> So far as organized human society is concerned, Williams' basic image is that of the City. The term can narrow to the smallest social unit, say a business firm or a family. It can widen to include Holy Church, that City of God which should also be the City of Man. It embraces Arthur's Logres and modern London. It functions as a symbol of the Byzantine Empire and of the Emperor himself as gathering, like Christ, the whole of humanity within his person. [1]

The perfection comes about as a result of love at its highest levels of exchange, substitution, and co-inherence. Christ is the city and in the co-inherence we are all in each other and all in Christ. Logres is an attempt to attain that perfection.

The city as it is (Williams calls it the state) images the co-inherent city (hereafter called the city). As with all images it is itself, yet with all its schisms and contradictions it images something greater. It is impossible to define that city, "the kingdom of heaven will not be defined by inexact terms and exacter terms", [2] in part it is a web of glory made up of all people living

from and to each other in a pattern of exchange. Williams gives a vision of the city in All Hallows' Eve:

> She saw a glowing and glimmering City, of which the life was visible as a roseal wonder within. The steets of it were first the streets of today, full of business of today--shops, transport, men and women . . . . It was London known again and anew. Then, gently opening, she saw among those streets other streets. She had seen them in pictures, but now she did not think of pictures, for these were certainly the streets themselves--another London, say--other Londons, into which her own London opened or with which it was intermingled. No thought of confusion crossed her mind; it was all very greatly ordered . . . . She was (though she did not find the phrase) looking along time. Once or twice she thought she saw other streets, unrecognizable, with odd buildings and men and women in strange clothes. But these were rare glimpses and less clear, as if the future of the City only occasionally showed. . . .
>
> It was not for her yet to know the greater mystery. That waited her growth in grace, and the enlargement of her proper faculties in due time. . . . There around her lay not only London, but all cities--coincident yet each distinct; or else, in another mode, lying by each other as the districts of one city lie. . . . In this City lay all--London and New York, Athens and Chicago, Paris and Rome and Jerusalem; it was that to which they led in the lives of their citizens. [3]

This would appear to be a conscious reflection of Traherne's Centuries, III,iii:

> The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. . . . The men! Oh what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal cherubins! And young men glittering and sparkling angels, and maids

> strange pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the street, and playing, were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die; but all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the light of the day. . . . The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in heaven. [4]

The city is all times and all places joined into one; in Williams' vision London provides the image in which the city is seen.

There is no conflict between the idea of the state with all its imperfections and the idea of the city. The city is made up of all the day to day actions that make up the state; yet in the city they are transformed into acts of glory. London is not the vision seen in All Hallows' Eve, but it is an image of what could be when the state becomes the city. Politics, the governing of the state, can become part of the city: "Politics are, or should be, a part of caritas; they are the matter to which the form of caritas must be applied." [5]

Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars are about translating politics into caritas, translating a chaotic earthly kingdom into the ordered reflection of heaven, translating the state into the city. Williams begins his cycle with a quote from Dante's De Monarchia: "Hence it is that the proper operation does not exist for the sake of the essence, but the essence has its

being for the sake of the operation." The operation is love and the essence is Arthur's kingdom, Logres. Logres exists because of love and for the sake of love, but it perverts this and thinks and acts as if love exists for the sake of Logres; thus the experiment fails.

In the "Prelude" to Taliessin Through Logres the situation is described:

> the glory of the Emperor stretched to the ends of the world.
>
> in the season of midmost Sophia
> the words of the Emperor established a kingdom in Britain;
> they sang in Sophia the immaculate conception of wisdom.

The Emperor creates Logres and makes it part of the Empire. In the image of the Empire as an organic body, Logres is the mind of the organism. In one sense this is God's creation of man as a creature with intellect.

The actual instruments of creation are Merlin (time) and Brisen (space). They prepare the formula and then go off: Merlin to meet Arthur and build Camelot, Brisen to prepare Carbonek for the birth of Galahad. The preparation is made for both the coming of the city in Logres and, failing that, the coming of the city in Galahad. Taliessin sets out for Byzantium where he sees a vision of the Empire and learns how Logres can become the city:

> The organic body sang together;
> dialects of the world sprang in Byzantium;
> back they ran to sing in Byzantium;
> the streets repeat the sound of the Throne.
>
> ("The Vision of the Empire")

Taliessin sees all in a multitude of exchange, each part giving to and receiving from each other part. Exchange is the medium of the city and Taliessin goes to Logres to share and teach in this exchange and thus build the city.

Logres is only begun when Taliessin arrives, "into the camp by the hazels / I Taliessin came" ("Taliessin's Return to Logres"). Taliessin's first important action in Logres occurs at Mount Badon where he leads the company that wins the battle: "he saw, in the long field, / the point where the pirate chaos might suddenly yield, / the place for the law of grace to strike" ("Mount Badon"). This is the imposition of order on chaos and the beginning of the city. Order is one of the things which makes up co-inherence:

> All beings great and small
> Are linked in order; and this orderliness
> Is form, which stamps God's likeness of the All. [6]

At the time of the Fall when the co-inherence is sundered, the order becomes chaos. Taliessin redeems that chaos and again makes it order.

Now begins the brief golden age of Logres. The kingdom has been created, order has been redeemed, and it is now up to humanity whether the experiment succeeds or fails:

> The Empire, in the peace of the Emperor,
> expected perfection; it awaited the Second Coming
> of the Union, of the twy-natured single Person,
> centuries belated, now to be. . . .
>
> ("Prelude" to The Region of the Summer Stars)

The part of the Empire which is Logres has been prepared for the operation, now it must remain worthy of it.

During this time in Logres the acts of affirmation and exchange go on: Bors and Elayne marry, Taliessin and Dindrane meet, Percivale plays his harp, and the slave girl begins the way to God after she hears Taliessin sing. The slave girl comes to God of her own will as a result of an affirmation; other slaves find God as a result of discipline. In "The Sister of Percivale" discipline is imaged by a scar on the back of a slave; in the same poem a star images the love of the city:

> The stress of the scar ran level with the star of
> Percivale.
>
> Scars and lightnings are the edge of the spun wheel;
> Spun is the reel to the height; the plan revolves;
> the peal breaks from the bone and the way of union
> speaks.
>
> Blessed is the eyed axis of both horizons,

and the wheel that taxes the hips and generates the sphere,
and illumination that waxes in the full revolution.

The star and scar are two faces of the same thing, and that thing is the city. People can be brought to the city by discipline but they remain by love.

Also during this time Taliessin's company grows and becomes a microcosm of the city:

it was first nobly spoken as a token of love
between themselves, and between themselves and their lord.
Grounds in the Acts of the Throne and the pacts of the
themes,
it lived only by conceded recollection,
having no decision, no vote or admission,
but for the single note that any soul
took of its own election of the Way. . . .

("The Founding of the Company")

It is not a closed group, it is itself, yet still part of Logres. The King in "Judgement at Chelmsford" says:

because the City is beyond all tribes
and all lives, even our dukedom of Colchester,
I have believed in it, and kept my people
as a street in the City rather than a village of their
own.[7]

Taliessin's company is a street in the city. The members do not make public profession of their membership in the city, but by example they reveal that they are members.

Members of the company exist along three levels. At

the first level

> were those who lived by a frankness of honourable exchange, lavour in the kingdom, devotion in the Church, the need each had of other; this was the measurement and motion of process--the seed of civil polity.

These are people who have embarked along the first step of exchange, they participate in acts of loving and sharing on an economic and social level. At the second level are those who practise substitution, "dying each other's life, living each other's death." In whatever they do they bear the burden for another, even so far as to die for that other; "none of the Company--/ in marriage, in the priesthood, in friendship, in all love--/ forgot in their own degree the decree of substitution." At the third level are those who can participate in the fullest co-inherence. They have grasped exchange and substitution as far as it is possible; they have become one with Christ:

> Few--and that hardly--entered on the third
> station, where the fullest salvation of all souls
> is seen, and their co-inhering, as when the Trinity
> first made man in Their image, and now restored
> by the one adored substitution; there men
> were known, each alone and none alone,
> bearing and borne, as the Flesh-taking sufficed
> the God-bearer to make her a sharer in Itself.

The members of the company at this third level have become the city. Of the Lords, Percivale, Dinadan, Dindrane, the

Archbishop, and of course Taliessin have reached this level. W.H. Auden says:

> the first law of the spiritual universe, the Real City, is that nobody can carry his own burden; he only can, and therefore he must, carry someone else's. Whose burden in particular he should carry is up to him to decide: usually this choice is dictated by his character and his social circumstances. . . but a few--Taliessin. . . is one--can become so adept at this practice that they can do it for anybody. [8]

All members at the third level of Taliessin's company can carry the burdens of anyone, this is the true meaning of co-inherence and of the city.

Simultaneously with the acts of affirmation and the growing of the company, the acts of the destruction proceed. Lancelot and Guinevere twist love by thinking it is made for them rather than they for it, and in twisting love they pervert their relationship to everything:

> When they do become lovers, they pervert their relation to the King and the Kingdom, and because they are among his subjects, they also pervert his relation with all his subjects, and as a result, Logres cannot achieve the Grail. Further, because the web is sundered, the two lovers can no longer love each other. [9]

Arthur refuses to participate in exchange and lies with Morgause, rather than loving a true other. At the same time he mistakes his function, "the king made for the kingdom,

or the kingdom made for the king?" ("The Crowning of Arthur"). Selfishness and vanity take their toll; the Fall happens once again, the web of co-inherence is sundered, and Logres becomes "mere Britain". The city is not to be in Logres and Logres is not to be in the city.

The experiment is not a total failure, for Galahad not only attains but becomes the union; he, Bors, and Percivale attain the Grail, and the company comes into being. What cannot be for all of Logres is for a small portion of it, for those who participate in the acts of exchange, substitution, and co-inherence. The company continues still; it is the remnant of the city on earth:

> "Therefore now We dissolve the former bonds--"
> the voice sounded, the hands descended--"We dissolve
> the outer bonds; We declare the Company still
> fixed in the will of all who serve the Company,
> but the ends are on Us, peers and friends. . . .
>
> ("The Prayers of the Pope")

The co-inherence exists among those few who follow the way of love and practise exchange and substition; the city can come again.

Williams uses the image of the city in Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars to show how the co-inherence can become reality. Logres is the state that is to become the city; this does not happen but

the image of the city is as valid as ever. As Beatrice imaged a greater reality for Dante, so the city images that reality for Williams. The earthly city, in its true image, reflects the heavenly city, and through love and its ways can become a type of that heavenly city.

NOTES

[1]Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry, Vol. VI (New York, Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 123.

[2]Charles Williams, The Forgiveness of Sins (London, Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 108.

[3]Charles Williams, All Hallows' Eve (New York, The Noonday Press, 1969), p. 188.

[4]Thomas Traherne, Centuries of Meditations, III.iii.

[5]Charles Williams, Religion and Love in Dante (Wesminster, Dacre Press, 1941?), p. 14.

[6]Dante, Paradise (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1962), VIII.43-45.

[7]Charles Williams, "Judgement at Chelmsford", Collected Plays (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 132.

[8]W.H. Auden, "Charles Williams: A Review Article", Christian Century, May 2, 1956, p. 522.

[9]Mary McDermott Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 27.

C.S. Lewis' ordering of the poems in Taliessin Through Logres (TTL) and The Region of the Summer Stars (RSS) as outlined in C.S. Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad", in Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 96.

The Calling of Taliessin (RSS)
The Calling of Arthur (TTL)
The Vision of the Empire (TTL)
Taliessin's Return to Logres (TTL)
Mount Badon (TTL)
The Crowning of Arthur (TTL)
Taliessin's Song of the Unicorn (TTL)
Bors to Elayne: the Fish of Broceliande (TTL)
Taliessin in the School of the Poets (TTL)
Taliessin on the Death of Virgil (TTL)
The Coming of Palomides (TTL)
Lamorack and the Queen Morgause of Orkney (TTL)
Bors to Elayne: on the King's Coins (TTL)
The Star of Percivale (TTL)
The Ascent of the Spear (TTL)
The Sister of Percivale (TTL)
The Founding of the Company (RSS)
Taliessin in the Rose Garden (RSS)
The Departure of Dindrane (RSS)
The Queen's Servant (RSS)
The Son of Lancelot (TTL)
Palomides Before his Christening (TTL)
The Coming of Galahad (TTL)
The Departure of Merlin (TTL)
The Death of Palomides (TTL)
Percivale at Carbonek (TTL)
The Meditation of Mordred (RSS)
The Last Voyage (TTL)
The Prayers of the Pope (RSS)
Taliessin at Lancelot's Mass (TTL)

SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auden, W.H. "Charles Williams: A Review Article". Christian Century. May 2, 1956.

Auden begins with a vivid personal recollection of Williams and then briefly discusses the way of exchange. He determines that the novels are the least successful of Williams' work because Williams is interested "in states of being rather than in individuals, and fiction is not an ideal medium for describing such."

Borrow, Antony. "The Affirmation of Images: An Examination of the Novels of Charles Williams". Nine: A Magazine of Poetry and Criticism. Summer/Autumn 1952.

Borrow examines Williams' novels in light of the occult and the legends Williams used. He concludes that "Williams' great achievement. . . seems to lie in his recharging of myth. . .", a statement which applies to the poetry as well as to the novels.

Brown, Robert McAfee. "Charles Williams: Lay Theologian". Theology Today. June 1953.

This long article is a general introduction to Williams' main theological themes.

Cavaliero, Glen. "The Way of Affirmation: A Study of the Writings of Charles Williams". Church Quarterly Review. January - March 1956.

This excellent article discusses the Way of Affirmation as outlined by Williams as a possible solution to man's conflict between what could be and what is. Cavaliero sees Williams' work as an attempt to ex-

---

*The books and articles selected for annotation are those most most directly relevant to this thesis. Other books consulted are cited below as "A Supplementary Bibliography".

plain the conflict and resolve it into the unity that exists below the surface at all times. Cavaliero's discussion of Williams' theological works is the most important aspect of the article, but the novels and drama are also adquately dealt with.

Conquest, Robert. "The Art of the Enemy". Essays in Criticism. January 1957.

Conquest criticizes Williams' poetry on the grounds that it is totalitarian, that it has "surprising lapses, reflecting on the general taste or education of Williams and his advisers," that it is too complex and symbolic to be poetry, and that it has "Both the over-detailed subtlety of the crank theorist, and the self-satisfaction of the consciously elect. . . ." He says that Williams' work is the product of a closed intellectual system that might have been fine in Dante's time but is out of date and senseless now since most people do not believe in this system any more. Conquest's own intellectual framework seems to prevent him from understanding or accepting Williams' poetry and his statements, although one can sympathise with some of them, are as dogmatic as any implied in Christianity.

Dawson, Lawrence R.Jr. "Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction". Ball State Teachers College Forum. Winter 1964.

This article is concerned with Williams' reviews of detective fiction and the influence this had on his own novels. Williams particularly admired the detective stories of Sax Rohmer (it was as a result of reading one of his Fu-Manchu books that Williams wrote his first novel, Shadows of Ecstasy), Dorothy Sayers, John Dickson Carr, Ellery Queen, and others.

Every, George. "Charles Williams - I. The Accuser". Theology. March 1948.

Every's most important point is that the Accuser in Judgement at Chelmsford, the Skeleton in Thomas Cranmer and in The Seed of Adam, and the Flame in The House

of the Octopus, are elements of the good. They may appear as evil to the ignorant, but they come "between the things themselves and our high dreams about them, teaching us to distinguish the sign from the thing signified, the way from the end, the beloved from love." They give a vision of what is true, rather than what we think is true.

_____. "Charles Williams - II. The City and the Substitutions". Theology. April 1948.

This article concentrates on the drama and later poetry. Every says that in his Arthurian poems, Williams acts as myth-maker in that his reworking of earlier myths creates something very different from the original.

_____. Poetry and Personal Responsibility. London: SCM Press; 1949.

In the chapter and a half dealing with Williams, Every is mainly concerned with the co-inherence. He says little that is not more completely covered elsewhere (particularly in Shiedeler's The Theology of Romantic Love).

Hadfield, Alice Mary. An Introduction to Charles Williams. London: Robert Hale Ltd.; 1959.

Hadfield presents a curious muddle of personal anecdotes about Williams, important biographical data that relates to his work, and critical analysis of the poetry. The books, in spite of its confusion, has value because she has much information (letters from Williams, quotations from poetry and reviews that are long out of print, and statements from Williams about what he was trying to do in his poetry) that is not available anywhere else.

Hanshell, H.D. "Charles Williams: A Heresy Hunt". Month. New Series. January 1953.

Hanshell criticizes Williams on the grounds that he is not the "great writer" that Dorothy Sayers and C.S.

Lewis have calimed him to be. His main target is The Figure of Beatrice because he says that Williams placed too much emphasis on Beatrice. Hanshell prefers to think that Beatrice was of little importance to the Divine Comedy and was, "if one may say so, put in her place." He neglects to tell us what that place is. He says that Williams' novels, drama, and poetry are the product of a mind that had deluded itself into thinking it had a creative gift, and that Williams' "famed 'originality' was basically a matter of indiscipline of spirit."

Heath-Stubbs, John. "The Poetic Achievement of Charles Williams". Poetry London. September 1947.

This article provides a brief introduction to the poetry. It contains little that is not in Heath-Stubbs' book, Charles Williams.

_____. "Charles Williams: Spiritual Power and its Temptations". Time and Tide. 1 May 1948.

Heath-Stubbs discusses the nature of evil in the novels of Charles Williams. He determines that when one knows much about spiritual power one is tempted to use it for oneself. The Williams novels are about the conflict between those willing to be used by the spiritual power and those wishing to use the spiritual power for their own selfish ends.

_____. Charles Williams. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.; 1955.

This is a useful introduction to Williams and his work. It contains interesting biographical material and deals with Williams' influence on his contemporaries and on younger British poets, as well as briefly summarizing Williams' main ideas as they are contained in the poetry, novels, and drama.

Jones, David. "The Arthurian Legend". Tablet. December 25, 1948.

Jones says that the difficulty with Williams'

Arthurian poetry is that it lacks what he calls "now-ness." He says that images must be valid now and that although Williams and C.S. Lewis consider the Arthurian images valid, they are not valid in Williams' poetry as far as he is concerned.

Mathew, Gervase. "Williams and the Arthuriad". Time and Tide. 1 June 1949.

This review of Arthurian Torso by Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis concludes that "Arthurian Torso is the most vital contribution to the growth of the Arthurian myth that has been made for nearly five hundred years."

Maynard, Theodore. Our Best Poets. London: Bretano's Ltd.; 1924.

Maynard ranked the top twelve living poets in Britain in 1924. He placed Charles Williams third, behind G.K. Chesterton (first) and Alice Meynell (second), and above Walter de la Mare (fourth), W.B. Yeats (sixth), Laurence Binyon (eleventh), and others. He justifies his choice of Williams, whom he says is an unknown, by saying that "his poetry has a greatness to which few of the moderns have attained, and promises a greatness which none of the moderns can hope to surpass." He says that Divorce, Williams' latest book in 1924, marks the beginning of the period of transition before the coming of his "supreme effort."

Moorman, Charles. Arthurian Triptych. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1960.

Moorman discusses the use of the Arthurian material as myth in the literature of Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis, and T.S. Eliot. The section on Williams identifies some of the geography and dramatis personae of the Taliessin poems (the identification relies heavily on Williams' and Lewis' Arthurian Torso) and outlines what appear to be the main themes. A major weakness is that Moorman ignores Dante and as a consequence finds it difficult to explain much of the Williams' material, particularly that which deals with the

attempt to perfect a civilization on earth.

_____. The Precincts of Felicity. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press; 1966.

Moorman examines the "Oxford Christians"--Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, T.S. Eliot, and Dorothy Sayers--and the concept of "the City" that he sees in their work. He also tries to point out connections in their work that show that they may have influenced one another.

Parsons, Geoffrey. "The Spirit of Charles Williams". The Atlantic Monthly. November 1949.

This article was written to introduce Williams to the American public. It contains an enthusiastic discussion of the novels with emphasis placed on Williams' use of the super-natural and on his skill as a writer of "thrillers".

Ridler, Anne. "Introduction". in Williams, Charles. The Image of the City and Other Essays. London: Oxford University Press; 1958.

In this introduction to a collection of essays by Williams, Anne Ridler outlines some of the basic points in Williams' poetry and drama. She knew Williams and her essay contains much useful information gathered from conversations with and letters from Williams.

Shideler, Mary McDermott. The Theology of Romantic Love. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 1966 (c. 1962).

Shideler says that Williams' "theology of romantic love" grew out of the discovery of a precise analogy between Christian doctrine and the vivid personal experience of falling in love. The book is a thorough examination of Williams' writing and brings together his central themes as related to his concept of romantic love.

_____. Charles Williams: A Critical Essay. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 1966.

This book deals with Williams' attitude toward love as it is presented in his novels, dramas, and poetry. It acts as an excellent introduction to Williams' work and is a background to Shideler's more extensive work on Williams' The Theology of Romantic Love.

Starr, Nathan Comfort. King Arthur Today. Gainesville: The University of Florida Press; 1954.

Starr discusses the Arthurian myth in twentieth century British and American literature. His chapter on Williams deals with the grail as the main force in War in Heaven, Taliessin Through Logres, and The Region of the Summer Stars. He says "the most exciting development of the legend in our day has been the re-establishment of the Grail by Charles Williams and others as a profound spiritual force."

Urang, Gunar. Shadows of Heaven. Philadelphia: The Pilgrim Press; 1971.

Urang discusses the "fantasy" novels of C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J.R.R. Tolkien. His section on Williams is mainly concerned with the idea of co-inherence as expressed in the novels.

Watkins, Vernon. "Three Sonnets for Charles Williams". The Wind and the Rain. 1951.

These sonnets show Williams' influence on younger poets better than any other specific group of poems.

Williams, Charles. "The Hero in English Verse. Contemporary Review. December 1920.

In this study of man's struggle against fate in English poetry Williams discusses Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, and Coventry Patmore. He decides that we must wait for a future poet to show

us man conquering the onmipotent and finding God as love.

_____. "The Commonwealth in English Verse." Contemporary Review. August 1923.

Williams states that Engish poetry dealing with politics takes two forms. One is a realization of, and a revolt against, political and social injustice. The other is a vision of, and an inspiration after, political and social justice. The realization occurs in much English poetry but the vision only in "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Prelude". Williams says that the reason there is so little good political poetry in England is because the idea of community is not foremost in British minds.

_____. Poetry at Present. 1930. rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press; 1969.

In this volume Williams discusses only those poets alive when he wrote the book (1928 - 1930) and only those whose poetry has "enlarged the boundaries of English verse." The book is an over-view of the work of the poets discusses, rather than a critical survey. It therefore does not contribute much to an understanding of Williams' views on poetry.

_____. War in Heaven. 1930. rpt. London: Faber and Faber; 1957.

In this novel the holy grail turns up in a small church in England. Various powers decide to use it for their own evil ends but in the final conflict the good wins and the grail mysteriously withdraws itself to the East, in the keeping of Prester John.

_____. Many Dimensions. 1931. rpt. London: Faber and Faber; 1958.

In this novel a girl gives her will to a mysterious Stone from the East with the Tetragrammaton engraved on it. The Stone has many powers and everyone but the

girl desires it for their own ends. She only desires what it desires and is therefore able to restore it to itself and save others from using it for evil.

_____. The Place of the Lion. 1931. rpt. London: Faber and Faber; 1965.

The archetypes of certain powers take shape in the physical world in this novel. They are subdued and return to their origins when one man is brave enough to face them.

_____. Shadows of Ecstasy. 1931. rpt. London: Faber and Faber; 1958.

This is Williams' first novel but it was not published until after The Place of the Lion and War in Heaven. It deals with the idea of a dark force (something like D.H. Lawrence's religion of the blood) emananting from Africa and attempting to take over Britain. It is stopped when it attempts to impose its will on an educated African chief and when one of its own initiates succumbs to greed.

_____. Three Plays. Oxford University Press; 1931.

This book contains five of Williams' early Arthurian poems: "Taliessin's song of Logres", "Taliessin's Song of Byzantion", "Taliessin's Song of the King's Crowning", "Taliessin's Song of the Setting of Galahad in the King's Bed", and "Epilogue in Somerset: A Song of the Myths".

_____. The Greater Trumps. 1932. rpt. New York: Avon Books; 1969.

In this novel the Greater Trumps come alive as natural forces. A young man seeks to possess them by destroying their owner and unleashes a disastrous storm that appears as if it will end the world. The storm is stopped because of the love that the man's fiancee has and because of her courage within that love.

_____. Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; 1933.

Williams discusses the use of the word "reason" in Wordsworth's "Prelude", the abandonment of intellect in Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the empahsis laid on reason in Paradise Lost, and the schism in reason in Shakespeare's tragedies. He concludes that Wordsworth, Milton, and Shakespeare involve the intellect in a search for identity, whereas Keats desires the abandonment of intellect in an escape from identity.

_____. "Autocriticisms". Week-End Review. November 18, 1933.

In this brief article Williams discusses his own Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind. He explains some parts of the book that he thinks could be misunderstood.

_____. "Et in Sempiternun Pereant". The London Mercury. December 1933.

This, Williams' only short story, deals with a man facing a moment of choice. The man realizes that "From every gate of hell there was a way to heaven, yes, and in every way to heaven there was a gate to deeper hell." It is up to him to decide what to do within whichever gate he chooses.

_____. Descent into Hell. 1937. rpt. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 1970.

The doctrine of exchange is more clearly expressed in this novel than anywhere else in Williams' work. Pauline Anstruther, a young woman who is terrified of one day meeting herself, is able to accept the offer of Peter Stanhope that he bear her fear for her. He does and Pauline is able to bear the fear that an ancestor of hers felt when he was burned at the stake. Williams is thus able to show how the co-inherence operates throughout all time so that one can bear the burden of someone in the past, or of someone in the

future, as well as someone living at this time.

_____. "Staring at Miracle". Time and Tide. 4 December 1937.

In this review of W.B. Yeats' A Vision, Williams is most impressed by Yeats' statements on love: "Love is the chief art of knowledge and knowledge is the chief art of Love." and "Love is created and preserved by intellectual analysis." Williams concludes that only by heeding these ideas can man discover the principle of exchanged life and thus of salvation.

_____. "Notes on the Way". Time and Tide. 27 August, 1938.

Williams explains that the position take by the Catholic Church in condemning certain books is similar to that taken by secular governments in times of crisis because the Chruch believes that mankind is always in a state of crisis. He then proposes that men re-examine the images that they see and suggests that it is almost impossible to imagine an Antichrist. His choice for the human figure which best images Antichrist is Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo) because he desired love but would not humble himself enough to accept it.

_____. "Notes on the Way". Time and Tide. 3 September 1938.

Williams asks if one can discuss one art in the technique of another. "Can one criticize music in anything but music? Of if one can, ought one not to regard verbal criticism as a poor substitute for the real thing?" He comes to no conclusion.

_____. "Men and Books". Time and Tide. 22 October, 1938.

Williams' review of Jacques Maritain's True Humanism and Nicolas Berdyaev's Solitude and Society concentrates on the idea that in the absolute sense the true Christian City is the Church but that we sometimes gain

by "considering the Church as a City-anthropotokos as as theotokos." Exchange is the medium of any city, and salvation can only be achieved through love (exchange).

_____. The Descent of the Dove 1939. rpt. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 1969.

Williams subtitles this "A History of the Holy Spirit in the Church". His subject is the development of the Church from a point out of time which he says is the meeting of two heavenward lines, "one drawn from Bethany along the Ascent of the Messias, the other from Jerusalem against the Descent of the Paraclete." He details events in the history of Christendom, particularly those which explain the co-inherence and the two Ways of Images, and states that the history of the Christian Church can be summarized by the maxim "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou."

_____. The English Poetic Mind. 1939. rpt. New York: Russell and Russell; 1963.

Williams' main point is that poetry is poetry and will not be subject to any outside force. He discusses Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and others, and says that his purpose has been to examine "the passing of the poetic genius from its earlier states to its full strength."

_____. "The Nature of Charity". Time and Tide. 25 February 1939.

In this review of A Popular History of the Church by Philip Hughes and History of the Dogma of the Trinity by Jules Lebreton, Williams discusses the supernatural nature of Charity. He says that God is Charity and that Charity is an operation that involves co-inherent existences.

_____. "Sensuality and Substance". Theology. May 1939.

In this article Williams attempts to establish a sense

of the body as something as important as the soul. He claims that Christian orthodoxy has tended to spiritualize or ignore the body and that this is neglecting half of the entire Man. In an interesting section on D.H. Lawrence, he claims that Lawrence was on the right track in his glorification of the physical but that because Lawrence was "ignorant of Christianity" he was unable to lead men in a positive direction.

_____. "Men and Books". Time and Tide. 24 June 1939.

In this discussion of John D. Sinclair's translation of the first two parts of The Divine Comedy, Williams talks about the importance of eyes, particularly the eyes of Beatrice, in Dante's work.

_____. "Church and State". Time and Tide. 21 October 1939.

Williams' review of Don Luigi Sturzo's Church and State praises Sturzo for his outline of the dangers of separating Church from State. The review then moves to an analysis of the Church-State situation in 1939. Williams asks about the duty of church-folk as nationals in a time of war, and decides that "Their duty as nationals involves separation from and killing of German nationals. Their duty as church-folk involves union with and spiritual dependence on Germans. Both duties must be fulfilled." He does not say how this can be carried out except that all must repent for all the atrocities of war, whether committed by the Germans or by anyone else, because all co-inhere in sin.

_____. "Divites Dimisit". Theology. December 1939.

This poem about the end of Logres (and perhaps also about the end of Britain) would appear to be a variant of "The Prayers of the Pope" in The Region of the Summer Stars.

_____. "The Romantic Need". Time and Tide. 3 February 1940.

In this review of B. Ifor Evans' Tradition and Romanticism Williams says that the main problem with the so-called romantic poets is that they lacked a mythology. He criticizes Evans for suggesting that Eliot's use of the Arthurian myth in The Wasteland is a distortion and says that the material "blazed as steadily in Mr. Eliot's work as anywhere."

_____. "One Way of Love". Time and Tide. 13 April 1940.

In this review of Denis de Rougemont's Passion and Society, Williams disagrees with the author and says that there are not two differerent kinds of love: "By virtue of the Incarnation Eros and Agape are no longer divided. . . ."

_____. "The Image of the City in English Verse". The Dublin Review. July 1940.

In this discussion Williams concludes that the close web of the desired City can only come about "by the ordering of an intellect so swiftly capable of ordering its emotions that it may itself be said to 'feel'."

_____. "Christ and Adam". Time and Tide. 2 November 1940.

This review of Denis Saurat's Regeneration and The Christ at Chartres says that the only solution to the present condition of the world is "the re-establishment of the two principles of authority and liberty, and their maintainence in equilibrium."

_____. Religion and Love in Dante. Westminster: Dacre Press; (n.d. 1941?).

This pamphlet contains much that is in The Figure of Beatrice. Its particular concern is the awakening of caritas in Dante by the appearnce of Beatrice. Williams

makes an interesting statement about caritas but does not elaborate on it: "Politics are, or should be, a part of caritas; they are the matter to which the form of caritas must be applied."

_____. Witchcraft. 1941. rpt. New York: Meridian Books; 1969.

Williams says that his book is "a brief account of the history in Christian times of that perverted way of the soul which we call magic, or (on a lower level) witchcraft. . . ." The book details cases of witchcraft and of the persecution of witches from the beginning of Christendom to the Salem witch trials. The only conclusion Williams draws is that although witchcraft is a perverted way of the soul, greater perversion of images came about as a result of the relentless persecution of suspected witches at the hands of serious Christians.

_____. "Dinadan's Song". Time and Tide. 15 March 1941.

This is a short poem of the carefree, ironic knight of the Arthurian poems.

_____. "Charles Williams on 'Taliessin Through Logres' ". The Poetry Review. May 1941.

Williams sets out to explain how he wrote the Taliessin poems but decides that a thorough examination would be "boring". He briefly outlines how some of the main images developed. The article is important for its identification of the images rather than for any insight into Williams' poetic process.

_____. "Innovations of Intelligence". Time and Tide. 17 August 1941.

In this review Williams discusses The Mind of the Maker by Dorothy Sayers and The Recovery of the West by Michael Roberts. He concludes that the Sayers article is almost convincing and sums it up by quoting

her: "Eternity is in the Father, form in the image, and use in the Gift." He says that the Roberts article sums up many of the most distasteful but important truths in our civilization and concludes that his book deserves much careful reading.

_____. "The Redeemed City". The Dublin Review. October 1941.

In this article Williams says that the City is Union and it is perfect exchange. When he refers to the "City" it would seem that Williams is talking about the spiritual community of people who co-inhere in each other and in God.

_____. "Natural Goodness". Theology. October 1941.

Williams says that the "natural" and "supernatural" states are not opposites but are complementary. In the human condition the soul is the "supernatural" and the body the "natural".

_____. "The Doctrine of Largesse". Time and Tide. 6 December 1941.

In this review of Vincent Taylor's Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Williams explains that the doctrine of largesse is a process of forgiveness and being forgiven.

_____. "Ways of the Soul". The New English Weekly. January 8, 1942.

In this review of Grey Eminence by Aldous Huxley, Williams defines the Way of the Affirmation and the Way of the Negation and says that they are not exclusive; they are part of a single principle of exchange which is co-inherence governing the universe. One cannot exist without the other.

_____. "Letters in Hell". Time and Tide. 21 March 1942.

In this review of his friend C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters, Williams writes as if he were in hell and says that the book gives away all the secrets that would help people to escape from hell.

_____. "Notes on the Way". Time and Tide. 7 May 1942.

Williams says that Britain in 1942 is in the time of "the Dolorous Blow and the madness of Lancelot". He discusses the difference between "cohering" and "co-inhering" and says that for Britain to see its way through the war, the Chiefs of Staff must co-inhere as certain knights of the Round Table did to see an earlier Britain through its worst hours.

_____. "The Index of the Body". The Dublin Review. July 1942.

In this article Williams proposes that the body should be studies as an index to all the heavenly qualities because Man was created in the image of God and therefore possesses certain virtues which can be seen in the body. The body must not be separated from the soul, therefore the virtues which are present in the soul are also present (and more easily observed) in the body. The body should be studied as an index to increase our preparation for the "whole text."

_____. "St. John of the Cross". Time and Tide. 27 June 1942.

Williams outlines the life of St. John of the Cross and discusses the Way of the Rejection of Images followed by St. John of the Cross. Since the Way of Rejection can only be expressed or considered by means of an image or images, Williams concludes that the Way of Rejection and the Way of Affirmation are not as far apart as is usually believed.

_____. The Figure of Beatrice. London: Faber and Faber; 1943.

Williams' subject is Beatrice as the image leading Dante to God. He discusses the Way of the Affirmation of Images as part of the Romantic Way and deals with the original appearance of the image, the withdrawal of the image, and the final re-appearance of it. The relationship of the personal Image (in this case Beatrice) to that of the City is important to the Way, as is the concept that we are all created for our particular functions. The book is an account of a Way to Paradise as charted by Dante and interpreted by Williams.

_____. "A Dialogue on Hierarchy". Time and Tide. 2 October 1943.

In this discussion of hierarchy Williams says that in the ideal society hierarchies are of honourable function rather than of individual merit. Also: "The classless Republic is a republic of hierarchies, and each hierarchy is the flashing out of ranked equalities."

_____. "What the Cross Means to Me". in What the Cross Means to Me; A Theological Symposium. London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd.; 1943.

In Williams' view the Cross is the exhibition of Life as pain. It is also the justification of creation in that He who willed that this life contains pain, endures at the moment of the Crucifixion that pain willed by Himself. It is at this point that God knows Himself as man knows Him.

_____. "Malory and the Grail Legend". The Dublin Review. April 1944.

In this important essay Williams picks out those elements of Malory's grail story which he feels are essential to that story as Myth. He concentrates on the heavenly substitution which causes Galahad's birth and upon Galahad, Percivale, and Bors as three

degrees of love, all of which achieve the grail.

_____. "Maid and Measure". Time and Tide. 6 May 1944.

In this review of The English Bible by Sir Herbert Grierson and The Bible: Its Letter and Spirit by W.C. Dick, Williams discusses how near the sound of of Virgil's name is to the words virgo (strong modesty) and virga (careful measurement). Virgil desired to establish a just city but the just city could not be established until the virgo and the virga became one in Christ.

_____. All Hallows Eve. 1945. rpt. New York: The Noonday Press; 1969.

This, Williams' last and most powerful novel, is concerned with the attempt by a modern "magus" to send a girl into the area between life and death. He is foiled in this because another girl, recently killed in a plane crash in wartime London, substitutes herself. Since she is already in the in-between world and is striving to love the people that she knew, he can do nothing to her, resorts to crude magic spells, and in the end he is destroyed.

_____. "The Romantic Imagination". The New English Weekly. May 10, 1945.

This review of Owen Barfield's Romanticism Comes of Age says that the tragedy of English Romanticism lies in a belief that Imagination bears some special relation to Truth and in a corresponding failure to ask "in what way is Imagination true and how?" Wordsworth is the only English Romantic to have examined the problem.

_____ and Lewis, C.S. Arthurian Torso. London: Oxford University Press; 1948.

This book contains Williams' unfinished history of Arthur, "The Figure of Arthur", and Lewis' interpretation of

Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars. "The Figure of Arthur", because it is incomplete, is useful only in that it gives some idea of Williams' wide reading in Arthurian romance. Lewis' interpretations are invaluable. They are based on discussions with Williams and on Lewis' knowledge of Williams' other work, and are the most complete and authoritative statements about the later poetry to date.

_____. He Came Down From Heaven and The Forgiveness of Sins. London: Faber and Faber; 1958.

He Came Down From Heaven: The theme is the Fall explained in terms of man's desire to know schism in the universe, the consequence of that action which is man's knowledge of good as evil, and the Atonement made by Christ as man. Christ's crucifixion is the great act of substitution that allows man to become part of the co-inherence if he can forget himself and recognize all as part of the greater kingdom.

The Forgiveness of Sins: This makes clear that because God became flesh man can hope to become part of God. Christ's act of taking the sins of man into his being opened the way for salvation. On earth the mutual exchange of forgiving and accepting forgiveness is the prelude to accepting God's forgiveness through Christ and becoming one with him.

_____. "Notes on the Arthurian Myth". in Williams, Charles. The Image of the City and Other Essays. London: Oxford University Press; 1958.

This article, written in the late nineteen twenties or early nineteen thirties, contains Williams' early plans and notes for his Arthurian cycle. It is helpful in explaining the origins of the Arthurian poems and contributes to an understanding of what Williams was trying to do in his Arthurian poetry.

_____. Collected Plays. London: Oxford University Press; 1963.

This volume represents Williams' mature dramatic

writing. It contains seven stage plays written in verse ("Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury", "Judgement at Chelmsford", "Seed of Adam", "The Death of Good Fortune", "The House by the Stable", "Grab and Grace, or It's the Second Step", and "The House of the Octopus"), a prose version of an uncompleted state play ("Terror of Light"), and a radio play ("The Three Temptations"). All except the radio play were commissioned for performance either by Church groups or at Church festival occasions. They deal with the conflict between good and evil that is central to Williams' work, but are more clearly religious in character than either the poetry or the novels.

Williams, Michal. "As I Remember Charles Williams". Episcopal Churchnews. April 12, 1953.

In this article Williams' wife recalls some moments in their life together. The article sheds little insight on Williams as person and/or artist but it does provide information on Williams' intense desire to finish his Arthurian cycle before his death.

Winship, George Parker Jr. "This Rough Magic: The Novels of Charles Williams". The Yale Review. Winter 1950.

Winship discusses the novels in an attempt to classify them as stories, thrillers, or something. This is impossible (and irrelevant) so he turns to a superficial analysis of all the novels. He fails to come to grips with their content and with the exception of Descent into Hell, does not give even good plot summaries.

A SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Kempis, Thomas. Of the Imitation of Christ. London: Cassell and Co., Ltd.; 1899.

St. Bonaventure. Mystical Opuscula. (Trans. Jose de Vinck.) Paterson, New Jersy: St. Anthony Guild Press; 1960.

Dante. On World-Government (De Monarchia). (Trans. Herbert W. Schneider.) Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts; 1949.

_____. Hell. (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers.) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1949.

_____. Purgatory. (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers.) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1955.

_____. Paradise. (Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds.) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1962.

_____. La Vita Nuova. (Trans. Barbara Reynolds.) Harmondsworth; Penguin Books; 1969.

Fairchild, Hoxie Neale. Religious Trends in English Poetry. Vol. VI. New York: Columbia University Press; 1968.

Graves, Robert. The White Goddess. New York: The Noonday Press; 1966.

Guest, Lady Charlotte. The Mabinogion. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.; 1906.

Lewis, C.S. The Great Divorce. London: Geoffrey Bles; 1945.

Lewis, W.H. (ed.) Letters of C.S. Lewis. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.; 1966.

Lindsay, David. A Voyage to Arcturus. New York: Ballantine Books; 1963.

Malory, Sir Thomas. Works. (ed. Eugene Vinaver.) London: Oxford University Press; 1966.

Nash, D.W. Taliesin; or, The Bards and Druids of Britain. London: John Russell; 1858.

Peacock, Thomas Love. The Misfortunes of Elphin. in The Novels of Thomas Love Peacock. Vol. II. London: Rupert Harte-Davis; 1963.

Rolt, C.E. Dionysius the Aereopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology. London: The Macmillan Co.; 1966.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles. Tristram of Lyonesse in The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne. (ed. Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise.) Vol. IV. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; 1925.

Wicksteed, Philip. From Vita Nuova to Paradiso. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1922.

Wolters, Clifton. (trans.) The Cloud of Unknowing. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books; 1961.