

72-22,624

HINES, Joyce Rose, 1929-

GETTING HOME: A STUDY OF FANTASY AND THE
SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN THE CHRISTIAN
SUPERNATURAL NOVELS OF CHARLES WILLIAMS AND
GEORGE MACDONALD.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1972
Language and Literature, modern

ii

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© COPYRIGHT BY

JOYCE ROSE HINES

1972

GETTING HOME:
A STUDY OF FANTASY AND THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
IN THE CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURAL NOVELS OF
CHARLES WILLIAMS AND GEORGE MACDONALD

by

JOYCE ROSE HINES

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in English in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1972

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 14, 1972
date

Marvin Magalaner
Chairman, Examining Committee

April 20, 1972
date

Paul L. Johnson
Executive Officer (Acting)

Norman Friedman

Wendell Steag Johnson

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

PLEASE NOTE:

Some pages may have

indistinct print.

Filmed as received.

University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company

Abstract

GETTING HOME:
A STUDY OF FANTASY AND THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
IN THE CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURAL NOVELS OF
CHARLES WILLIAMS AND GEORGE MACDONALD

by

Joyce Rose Hines

Adviser: Professor Marvin Magalaner

This study is concerned with defining the similarities between George MacDonald (1824-1905) and Charles Williams (1886-1945) as parabolists, and thus to document a kinship which has only been touched upon in general terms in the critical literature on these writers. Both were late exponents of an outlook made unfashionable by the great religious change--or un-christening, as C. S. Lewis called it--of the early nineteenth century: acceptance through faith of the idea of an ordered and moral universe. Both were preoccupied with the theme of "getting home," i.e., the spiritual journey, within a broad Christian framework; and, working within an old didactic tradition, that of the *sermo* and the *exemplum*, which clothes doctrine in allegory and/or symbol and transforms it into a literature of imagination, they used fantasy as a vehicle both to teach and to entertain.

By examining and comparing MacDonald's two fantasy novels for adults, Phantastes (1858) and Lilith (1895), and Williams' seven fantasy novels (Shadows of Ecstasy, War in Heaven, Many Dimensions, The Place of the Lion, The Greater Trumps, Descent into Hell, and All Hallows' Eve, written and published between 1925 and 1945), the study demonstrates that their highly specialized type of parable--Christian mythopoeic fantasy deriving from the use and transformation of traditional, and

predominantly romantic, symbology--is that which sets MacDonald and Williams apart from other practitioners in the parable tradition, constitutes the basis of their literary kinship, and raises them to high stature in the field of imaginative writing.

The study deals with each author separately first, in order to highlight his themes, the main characteristics of his work, and his approach to fantasy. MacDonald's development of fantasy in the service of Christian apologetics is examined in terms of the influence on him of the German romantic fantasists, as well as of his own views on the fantastic imagination. The study seeks to define and analyze the doctrinal and structural elements in MacDonald's fantasy technique--particularly his transformation of traditional fantasy motifs--which set his type of fantasy apart from previous ones and which moved C. S. Lewis to apply the term mythopoeic to Phantastes and Lilith. It is these elements, moreover, which made MacDonald a forerunner of the so-called Oxford group of religious fantasy writers of the late 1930's and 1940's, of whom Charles Williams was the earliest and the most like MacDonald.

No attempt is made to "prove" that MacDonald "influenced" Williams. Attention is given, however, to the body of critical opinion linking the two writers and to their main point of contact, C. S. Lewis, as well as to the similarity of circumstances which resulted in their being considered minority writers: in a predominantly secular age, which preferred literary realism to fantasy and which tended to regard fantasy as a literary subgenre, both juvenile and lacking in seriousness, MacDonald and Williams chose to write religious fantasies for adults.

The study examines Williams first in terms of the doctrinal themes which inform his world-view: co-inherence, exchange and substitution, and forgiveness (*largesse*); the concept of the City; and the concept of the Ways of Affirmation and Rejection of Images (the romantic and the ascetic paths). It then examines the ways in which these doctrinal motifs shaped the pattern of narrative structure and characterization in Williams' novels. Succeeding chapters deal with Williams as a fantasy technician, particular attention being given to the function of his unusual blend of supernatural and real, the various categories of fantasy motifs (*preternaturals* and *impossibles*) which he uses, and the means whereby he achieves his effects. The differences between the earlier and the later novels in terms of mood, complexity, and imagery are discussed, as well as the most salient characteristics of Williams' style. An interpretative analysis of each novel presents selected illustrations of Williams' method of blending doctrine with narrative by the use of the supernatural. Critical attempts to classify Williams' novels and to place them within a tradition are reviewed and evaluated; the supposed resemblance between his works and those of the gothic/macabre school, for instance, fades away before the fact that, like MacDonald, he eschewed the thrill for thrill's sake and treated the supernatural as part of the natural.

The final chapter presents a consolidated, ordered, and detailed picture of the resemblances between MacDonald and Williams as Christian supernatural fantasists which came to light during the course of the study, with respect to (1) doctrine, themes, and world-view, or formalizing elements, and (2) fantasy technique and style.

FOR MY MOTHER AND FATHER
AND MY AUNT MARJORIE WILSON

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Abstract.....	iv
I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Fantasy Genre and George MacDonald: General Observations.....	6
III. Themes and Fantasy Modes in George MacDonald.....	45
IV. The Relationship Between MacDonald and Williams: General Observations.....	100
V. Charles Williams: A Biographical Note.....	120
VI. Doctrinal Themes in Williams' Novels.....	129
VII. The Effect of Doctrinal Content on Narrative Structure and Characterization in Williams' Novels.....	142
VIII. Williams as a Fantasist: I. Technique.....	153
IX. Williams as a Fantasist: II. The Early Novels (An Interpretative Summary).....	198
X. Williams as a Fantasist: III. The Late Novels (An Interpretative Summary).....	249
XI. Williams' Novels: Critical Opinion and the Problem of Classification.....	283
XII. George MacDonald and Charles Williams: A Summary of Similarities.....	314
Appendix	
I. Summaries of <u>Phantastes</u> : <u>A Faerie Romance for Men and Women</u> and <u>Lilith</u> : <u>A Romance</u> by George MacDonald.....	356
II. List of Chief Works of George MacDonald (1824-1905).....	372
III. Chief Works of Charles Williams (1886-1945).....	374
Bibliography.....	376
Vita.....	402

Yet, all the time, I seemed to have a kind of double consciousness, and the story a double meaning.

--George MacDonald, Phantastes, ch. xiii.

"Mythology always heightens the style."

--Charles Williams, Shadows of Ecstasy, ch. ii.

. . . in order to achieve parable writing of the order of Imagination rather than of mere Fancy, the parabolist must have some sort of world-view which engages his deepest feelings.

--Louis MacNeice, Varieties of Parable, ch. iv.

Fairy tales are serious things, or they are nothing; and this age will not treat them in a serious spirit.

--Anonymous review of George MacDonald's novels, The North British Review, September 1866, p. 7.

GETTING HOME:
A STUDY OF FANTASY AND THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
IN THE CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURAL NOVELS OF
CHARLES WILLIAMS AND GEORGE MACDONALD

Chapter I. Introduction

Christians and Pagans had much more in common with each other than either has with a post-Christian. The gap between those who worship different gods is not so wide as that between those who worship and those who do not.¹

The greatest frontier, or divide, in the history of the western world is, in the view of C. S. Lewis, that which divides the present from, approximately, the time of Jane Austen and Scott: "somewhere between us and the Waverley Novels, somewhere between us and Persuasion, the chasm runs."² One of the most important grounds on which he bases his conclusion is the great religious change, or "un-christening," which ushered in the post-Christian western world. For, as Lewis points out, while there were many sceptics in Jane Austen's time and before, just as there are many believers now, the basic assumption has changed: "in her day some kind and degree of religious belief and practice were the norm [whereas] now . . . they are the exception."³ The nineteenth century was a period of flux and struggle in this respect; by the beginning of the twentieth, a definite change in attitude towards the inevitability of a need for strong religious beliefs as the core of

¹C. S. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum," in They Asked for a Paper (London, 1962), p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., p. 20.

man's existence had taken place in the western world.⁴

The twentieth century nevertheless has had its Christian apologists; one of these is Charles Williams (1886-1945), poet, novelist, playwright, and critic. Religion is woven into all his writings within a framework of symbolism which is peculiarly his. In all of his seven novels, which are the main concern of this study, fantasy is the ground into which Williams' ideas are set.

This approach to the exposition of doctrine—to clothe it in allegory or symbol and turn it into a literature of imagination—has had a long and diversified history, and is responsible for some of the most superb compositions in western literature; the Divine Comedy, Everyman, The Faerie Queene, and The Pilgrim's Progress are only a few of the brighter stars in that firmament.

A little known author, who nevertheless made a unique contribution to this tradition during the nineteenth century, was

⁴Cf. Samuel Butler's remark in The Way of All Flesh (ch. xii), published in 1903, that "this [an orthodox belief in such Biblical stories as the creation of Eve] was the average attitude of fairly educated young men and women towards the Mosaic cosmogony fifty, forty, or even twenty years ago." And Charles Williams in Witchcraft (New York, 1960, p. 59): "Hardly till our own day was that universe [dominated by the supernatural will] itself to be widely disbelieved." In the closing decades of the Victorian era, "the 'respectability' of the Church began to disappear; that is to say, Christianity was no longer one of the necessary opinions of a gentleman" (Charles Williams, Flecker of Dean Close [London, 1946], p. 14). The twentieth century is, in Williams' view, a period of transition, "when all general acceptance of a scheme of thought or a hierarchy of emotion has been broken up, and no other has taken its place" (rev. of David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World, in Time and Tide, 9 March 1940, p. 25¹). Cf. also G. K. Chesterton, writing in a lighthearted but earnest vein ("On Modern 'Paganism,'" in All I Survey [London, 1933], p. 154): "[Youth] has lost the traditions of humanity, and rather especially the traditions of heathenry" (i.e., the sense of mystery or "otherness" behind "real" things).

George MacDonald (1824-1905), a preacher and novelist. He is known today mostly for his fairy tales and fantasies for children,⁵ while his thirty-odd novels for adults, long out of print, have all but vanished from public memory.⁶ Most of these are moralistic stories of everyday life in England and Scotland, but two, Phantastes (1858) and Lilith (1895), are exceptions; the present study deals only with these two works in connection with MacDonald. In these books, in which interest has begun to revive,⁷ MacDonald used fantasy to entertain and teach the adult mind. The result was a new kind of moral fantasy, which goes beyond allegory into near-mysticism, and which may be described as Christian mythopoeic fantasy.

⁵Mainly At the Back of the North Wind, The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie, and The Golden Key.

⁶Bearing out the prediction of at least one turn-of-the-century critic, Coulson Kernahan (Wise Men and A Fool [New York, 1901], pp. 56 and 69), that, although MacDonald was one of the most widely-read writers of the latter half of the nineteenth century, who was at his best in work "which is purely imaginative and in his exquisite flights of fancy," it was doubtful whether "fifty years hence . . . any one will read his novels." They contain much, however, of interest, value, and beauty.

⁷Phantastes was originally published in London in 1858. Other editions included one with illustrations by John Bell, and another, with a preface by MacDonald's son Greville and illustrations by Arthur Hughes, published in London in 1894 and 1905, respectively. An Everyman edition, also with an introduction by Greville MacDonald, appeared in 1915 (and was reprinted at least twice, in 1923 and 1940). Lilith was published in London originally in 1895; an edition commemorating the centennial of MacDonald's birth appeared in 1924. In 1954, both novels were issued in one volume, with an introduction by W. H. Auden (The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald, ed. Anne Fremantle [New York, The Noonday Press]); this edition omits the German originals of certain chapter heading epigraphs in Phantastes, as well as a long prefatory epigraph from Thoreau ("Walking") which appeared in the first edition of Lilith. Again, in 1962, they were issued together, with an introduction by C. S. Lewis ("Phantastes" and "Lilith" [London, Victor Gollancz Ltd.]); a one-volume paperback edition, with a slightly different introduction by C. S. Lewis, was published in the United States by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company in 1964 and 1968). Lilith appeared in cheap paperback in 1969 and Phantastes in 1970 in the United States (with introduction by Lin Carter [New York, Ballantine Books, Adult Fantasy series]); in this edition, the German chapter heading epigraphs are omitted from Phantastes and the Thoreau epigraph from Lilith.

Charles Williams is the writer most nearly like MacDonald who has yet appeared. Both wrote serious imaginative literature which borders on the mythopoeic and which springs from and shadows forth deeply-held religious and ethical views. A few critics have acknowledged their kinship, without, however, expanding on it. William Lindsay Gresham, for example, has described Charles Williams (and C. S. Lewis) as novelists who "inherited the mantle of George MacDonald—their fantasies are balm for the spiritual sickness of the world."⁸ Robert Lee Wolff speaks of Williams (and J. R. R. Tolkien) as having "paid MacDonald the . . . compliment of presenting his ideas in twentieth-century fantasies—often influenced by his creations—without explicit acknowledgment."⁹ Edmund Fuller, pointing out that "no man can write richly textured fantasy as if it had never been written before," states that George MacDonald was a specific inspiration and influence on Williams,¹⁰ as does W. H. Auden: "I know for a fact that Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis and Tolkien all admired George MacDonald and were undoubtedly influenced by him."¹¹ Finally, William York Tindall speaks unequivocally of Williams, in his novels, as "taking his pattern from George MacDonald and maybe Chesterton's Man Who Was Thursday."¹²

⁸ William Lindsay Gresham, preface to The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams (New York, 1950), p. iv.

⁹ Robert Lee Wolff, The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald (New Haven, 1961), p. 9.

¹⁰ Edmund Fuller, Books With Men Behind Them (New York, 1962), p. 140.

¹¹ Information in a letter to the author from W. H. Auden, March 22, 1971.

¹² William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature 1885-1956 (New York, 1956), p. 184.

MacDonald and Williams both chose to depict the spiritual journey, according to the Christian mode of thought, in terms of fantasy. This is the most important point of similarity between their novels. They are both deeply concerned with the question of "getting home," i.e., with spiritual salvation through free choice, and with the nature of the difficulties on the way, especially the struggle to conquer illusion and to recognize and embrace spiritual truth. MacDonald's works attest to a deeply-rooted emotional faith which approaches mysticism; Williams' convey an added sense of intellectualized belief (certainly equal in degree).

MacDonald and Williams, then, offer an interesting example of two writers working in a special genre, one in the nineteenth century, the other in the twentieth. This study is concerned with the kinship between the two and with the ways in which Williams, in inheriting the mantle of George MacDonald, developed as a writer of fantastic novels in the framework of the Christian cosmos in the twentieth century.

Chapter II. The Fantasy Genre and George MacDonald: General Observations

Of course as all children's literature is not fantastic, so all fantastic books need not be children's books.¹

The Fantastic or Mythical is a Mode available at all ages for some readers; for others, at none.²

The most immediate task of this chapter is to particularize the tradition in which MacDonald and, later, Williams wrote, and to examine the ways in which MacDonald adapted the tradition. In order to do this, it has seemed advisable first to examine the varieties of meaning of the word fantasy itself, and then to determine what it means with respect to MacDonald.

The word fantasy, as has often been pointed out, is both a psychological and a literary term. In the former context, it refers to any mental activity or outlook which is fully or partly divorced from reality. Thus it may refer, for example, to an imaginative construction which is pleasing to the fantasizer and is mistaken by him for reality (delusion); or to a pleasing imaginative construction indulged in frequently, with harm to the fantasizer, but which is not taken for reality ("morbid castle-building," in C. S. Lewis' terms); or to normal castle-building, i.e., the same activity indulged in to a lesser degree, so that it does not interfere with "more effective and outgoing activities."³

¹C. S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," in Of Other Worlds (London, 1966), p. 27.

²C. S. Lewis, "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said," in Of Other Worlds, p. 38.

³See C. S. Lewis, "The Meanings of 'Fantasy,'" in An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 50-51.

As a literary term, Lewis defined fantasy as "any narrative that deals with impossibles and preternaturals."⁴ Fantasy, according to this definition, includes all the literature of the marvellous and the unusual. It is a very old genre; indeed, as Lewis has pointed out, until quite modern times, i.e., the nineteenth century, nearly all stories tended to relate what was strange and exceptional.⁵ His definition would therefore apply to a vast range of stories, heterogeneous in intent, form, and spirit, according to the temper of its author and the time in which it was written. The Golden Ass is fantastic; impossibles and preternaturals characterize parts of the Odyssey, Beowulf, and the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, as they do a host of other works in many languages over the centuries, e.g., Orlando Furioso, Perrault's fairy tales, Gulliver's Travels, The Adventures of Baron Munchhausen, the Tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann, and so on through the Alice books, The Man Who Was Thursday, Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, and many of the works of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. The definition also includes Phantastes, Lilith, and all of Williams' novels. The list of titles could be extended almost indefinitely.

The subgenres of fantasy are also numerous. One way of classifying them is by form or main device employed. There are, for

⁴Ibid., p. 50. Cf. H. Bruce Franklin, Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1966), p. 3: "To put the matter in the simplest terms, realistic fiction tries to imitate actualities, historical fiction past probabilities, science fiction probabilities, fantasy impossibilities."

⁵C. S. Lewis, "On Realisms," in An Experiment in Criticism, pp. 62-63.

example, tales of adventures in imaginary lands; stories of magic, black and white; ghost stories and stories of other supernatural beings; tales of the weird and/or horrible, in which natural laws are suspended; and science fiction, including interplanetary travel, time travel, and many other ramifications.

The fantastic can also be presented in many moods, ranging from lighthearted comedy (which is not, of course, to say that it is not serious in intent) to the most awe-inspiring gravity. It may be of traditional composition, as in many folktales, or the work of a known author. Fantasy can also be subdivided according to whether the main intention is to provide entertainment alone or to entertain and teach. The number of possible cross-combinations of form, mood, and purpose therefore verges on the astronomical.

This is a mixed bag indeed. In order to obtain a clearer picture of what the term fantasy means with respect to MacDonald and Williams, it is necessary to narrow Lewis' definition somewhat. Let us consider, first, certain factors which had an important bearing on the development of MacDonald's work.

Critics are agreed that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a reaction, both on the continent and in England, against the classic rationalist spirit, and an upsurge of literature of the imagination. One part of this romantic movement was the revival, for a time, of tales of the marvellous and the

supernatural.⁶ In England, certain Gothic novels, such as Matthew Lewis' The Monk (1797) and Charles Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), are examples of this literature, as is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1817). These constitute part of the so-called school of terror, "romantic novels, in which fear was treated as the dominant passion."⁷ In Germany there was a particularly rich flow of writing in which the fantastic was the predominating element.⁸ It included, for example, some of the works of Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853);⁹ some of the writings of his friend Friedrich von Hardenberg, called Novalis

⁶ See, for example, A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh, 2nd ed. (New York, 1967), pp. 1124 and 1126-1127; Alberto I. Mirano, Lo maravilloso en el cuento y la novela (Mexico City, 1937), pp. 172 ff.; Rodolfo Bottacchiari, "Romanticismo e realismo in E. T. A. Hoffmann," La Cultura, I, Fasc. 6 (15 Aprile 1922), 245 ff.; and Joseph Chiari, Realism and Imagination (London, 1960), pp. 63-64: "the life of the imagination, which was at its lowest ebb in the middle of the eighteenth century, was going to emerge again into one of the greatest blossomings which it ever had, and which, after a brief interruption, still goes on now. This great blossoming is generally labelled Romanticism. With it, imagination and reality regained their partnership." See also Charles Nodier (French fantasist, 1780-1844), introduction to Contes fantastiques (Paris, 1913, p. 10): "Il ne faut donc pas tant crier contre le fantastique. Ces innovations prétendues sont l'expression inévitable des périodes extrêmes de la vie politique des nations . . ." ("The fantastic should not be denigrated so. These so-called innovations are the inevitable expression of critical periods in the political life of nations.")

⁷ "The Supernatural in Nineteenth-Century Fiction" (anon. art.), The Edinburgh Review, CCCCIV (April 1903), 397.

⁸ Cf. Nodier, op. cit., pp. 25-26: "L'Allemagne a été riche dans ce genre de créations, plus riche qu'aucune autre contrée du monde . . . l'Allemagne a été jusqu'à nos jours le domaine favori du fantastique" ("Germany has been prolific in this type of creation, more so than any other country . . . Germany has remained the chief stronghold of the fantastic to this day").

⁹ A collector of popular traditional tales, Tieck was the author of, inter alia, a series of tales published originally under the title Peter Leberrechts Volksmärchen (1797) and, in 1812, with the title Phantasus (Thomas Carlyle, German Romance: Specimens of its Chief Authors [Boston, 1841], pp. 275 and 280).

(1772-1802), author of Heinrich von Ofterdingen¹⁰ and Die Lehrlinge zu Sais; Adalbert von Chamisso (1781-1838), whose Peter Schlemihl (1814) is a celebrated story of a man who sells his shadow to the devil; the Baron de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843), author of Undine (1811); and the master of the German romantic movement, E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822).

These and other German writers were a subject of lifelong interest to MacDonald. It was conjectured by his son Greville that MacDonald had come under their influence at an early age. He believed that the experience of the young hero in MacDonald's The Portent (1864), who, in cataloguing a mansion-house library, comes upon the German classics for the first time, reflected MacDonald's own experience in cataloguing the library of an unidentified castle or mansion during the summer of 1842, when he was seventeen:¹¹

But I found in the library what I liked far better--many romances of a very marvellous sort, and plentiful interruption they gave to the formation of the catalogue. I likewise came upon a whole nest of the German classics, which seemed to have kept their places undisturbed, in virtue of their unintelligibility. . . . happening to be

¹⁰Published in 1802, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, dealing with the search for the Blue Flower, was, in Altomirano's opinion (op. cit., p. 153), the first important German tale (novela) in which the fantastic was the main element.

¹¹See Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, with introduction by G. K. Chesterton (New York, 1924), pp. 72-73. According to this biography (p. 68), George MacDonald acquired German easily and thoroughly during his years at King's College, Aberdeen.

a tolerable reader of German, I found in these volumes a mine of wealth inexhaustible.¹²

This conjecture is shared by R. L. Wolff:

here, we can be sure, George MacDonald had some of the most important experiences of his life. He read widely in the English poets and discovered the German authors, chiefly the romantics, perhaps first through Carlyle's essays and translations, but soon enough through the originals.¹³

But there is tangible proof, in MacDonald's own work, of his interest in the German writers. In 1851, seven years before the publication of Phantastes, he printed for private circulation his own verse translations of twelve of Novalis' Spiritual Songs (Geistliche Lieder); this was MacDonald's first published work.¹⁴ Some of these were ultimately published, together with translations by MacDonald of selections from Goethe, Heine, Schiller, and Uhland, among others, in 1876; in his preface to the collection, MacDonald stated that he had bestowed on the Novalis poems "twice the labour spent upon all

¹²George MacDonald, The Portent: A Story of the Inner Vision of the Highlanders, Commonly Called The Second Sight (London, 1864), p. 83. Note also that one of the two stories within a story in Phantastes (ch. xiii) is a romance in the German tradition which the hero, Anodos, reads in the library of the fairy palace. The hero of the tale has a German name: Cosmo von Wehrstahl ("Steel-strength"?)

¹³Wolff, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁴See Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 159, and John Malcolm Bulloch, "A Bibliography of George MacDonald," Aberdeen University Library Bulletin, V (February 1925), 723. One of the charges which eventually led MacDonald to resign his pastorate at Arundel in 1853 was that he was "tainted with German Theology." Greville MacDonald (George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 179) believed that this had its roots in the translations of Novalis' Songs.

the rest of the book together."¹⁵ These were reprinted in a new collection in 1897,¹⁶ and, interestingly enough, the section on Novalis was expanded to include translations of his Hymns to the Night (Hymnen an die Nacht) and the story (Märchen, translated as "parable" by MacDonald) of Hyacinth and Rosebud, from The Disciples at Sais (Die Lehrlinge zu Sais).¹⁷

It should be noted that nearly one third of the epigraphs quoted at the heads of the chapters in Phantastes are from the German romantics: Goethe, Heine, La Motte Fouqué, Novalis, Jean Paul Richter, and Schiller.¹⁸ Novalis is especially important in this connection: his discussion of the nature of the Märchen¹⁹ is an epigraph to the entire book. In addition, MacDonald used one passage from Novalis twice, in key places: first, as one of the epigraphs to the last chapter of Phantastes ("Unser Leben ist kein Traum, aber es soll und wird vielleicht einer werden"); and, second, in the final sentence of

¹⁵See George MacDonald, Exotics: A Translation of the Spiritual Songs of Novalis, the Hymn-Book of Luther, and Other Poems from the German and Italian (London, 1876), p. xv.

¹⁶George MacDonald, Rampolli: Growths from a Long-Planted Root, Being Translations, New and Old, Chiefly from the German (London, 1897).

¹⁷The story is concerned with a young man's search for the sacred goddess Isis (the mother of creation); when he comes to lift her veil, he finds his sweetheart, Rosebud. The possible influence of this tale on Phantastes is discussed by Wolff, op. cit., pp. 72 and 86-87. In Phantastes, ch. xv, the narrator, Anodos, refers obliquely to the story when he says, "And now, what song should I sing to unveil my Isis, if indeed she was present unseen?"

¹⁸Of thirty-five epigraphs, ten are from German writers, three from English romantic poets (Coleridge, Shelley, and Wordsworth), and four from traditional ballads.

¹⁹For a detailed discussion of the passage in question, see Wolff, op. cit., pp. 42-45.

Lilith, written nearly forty years later ("Novalis says, 'Our life is no dream; but it ought to become one, and perhaps will.'") The passage reflects MacDonald's lifelong concern with the theme of seen and unseen reality.²⁰ Evidence that MacDonald also had special

²⁰The passage, slightly altered, also occurs in a letter dated January 4, 1891 from George MacDonald to his eldest daughter, Lilia: "My dear love to Ronald [a son]. . . . Tell him from me that Novalis says: 'This world is not a dream, but it may, and perhaps ought to become one.' Anyhow it will pass--to make way for the world God has hidden in our hearts'" (quoted in Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 518).

Cf. the following passage, also from Novalis, as translated by Maurice Maeterlinck ("Les disciples à Sais" et les "Fragments" de Novalis [Brussels, 1895], p. 151): "Le monde extérieur est le monde des ombres, il projette ses ombres dans le royaume de la lumière. Aujourd'hui tout nous paraît si obscur, si isolé, si informe! Mais comme tout cela changera quand cet obscurcissement sera passé et que le corps d'ombre sera rejeté!" ("The external world is the shadow world, projecting its shadows into the realm of light. Today everything seems so dark, so fragmented, so formless! But how greatly that will change when the darkness is past and the shadowy body rejected!") Cf. the similarity of the following statement by Jean Paul Richter, another of MacDonald's favorite writers: "Das Leben ist ein Traum; der Tod ist ein Traum: aus den Träumen werden wir im Himmel wach" (Jean Pauls Träume, ed. Will Vesper [Munich, 1906], p. 28); "Life is a dream, death is a dream: we shall awake from dreams in heaven."

The romantic interest in the mysterious nature of dreams is reflected in a passage from Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Part I, ch. i, in which Heinrich, in reply to his father's scoffing remark that "dreams are froth, let the learned think what they will of them" ("Träume sind Schaume, mögen auch die hochgelahrten Herren davon denken, was sie wollen!"), says: "Is not every dream, even the most confused, a peculiar vision, which, though we do not call it sent from Heaven, yet makes an important rent in the mysterious curtain, which, with a thousand folds, hides our inward natures from our view?" ("Ist nicht jeder, auch der verworrenste Traum, eine sonderliche Erscheinung, die auch ohne noch an göttliche Schickung dabei zu denken, ein bedeut-samer Riss in den geheimnisvollen Vorhang ist, der mit tausend Falten in unser Inneres hereinfällt?") (The English version is taken from an anonymous translation of Friedrich von Hardenberg [Novalis], Henry of Ofterdingen: A Romance from the German of Novalis [Cambridge, 1842]; the German original is quoted from Novalis, Schriften, I, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel [Stuttgart, 1960].) A quotation from Heinrich von Ofterdingen forms one of the epigraphs to Phantastes, ch. ii.

regard for the work of La Motte Fouqué is given in his essay "The Fantastic Imagination":

That we have in English no word corresponding to the German Märchen [sic], drives us to use the word Fairytale, regardless of the fact that the tale may have nothing to do with any sort of fairy. . . .

Were I asked, what is a fairytale? I should reply, Read Undine: that is a fairytale . . . and of all fairytales I know, I think Undine the most beautiful.²¹

An analysis in detail of the extent to which MacDonald's fantasies reflect specific situations and themes in the German writers lies beyond the scope of the present study; the subject has, indeed, been dealt with elsewhere, at least in part.²² Wolff stresses that

²¹George MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," in A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and on Shakespeare (London, 1908), p. 313. In his preface, dated August 5, 1893, MacDonald refers (p. vi) to the essay's having formed the preface to "an American edition of my so-called Fairy Tales." It is of interest to note that, on at least one occasion, MacDonald was paid the compliment of being told that "Undine apart, Phantastes held an absolutely unique place in literature" (Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 318). There are echoes of Undine in Phantastes. For example, the situation in Phantastes (chs. xix and xx) in which the magic waters rise around the many-doored cottage, submerging the isthmus on which it is built and cutting it off from the mainland, is not unlike that in Undine (ch. iii), where Undine's uncle, the water-spirit, causes the waters to rise around the fisherman's cottage, also covering the isthmus on which it is located and isolating its occupants as if they were on an island. Similarly, the goblins who mock Anodos by offering him handfuls of gold (Phantastes, ch. x) are reminiscent of those whom the Knight Huldbrand sees pelting each other with gold, which to them is so plentiful as to be valueless (Undine, ch. iv). The goblins in Phantastes are specifically "just such as those described in German histories and travels, as Kobolds" (ch. xvii). A fuller development of these as fairytale characters and as representations of moral ugliness may be found in MacDonald's The Princess and the Goblin.

²²MacDonald's indebtedness to, and surpassing of, certain German romantic writers such as Tieck was noted very early. See, for example, the lengthy anonymous review, "Works by George MacDonald," (Littell's) Living Age / reprinted from The British Quarterly /, XCVI

Novalis' more important works (Heinrich von Ofterdingen and Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, with the story of Hyacinth and Rosebud), as well as the work of other German romanticists, "influenced MacDonald's own early thought and writing to a degree that nobody has yet realized."²³ Thus, to give one example, a resemblance may be detected, as Wolff points out, between the speaking flowers in Phantastes (ch. iii) and the sentient flowers in Die Lehrlinge zu Sais, which speak to the human children Hyacinth and Rosebud, and to each other; and between the flowers' mockery of Anodos in Phantastes and the way in which the birds mock the hero, Anselmus, in Hoffmann's

(March 21, 1868), 707, which states, inter alia, that George MacDonald's literary originality embraced, as one of its derivative elements, "the legendary tale (mährchen) which plays so important a part in the literature of the Germans; the legendary tale of enchantment and mystery." The review also refers to a statement by a skilled critic that Tieck, "very eminent in this department, would have been proud to have written MacDonald's Phantastes." The article discerns the influence of Jean Paul Richter, and, from among the English romantics, Wordsworth, on MacDonald's view of nature as imbued with a mystic presence. Cf. also MacDonald's statement in his novel Robert Falconer (first published in 1868), ch. xvi ("Mr. Lammie's Farm"): "I know but one writer whose pen would have been able worthily to set forth the delights of / the country and the scenes of nature in / the first few days at Bodysfauld--Jean Paul." References to Novalis and Jean Paul occur throughout MacDonald's works. Note also his admiration for Wordsworth: "This Christian pantheism, this belief that God is in everything, and showing himself in everything, has been much brought to light by the poets of the past generation, and has its influence still, I hope, upon the poets of the present. . . . Now, Wordsworth is the high priest of nature thus regarded. He saw God present everywhere . . . to Wordsworth, God, as the Spirit of Truth, was manifested through the forms of the external world" ("Wordsworth's Poetry," in A Dish of Orts, pp. 246 and 247). Discussions of the influences of Novalis, Chamisso, and Hoffmann, in particular, on MacDonald may be found in Wolff, op. cit.

²³Ibid., p. 11.

Golden Pot.²⁴ The form of Phantastes, "mingled prose and verse, with many interpolated songs sung by the characters," is, Wolff feels, reminiscent of Heinrich von Ofterdingen.²⁵

It is of more immediate interest to this study to identify the broader characteristics of the German romantic writers which, by virtue of their occurring in MacDonald, may be assumed to have appealed to him: a kaleidoscopic variety of fantasy motifs derived in part from traditional folktale material; and, equally important, a multi-layered meaning.

A persistent use of supernaturalism and the marvellous was part of what Wolff has called the general war cry of the German romantics against the intellectuals of the Enlightenment: that disillusionment, suspicion, and intellectual questioning spoil "the

²⁴Ibid., pp. 53-54. According to one critic, Novalis passionately believed "in some mysterious connection between man and the universe," and felt that "there rests within us a close relationship both with the powers of the spiritual world and with the earth. . . . it is in the flower, in the water, in the animals and in the moon that Novalis discovers the supernatural" (A. Closs, introduction to Hymns to the Night, by Novalis, trans. Mabel Cotterell [London, 1948], pp. 15 and 16). This might be said of MacDonald as well.

²⁵Wolff, op. cit., p. 45. Another feature of Phantastes which may be an echo of German romanticism is the use of the Alder-Tree to represent temptation, voracious evil, and death, just as Goethe uses the King of the Alders (Erlkönig, Erlenkönig) to represent the robber Death. MacDonald's alder spirit is female, however, and represents spiritual death, while Goethe's erl-king is masculine and is associated only with physical death. The alder-king is specific to German literature. (Once thought to be connected with the ancient Germanic tree worship, the name, and hence the character, of the Erlkönig is now considered to be the result of J. G. Herder's mistranslation (in Stimmen der Völker in Liedern, 1778) of the Danish ellerkonge, ellekonge, or elverkonge, which means "king of the elves," and for which the correct German would have been Elfkönig or Elfenkönig. Herder may have been confused by the fact that the Danish word elle means both "elf" and "alder" [Encyclopedia Britannica, 1967 ed., article on "Erlkönig"]. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to find coincidental, if spurious, justification for associating the alder with death in, for example, the tree's affinity for marshes and spongy ground, in which travelers have been known to sink and drown. This treacherous characteristic is effectively exploited as symbol at the close of Michel Tournier's novel Le Roi des Aulnes [The King of the Alders] (1970)). The alder is credited with definite supernatural properties in certain bodies of legend: in the Irish, it is regarded as a tree of divination; in Norse myth, the first woman is said to have been created from an alder, and the first man from an ash (Maria Leach, ed., Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend, I [New York, 1949], pp. 34 and 80). It is interesting that in Phantastes also, the Alder and the Ash, female and male respectively, are linked, but as partners in evil: the Alder smothers victims for the Ash, who uses his shadow to frighten his prey (superstitious fear of the ash tree's shadow has persisted into modern times, according to Leach, p. 80). It appears that alders rarely grow near any other trees, with the occasional exception of the ash (Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle, I [Paris, 1865(?)], p. 947, article on the alder).

poetic power of the imagination."²⁶ Moreover, the romantics adopted a variety of approaches in presenting the supernatural:

Hoffmann channelled the Romantic impulse, particularly the supernaturalism which was its heart, into a final bed from which it could not break. For Novalis the supernatural was numinous, poetic, and ethical; for . . . Tieck it was self-laughter; for the minor writers, it was emotion--thrills and longing; and for Hoffmann it was science.²⁷

Hoffmann, according to E. F. Bleiler, was virtually unequalled "where the principle of Serapionism is concerned--the technique of presenting the supernatural convincingly."²⁸

The fantastic tales of these authors may be described as Kunstmärchen, "fairy-tales in which a sophisticated artist makes use of the folklore materials and naive effects of the Volksmärchen, or popular fairy story, to create what was, when Goethe founded it, virtually a new genre."²⁹

²⁶ Wolff, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁷ E. F. Bleiler, introduction to The Best Tales of [E. T. A.] Hoffmann (New York, 1967), p. xvii, quoting Professor Ralph Tymms. Bleiler has also pointed out that Hoffmann, whom he considers to be the last of the important Romantic writers, "was passionately concerned, in almost all his work, with dissociation of elements within the human personality, and with madness of various sorts, basing his stories upon the sciences of the now-forgotten philosopher, Gotthilf Schubert" (E. F. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty, eds., Imagination Unlimited [New York, 1952], p. 324). Cf. footnote 72 below.

²⁸ Bleiler, introduction to The Best Tales of Hoffmann, pp. xv-xvi.

²⁹ Wolff, op. cit., p. 45. See, for instance, Goethe's Parable [Das Märchen], with which Phantastes has been compared (Edward Stanley Robertson, "A Literary Causerie: Phantastes," The Academy, LXX [March 31, 1906], 309). Wolff points out (op. cit., p. 45) that MacDonald owed a large debt to the Kunstmärchen in general, and to Novalis in particular.

These stories are filled with fantasy motifs which mirror the relationship between the real and the spiritual world: places in either world which melt imperceptibly into the other, or interpenetrate; beings with magical powers (e.g., magicians and witches), sometimes wicked, sometimes not; talking animals; sentient plants; and animate objects, to name but a few examples. Similarly, in Phantastes, there is a room in the real world which melts into a forest clearing in fairyland, a talking tree invested with a semi-human spirit (the Beech), talking flowers, an ogress-witch, goblins, giants, a magic mirror, and magic food which enables one to understand the language of the animals. These motifs form part of traditional folktale material, but are here used with conscious literary purpose. In the German tales the effect sometimes is, on the surface at least, rather like the phantasmagoria of a dream (on occasion, as in Hoffmann's Nutcracker and the King of Mice, the story is even "explained" as having been a dream).

Novalis advocated the use of disconnected imagery in the writing of Märchen.

"One can imagine narratives without coherence . . . but rather with association . . . like dreams . . . A fairy-tale [Märchen] is like a dream-picture without coherence.

.

"In a genuine Märchen, everything must be wonderful, mysterious, and [in/coherent] . . . All nature must be wonderfully mixed with the whole world of spirit . . . The world of the Märchen is the world that is entirely opposite to the world of the truth and is yet just as similar to it as is Chaos to the completed created universe ³⁰

³⁰Translated from the German by Wolff, op. cit., pp. 42-43; the second set of square brackets is mine, to indicate the error of transcription mentioned by Wolff, discussed below. Cf. Novalis'

As Wolff points out, Novalis' editors, Ludwig Tieck and Frederick Schlegel, made a major error of transcription in this passage, printing "zusammenhängend" ("coherent," ordered) instead of "unzusammenhängend" ("incoherent," disconnected), which appeared in the passage as Novalis originally wrote it.³¹ The error therefore causes the second part of the passage to contradict the first and conveys the opposite of what Novalis meant.

The passage, in German and with the erroneous reading, forms part of the epigraph which MacDonald placed at the head of Phantastes. (None of the editions of Phantastes contains a translation of this important epigraph.) Wolff takes the view that MacDonald "apparently had not noticed or been troubled" by the inconsistency created by the editors' mistake, and that Phantastes is written in the style actually advocated by Novalis, i.e., "incoherent" or disparate.³² But, even assuming that MacDonald grasped the true intention of Novalis' passage,³³ one may question whether MacDonald would have chosen such a goal, divorced from any consolidating meaning. As

statement (Heinrich von Ofterdingen, ch. viii) that Märchen are difficult to compose and are seldom properly achieved by a young poet ("Daher ist auch ein Märchen eine sehr schwierige Aufgabe, und selten junger Dichter sie gut lösen.") The words are those of Klingsohr, an old poet, who later narrates a Märchen of his own, a weird, kaleidoscopic series of disconnected events, filled with semi-allegorical characters.

³¹Wolff, op. cit., pp. 43-44 and 391, note 4. The correct reading can be found in, for example, Novalis, Fragmente, ed. Ernst Kamnitzer (Dresden, 1929), p. 672.

³²Wolff, op. cit., p. 44.

³³Either because he did not notice the discrepancy in the second half, or because he recognized the textual error for what it was (but if the latter, why did he allow the passage to go uncorrected?)

discussed below, two of the criteria which MacDonald considered indispensable for a good fairy tale were that it should have meaning and that its world, however fanciful, should be governed by a set of harmonious laws. Moreover, as has been seen, MacDonald considered Undine as the best model of a fairy tale, and Undine is outstanding for its consistency of conception and structure. It would therefore not be consistent on his part to elect to write a tale which was deliberately chaotic. Indeed, much as he may have admired the numinous and poetic element in Novalis, one looks in vain among his stories, fanciful or otherwise, for one in which there is not a central cohesive meaning. Phantastes is no exception. It is plain, from its many moralistic and explanatory passages, that it too has a strong ethical and religious substructure, which inspires the fantasy motifs, binds them together, and uses them to convey its message. (The same is true of Lilith.) Moreover, even if one grants that the sequence of marvellous events which forms the narrative of Phantastes is occasionally dream-like--a debatable point, which rests on subjective evaluation--the fact remains that this sequence represents, first and foremost, an ordered, cohesive spiritual progression on the part of the hero, Anodos.

There may be a faint possibility that MacDonald did in fact notice that, in the passage quoted above, Novalis speaks of incoherence in one breath, and of coherence in the next, but that he interpreted this sequence not as an inconsistency, but as an attempt to distinguish between two types of narrative: (1) those that do not have organic structure, but simply a loose association of elements ("Erzählungen ohne Zusammenhang, jedoch mit Association"); and (2) the genuine

Märchen ("einem echten Märchen"), which the Tieck-Schlegel text inadvertently characterized as wonderful, mysterious, and coherent; that is to say, MacDonald may have taken both parts of the text equally at face value and chosen to attempt the second kind of narrative. This hypothesis would account for his not attempting to emend the quotation. (The whole question depends largely, of course, on the degree of MacDonald's knowledge of German.) But, whatever MacDonald's understanding of Novalis' advice, Phantastes successfully achieves the goals of being wonderful, mysterious, and, in its message and meaning, coherent.

In some German romantic literature, notably E. T. A. Hoffmann, a love of the marvellous is counterbalanced by parabolic meaning. Behind the wild and variegated imagery of the story line are serious statements about human life. Hoffmann's Golden Pot, for instance, with its Student Anselmus now in the real world of Dresden, now in a fairy world where he copies mysterious manuscripts for a magician and pursues the magician's daughter, who is sometimes a real woman and sometimes a beautiful little serpent, can be read simply as a fantastic tale. But other themes are also evident: that "loss of faith or denial of revelation can be destructive; that there is a connection between madness and the suffering world; and that art and life do not mingle, but must be separated."³⁴ MacDonald's admiration for Hoffmann, particularly The Golden Pot, is evidenced in his letters;³⁵ he read the story prior to writing Phantastes,

³⁴Bleiler, introduction to The Best Tales of Hoffmann, p. xviii.

³⁵See Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 259. He believed that his father might have first found Hoffmann's works in the library he had catalogued (ibid., p. 79, note).

and his son Greville believed that it made an arresting impression upon him.³⁶ It is likely that this was so as much because of its many-layered meaning as because of its luxuriant use of the marvellous. It is not surprising that MacDonald, who combined a unique imagination with a very strong religious background--who was, indeed, an ordained minister--should have found the German romantics, who combined a fantastic imaginativeness with a serious concern with moral and artistic questions, to his taste, for although he was interested in fantastic literature, it was not for the sake of fantasy alone, but for a serious purpose. In MacDonald's view, the most serious business of life was to find one's way to God. When he came to write his tales of imagination, therefore, he fused richness of invention with the Christian message that life is a spiritual pilgrimage whose turnings are determined by individual choice, and that there are some fearful and wonderful way stations possible. Fantasy is the form, but reason and faith are the controlling spirit, of Phantastes and Lilith. Thus was born a special kind of writing in English, novels of the Christian supernatural, exemplified in our own time by some of the works of C. S. Lewis and the novels of Charles Williams. According to Louis MacNeice, what is unique in MacDonald is "his passionately spiritual attitude to the universe and his prolific invention of symbols to

³⁶Ibid., p. 298. He points out, for instance, the similarity between the opening episode of Hoffmann's tale and the way in which, in Phantastes, Anodos' bedroom melts into a forest dell; both stories show how "quite easily and unexpectedly we also may step--not if we will, but rather if we are led--out of the common tangible world into that truer land of faerie and imagery; and that having set foot in it, we can never quite leave it," i.e., it induces a subtle and irreversible spiritual change.

embody it."³⁷ He considers that in the realm of parable writing, "no one went further than MacDonald in the whole of the nineteenth century."³⁸

Fantasy in the sense of fancy unbridled is foreign to MacDonald. Taking his cue from Coleridge, perhaps, he even distinguished, as will be seen, between imagination, on the one hand, as a faculty which partakes of both the rational and the intuitive and which functions in many spheres besides that of story or poetry--history and science, for instance; and, on the other hand, fancy, which he considered to be the essence of fairytale.

This distinction may be somewhat unfamiliar today, since the terms imagination, fantasy, and fancy, when used in a literary context,³⁹ have virtually become synonyms. The shades of meaning which once distinguished them have atrophied; the modern reader tends to forget that they were the subject of serious philosophical thought in other days, and that they were considered to be separate but related faculties, of varying degrees of worth.

³⁷Louis MacNeice, Varieties of Parable (Cambridge, 1965), p. 96.

³⁸Ibid., p. 95. MacNeice prefers the term parable to symbol, allegory, fable, fantasy, or myth, for reasons explained in the opening chapter of his book.

³⁹As Murray Wright Bundy has pointed out ("The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought," University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XII / May-August 1927 /, 8 and 11 / 190 and 193 /), imagination and fancy are not primarily critical terms, and, as terms of reflective thought, go back to Plato. He states (p. 270 / 452 /): "the terms are not in their original aesthetic terms. . . . the concepts themselves were, for the most part, molded by philosophy, and, specifically in the order of their importance, by metaphysics, psychology, and ethics. Definitions in these three realms largely determined the nature of the terms which were to become so important in the vocabulary of the aesth~~etic~~ician and the critic." Bundy's study treats the history of the concepts of fancy and imagination from the time of Plato through that of Dante.

As early as the fifteenth century, for example, Pico della Mirandola defined the imagination as a power of the mind which had received its name (Latin imaginatio) from its function of making images, "which it conceives and forms in itself. To it there are carried through the instruments of the five exterior senses . . . the likenesses and impressions of things which are from without . . ." ⁴⁰

The imagination was to be distinguished from mind and intellect, to both of which it was subordinate, and from the senses, to which it was superior. Fantasy (phantasy) he considered to be a power of the soul, with its starting-point in the senses. ⁴¹ Imagination was therefore a rational function, fantasy not, although both were dependent upon the senses for nourishment.

According to William Rossky, the terms imagination and fantasy had more or less merged by the sixteenth century.

Although in classical times the functions of imagination and fantasy were carefully distinguished as the bases of passive or active function, by Elizabethan times the distinctions had, for the most part, been lost and terms like "phantasy", "fantsie", even "fancy", are used interchangeably with "imagination". ⁴²

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, there was, as already mentioned, a new upsurge of interest in the literature of the imagination; and in Coleridge's Biographia

⁴⁰ Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, On the Imagination, ed. Harry Caplan, Cornell Studies in English, XVI (New Haven, 1930), p. 25.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 25 and 27.

⁴² William Rossky, "Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic," Studies in the Renaissance, V (1957), 50.

Literaria (1817), a new attempt was made to distinguish between and define imagination and fancy. Coleridge divided imagination into primary--"normal perception that produces the usual world of the senses"--and secondary, which, in "re-forming this world, gives us not only poetry . . . but every aspect of the routine world in which it is invested with other values than these necessary for our bare continuance as living beings . . ."⁴³ Fancy is "no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space . . . [which] . . . must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."⁴⁴ Imagination "brings the mind into direct connection with the ultimate and supersensuous reality,"⁴⁵ while the workings of fancy, obviously a lower function, are, in MacNeice's interpretation of Coleridge's definition, "not inevitable but arbitrary." They "have surface but no depth; they amuse but they do not nourish; they are almost a form of doodling."⁴⁶ Imagination is serious; fancy, if not quite frivolous, is capable of degenerating into frivolousness.⁴⁷

⁴³I. A. Richards, Coleridge on Imagination (London, 1962), p. 58.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵A Literary History of England, p. 1157.

⁴⁶MacNeice, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁷Lascelles Abercrombie maintained that no faculty of fancy exists, that it is "one of Coleridge's chimeras," and simply a degree of imagination (quoted in John Livingstone Lowes, The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination [Boston, 1927], p. 103). Lowes (p. 103) agrees with this view, regarding fancy and imagination not as two powers, each working with different materials, but as a single power, which, when working at high intensity, assimilates and transmutes, and, at low, "aggregates and yokes together those images which, at its highest pitch, it merges indissolubly into one." Cf. also Chiari, op. cit., pp. 25-26: "Imagination always starts from reality which it perceives as an idea or a unifying principle, and at the same time it differentiates itself from phenomenal reality by its capacity to deal with ideas or concepts of pure reason which cannot be known by experience."

MacDonald's imaginative works are an amalgam of romantic fancy and Christian message—a mutually enhancing combination, that is, of (1) an element which can lend richness to story but which can also become chaotic if unbridled, and (2) an element which shapes, controls, and imparts special meaning to romantic fancy. The distinction between fancy and imagination as between a lower and a higher faculty was therefore of great interest to MacDonald. In writing about them, he gave them an added dimension by treating them as faculties of man's mind functioning within the mind of God. Therefore, in the last analysis, man could never create entirely on his own. Referring to the imagination in its meaning of "imaging or a making of likenesses," he defined it as "that faculty which gives form to thought . . . in any mode upon which the senses can lay hold."⁴⁸ In the context of science he regarded it as a power which could suggest to the intellect what direction to take in order to discover new laws.⁴⁹ In the context of poetry, imagination is the faculty which chooses, gathers, and vitally combines the material of a new revelation.⁵⁰ The imagination is the creative faculty, combining thought-forms in ways that are not the result of the individual's intention, but which arise from the unconscious portion

⁴⁸George MacDonald, "The Imagination," in A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and on Shakespeare, p. 2. This essay was originally published anonymously in 1867 as "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture," in The British Quarterly Review, XLVI (July 1, 1867), 45-70.

⁴⁹Ibid., 1908 edition, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 22.

of his nature. This is not to say, however, that the unconscious creates from "its own blind working"; the ultimate creator is God, working through man's mind, which is the image only of God's imagination.⁵¹

One difference between God's work and man's is, that, while God's work cannot mean more than he meant, man's must mean more than he meant. . . . it is God's . . . embodied thoughts, which alone a man has to use, modified and adapted to his own purposes, for the expression of his thoughts; therefore he cannot help his words and figures falling into such combinations in the mind of another as he had himself not foreseen . . . so many the thoughts hinted in every symbol. A man may well himself discover truth in what he wrote; for he was dealing all the time with things that came from thoughts beyond his own.⁵²

Although MacDonald placed imagination on a higher level than fancy, he regarded true fancy not as the equivalent of riotous imagining, but as the ability to invent another world (what Tolkien was to call a Secondary World) with a consistent set of laws of its own. He called this faculty the fantastic imagination. His discussion of it occurs in an essay on the Märchen, a word which he reluctantly translates as "fairy tale."

The natural world has its laws, and no man must interfere with them in the way of presentment any more than in the way of use; but they themselves may suggest laws of other kinds, and man may, if he pleases, invent a little world of his own, with its own laws; for there is that in him which delights in

51

Ibid., pp. 24 and 25. The passages in question afford an interesting example of a pre-Freudian discussion of the unconscious. Naive and oversimplified as it may seem today, MacDonald's explanation was characteristically straightforward and devout.

52

MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," pp. 320-321.

calling up new forms--which is the nearest, perhaps, he can come to creation. When such forms are new embodiments of old truths, we call them products of the Imagination; when they are mere inventions, however lovely, I should call them the work of the Fancy: in either case, Law has been diligently at work.⁵³

The most important criterion of a good "fairy tale," according to MacDonald, is that the laws operating within its imagined world are harmonious; consistency, even in a fanciful world, is necessary to induce literary belief.⁵⁴ A true (good) fairy tale should have meaning,

⁵³Ibid., p. 314.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 314-315. To create what Tolkien terms inner consistency of reality (see J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in Tree and Leaf [London, 1964], passim; first published in Essays Presented to Charles Williams [London, 1947]). Since MacDonald cited La Motte Fouqué's Undine as the most beautiful fairy tale he knew, it may be assumed that this was due, at least in part, to the fact that it fulfills MacDonald's criteria for a true fairy tale. The story is of a young girl who is a water-spirit, sent to earth to marry a mortal in order to gain a soul. When her husband rejects her, she must return to her people; when he is unfaithful (remarries), she must kill him. La Motte Fouqué invested his story with a wealth of realistic psychological detail which helps to make his characters' decisions and changes of heart believable. The religious framework is Christian. At the same time, the supernatural law which allows Undine's uncle to take human shape or that of a water-spout, a stream, or a storm, and which eventually bends her to its will, is made equally plausible (a segment of the pagan elemental world is allowed to function within the Christian one). There are no loose ends; the structure is tight, and all actions well motivated. Events are carefully prepared for and unfold logically. Undine, as was pointed out even in its own day, is a "harmonious union of fiction and fact," an "exquisite blending of the natural and supernatural" (Rev. Thomas Tracy, preface to "Undine" and "Sintram and His Companions," by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué [New York, 1845], p. xi). Cf. also G. K. Chesterton, a great admirer of MacDonald ("Fairy Tales," in All Things Considered [London, 1926], p. 190): "If you really read the fairy-tales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other--the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is the core of the nursery-tales."

which will vary according to the person interpreting it.⁵⁵ It may contain allegory but is not itself an allegory.⁵⁶ A good fairy tale is not subject to a one-for-one analysis--indeed, MacDonald considered that any key to a work of imagination would be absurd⁵⁷--but should wake up in the reader "things which are in him" and make him "think things for himself."⁵⁸

Since this essay formed the preface to an American edition of what MacDonald designated as "my so-called Fairy Tales,"⁵⁹ it may be assumed that he had attempted to observe these criteria in writing his tales.

Certainly MacDonald attempted to make his imagined worlds consistent within themselves. In Phantastes, for instance, one of the fundamental laws of the world in which Anodos finds himself is that if a man disobeys moral law, the deterioration in his soul will take material form as a destroying Shadow. Thus, Anodos' Shadow, as it follows him about, kills the flowers which it touches, blots out the sun from the eyes of its owner, makes beautiful things seem tawdry and commonplace, and makes an honest friend seem untrustworthy (ch. ix).

MacDonald also used symbols and archetypes that refuse to submit to allegorical analysis and which provide a good deal of material for

⁵⁵MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," pp. 316-317.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 317.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 321.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 319.

⁵⁹MacDonald, A Dish of Orts, p. vi.

interpretation. There is, for instance, the character of Lilith, who is at once an embodiment of illusion and self-delusion, a vampiric representation of selfishness, a witch, and yet a woman who cannot escape suffering and redemption.

The line of demarcation between imagination and fancy is elusive, but MacDonald obviously felt it to be important enough to try and establish. In coining the term fantastic imagination, he created a twilight region between the two, where invention and law counter-balance each other.⁶⁰ This was a viable compromise for one who drew delight from the splendors of make-believe, but who also felt that it, like every activity in life, should be ordered to a higher purpose and not indulged in merely for its own sake.

Interestingly enough, J. R. R. Tolkien's conception of fantasy is, without any reference to a Christian context, close to what MacDonald tried to express in the phrase "fantastic imagination."

Imagination, according to Tolkien, is the mental power of image-making, but in recent times, mere image-making has been ascribed to "the operations of Fancy (a reduced and depreciatory form of the older word Fantasy)."⁶¹ Differences in degree of vividness or strength of image-making exist, but these are only differences in intensity of

⁶⁰Cf. MacDonald's distinguishing between fancy and mere fancy in "Essays on Some of the Forms of Literature" (A Dish of Orts, p. 231): "It is true that his /T. T. Lynch, the author whose Essays are being discussed/ Fancy is the fairy attendant on his Imagination, which latter uses the former for her own higher ends; and that there is little or no mere fancy to be found in his books; for if you look below the surface-form you find a truth." Truth is the redeeming feature of Fancy, as opposed to aimless imaginings (mere fancy).

⁶¹Tolkien, op. cit., p. 43.

imagination, not differences in kind. Since imagination is only perception of images, it is inappropriate to apply the term to something higher, "the power of giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of reality."⁶² Imagination is necessary to, but does not constitute, the operative faculty which actually achieves a result that has inner consistency of reality, i.e., which commands or induces Secondary Belief in a Secondary World, or Sub-creation. (Just as MacDonald spoke of a man's inventing a little world of his own, with its own laws, so Tolkien speaks of imagination and the creative, belief-producing faculty. MacDonald's terms "invention" and "law" can be substituted for "imagination" and "inner consistency of reality"; a fusion of the two will in either case yield a sub-creation.) The operative link between imagination and the final result, sub-creation, is the sub-creative art. Tolkien feels that a term is needed to "embrace both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image: a quality essential to fairy-story."⁶³ MacDonald uses the term "fantastic imagination" to contain all this. Tolkien uses the word fantasy, "in a sense, that is, which combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of 'unreality' (that is, of unlikeness to the Primary World), of freedom from the domination of observed 'fact', in short of the fantastic"; moreover, he looks upon the fact that the images are of things which are not in the primary world as a virtue, not a defect, and regards fantasy as "not a lower but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent."⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 44.

Fantasy should not be confused with dreaming, in which there is no art; for Tolkien, it is a rational activity.⁶⁵ It neither opposes nor challenges reason; on the contrary, the sharper and more perceptive reason is, the better the fantasy it will create.⁶⁶ This is due to the fact that "creative Fantasy is founded upon the hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun; on a recognition of fact, but not a slavery to it."⁶⁷ Finally, in the best fairy stories, when the high point is achieved, there is "a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart's desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through," i.e., the special kind of joy in successful Fantasy may be explained as "a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."⁶⁸

MacDonald's fairy tales, or fantasies, meet Tolkien's criteria: they take place in secondary worlds which have inner consistency of reality (in MacDonald's terms, harmony or law); they are also worlds of strangeness and wonder, in that they are either in a dream-like world or fairyland (Phantastes) or are trans- and multi-dimensional (Lilith), while at the same time they are ruled by the rationality of Christian moral principles; and they open out at moments into the joy which Tolkien describes, but which in

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 61 and 62.

MacDonald is the joy of realization of the truth of Christian teaching.⁶⁹

Again the facts have presented themselves: in MacDonald, two currents, strong Christian belief and a capacity for romantic imaginativeness, combined to form something new, romantic fantasy in the service of Christian ethics, a special kind of moral fiction. He is, beyond all things, a teacher and guide.⁷⁰

This genre may be regarded as a new development in a very old kind of literature, the sermon, conceived of in its widest sense, of Christian didacticism. MacDonald's writing is in the same moral and literary tradition that clothed Christian teaching in parable and exemplum during the Middle Ages, composed the dream Dialogue of the

69

MacDonald's ability to create inner consistency of reality in his fantasies was noted in his own time. See, for example, "Mr. George Mac Donald's Novels," The North British Review, New Series, VI (September 1866), 5, where the anonymous critic, in discussing Phantastes, states that "the reader is made to feel, as he ought to do in romance, that what is most impossible is nevertheless perfectly true." W. H. Auden gives the name "mythical creation" to the rare gift of being able consciously to create a believable secondary world with its own set of consistent laws, and considers that MacDonald was one of the few writers within historical memory who have done so. He finds that the gift for mythical creation is difficult to define and that "the satisfaction that works of this genre give us is equally difficult to define." (Cf. C. S. Lewis' discussion of MacDonald as a mythopoeic writer, dealt with later in this chapter.) Moreover, for Auden, "George MacDonald's most extraordinary, and precious, gift is his ability, in all his stories, to create an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony or moralistic. 'Nothing is rarer in literature' ("Afterword, for a New Edition of George MacDonald's The Golden Key," The Horn Book Magazine, XLIII [April 1967], 176 and 177).

70

Note that C. S. Lewis put MacDonald into his short moral fantasy The Great Divorce, as his guide among some of the inhabitants of the other world, and that he is there called Teacher many times. Cf. Lewis' statement (Letters of C. S. Lewis [hereafter referred to as Letters], ed. W. H. Lewis [London, 1966], p. 84): "'I read Macdonald's Phantastes over my tea, which I have read many times and which I really believe fills for me the place of a devotional book.'"

Body and Soul, related Everyman's journey, and described, in an allegory within a dream, the Pilgrim's Progress.⁷¹

But MacDonald's fantasies are more complex. As already seen, he felt that true stories of the fantastic imagination should not be simple allegory and need not have the same meaning for everyone, but should awake an awareness in the reader of thoughts which had not previously risen to the conscious level. This was his own goal in writing fantasy, and it is clear that the conclusion he wished to evoke in the minds of his readers is that God waits for the soul to struggle towards Him through a forest of difficulties and hard choices, and that the journey is as good as it is unavoidable. Part of MacDonald's skill as a writer of fantasy lies in his ability to use symbols which allow of both psychological and theological interpretation--the Shadow is a case in point--and whose appeal lies in their being simultaneously familiar and mysterious figures. This appeal could be explained in Jungian terms by identifying these images as archetypes which exist in the collective unconscious, and which have a strange power to excite the human mind, in whatever material they are embodied.⁷² Jung was also of the opinion that

⁷¹Bunyan's work was of course very familiar to MacDonald, who, with his family, presented a theatrical version of it for many years, in order to supplement their income (see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 386, 470, 490, and 501).

⁷²See, in this connection, Alexander Reid, "The St. Francis of Aberdeen," Scotland's Magazine, LVIII (January 1962), 43-44: "MacDonald's fantasies fit in almost exactly with Jung's theory of archetypes. Indeed the adventures of 'Anodos' ('The Lost') in Phantastes and of Mr. Vane (from Vanity?) in Lilith duplicate so exactly the kind of adventures that Jung predicts are to be encountered along 'the way' that leads to 'individuation' that if MacDonald had not written before Jung one might have suspected that he was merely trans-

"myths, or at any rate the older and greater myths, are such images recovered from the collective unconscious."⁷³ Indeed, in trying through fairytale to "wake things up that are in . . . [the reader] or . . . make him think things for himself . . . the something deeper than the understanding--the power that underlies thoughts,"⁷⁴ MacDonald seems to imply a belief in a collective unconscious, but, as his discussion of the imagination shows, his conception of the collective mind behind man is God's mind, and not race memory.

Whether the psychological or the religious base is preferred, the fact remains that the essence of MacDonald's sub-creative art is the ability to write story that has the universality of myth, within a Christian cosmos. C. S. Lewis has identified MacDonald's fantasy as "fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic [myth-making, or myth-evoking]," and this, in Lewis' opinion, "he does better than any man."⁷⁵ W. H. Auden has also described MacDonald

lating Jung's findings into fiction." It is interesting to note, for instance, that Anodos' Shadow bears a resemblance to what Jung also called the shadow--"the personal unconscious . . . all those uncivilized desires and emotions that are incompatible with social standards and our ideal personality, all that we are ashamed of . . . all that we do not want to know about ourselves" (quotation from Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology / Baltimore, 1968 /, p. 50). In addition to each individual's having a shadow, Fordham continues, there is, to Jung's way of thinking, a collective aspect of the shadow, which "is expressed as a devil, a witch, or something similar." This description is applicable to the Shadow in Lilith, which exists on its own, apart from any individual, and is a stalking evil.

⁷³C. S. Lewis, "Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism," in They Asked for a Paper, p. 133.

⁷⁴MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imatiration," pp. 319-320.

⁷⁵C. S. Lewis, preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology (New York, 1948), p. 14.

as "pre-eminently a mythopoeic writer."⁷⁶

Like "imagination," "fancy," and "fantasy," the word "myth" has many connotations. As Stith Thompson has pointed out, it is, "of all the words used to distinguish the classes of prose narrative . . . the most confusing"; it can be used, as he uses it, to mean "a tale laid in a world supposed to have preceded the present."⁷⁷ This definition would not be applicable to MacDonald, however, for, in the Christian context, the only world preceding the present one would be Eden, and with this MacDonald does not deal—only the journey to a new Eden.

Alan Watts has suggested as a definition of myth: "a complex of images or a story, whether factual or fanciful, taken to represent the deepest truths of life . . ."⁷⁸ I. A. Richards, while not defining myth, describes it in terms approaching Watts's: "the saner and greater mythologies are not fancies [here, enervating make-believe]; they are the utterance of the whole soul of man and, as such, inexhaustible to meditation."⁷⁹ Both these descriptions are akin to C. S. Lewis' conception of a myth as "a particular kind of story which has a value in itself—a value independent of its embodiment in any literary work,"⁸⁰

⁷⁶W. H. Auden, introduction to The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald, ed. Anne Fremantle (New York, 1954), p. v. See also footnote 69 above.

⁷⁷Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York, 1946), p. 9.

⁷⁸Alan W. Watts, Myth and Ritual in Christianity (London, 1954), p. 63.

⁷⁹Richards, op. cit., p. 171.

⁸⁰C. S. Lewis, "On Myth," in An Experiment in Criticism, p. 41.

and "a story out of which ever varying meanings will grow for different readers and in different ages."⁸¹ In a myth, the mere pattern of events is what matters, regardless of the medium in which they are embodied.⁸²

In poetry the words are the body and the "theme" or "content" is the soul. But in myth the imagined events are the body and something inexpressible is the soul: the words, or mime, or film, or pictorial series are not even clothes--they are not much more than a telephone.⁸³

Furthermore, in a myth, according to Lewis, the characters follow a pattern of movement which we feel has a profound relevance to our own life, but they do not cause us to transport ourselves imaginatively into theirs as individuals.⁸⁴ (In this sense, Anodos in Phantastes and Mr. Vane in Lilith are mythical.) Myth is also always fantastic, i.e., it deals with impossibles and preternaturals; the experience it yields may be sad or joyful, but it is always grave and awe-inspiring:

We feel it to be numinous. It is as if something of great moment had been communicated to us. The recurrent efforts

⁸¹Lewis, Letters, p. 271.

⁸²Lewis, "On Myth," p. 41.

⁸³Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 16. Cf. the description in Phantastes, ch. xiii, of the effect of a story read in a book in the library of the fairy palace: everything [in the book] was just as it should be, though whether in words or something else, I cannot tell. It glowed and flashed the thoughts upon the soul, with such a power that the medium disappeared from the consciousness, and it was occupied only with the things themselves."

⁸⁴Lewis, "On Myth," p. 44.

of the mind to grasp . . . to conceptualise—this something, are seen in the persistent tendency of humanity to provide myths with allegorical explanations. And after all allegories have been tried, the myth itself continues to feel more important than they.⁸⁵

Most myths, Lewis points out, were made in prehistoric times, and probably not by individuals, but that every once in a while a genius occurs in the modern world, e.g., a Novalis or a Kafka, who can compose such stories.

Macdonald [sic] is the greatest genius of this kind whom I know. But I do not know how to classify such genius. . . . It may even be one of the greatest arts; for it produces works which give us (at the first meeting) as much delight and (on prolonged acquaintance) as much wisdom and strength as the works of the greatest poets. It . . . hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives.

It was in this mythopoeic art that Macdonald excelled.⁸⁶

In discussing the relationship between myth and allegory, Lewis once wrote that myth "'is a higher thing than allegory (into which one meaning has been put).'" Further, "'into an allegory a man can put only what he already knows; in a myth he puts what he does

⁸⁵Ibid. Cf. G. K. Chesterton's statement ("Man and Mythologies," in G. K. Chesterton: A Selection from His Non-Fictional Prose, selected by W. H. Auden [London, 1970], p. 214) that "it is often said that pagan mythology was a personification of the powers of nature. The phrase is true in a sense, but it is very unsatisfactory; because it implies that the forces are abstractions and the personification is artificial. Myths are not allegories. Natural powers are not in this case abstractions. It is not as if there were a God of Gravitation. There may be a genius of the waterfall; but not of mere falling, even less than of mere water. The impersonation is not of something impersonal. The point is that the personality perfects the water with significance."

⁸⁶Lewis, preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, pp. 16-17.

not yet know and cd. [sic] not come by in any other way."⁸⁷

Allegory is at its best when it "approaches myth, which must be grasped with the imagination, not with the intellect."⁸⁸ This may be taken to mean that mythopoeic writing springs from visceral perception of universal truth. Viewed from one angle, it is highly subjective; from another, mystic. If the idea is accepted that man's mind does not contain, but is contained by, a greater mystery, it follows that that mystery can never be encompassed, or more than partly perceived, by the human mind. True mythopoeic writing, Lewis seems to be saying, will convey a sense of this relationship of man to the universe; it will couch intuitively-known truths in the symbols which most vividly present themselves to the mind of the writer; and it will inspire a variety of interpretations: "the mythopoeic is . . . for good or ill, a mode of imagination which does something to us at a deep level."⁸⁹

But the relationship between myth-making and allegory can be clarified further. Mythopoeism is related to allegory in that

⁸⁷ Lewis, Letters, p. 271. Cf. C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, tr. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Bayne (London, 1959), chapter on "Psychology and Literature," pp. 185-186 and 187: "ordinarily we dismiss the visionary experience as the outcome of a rich fantasy or of a poetic mood--that is to say, as a kind of poetic licence psychologically understood. . . . We cannot doubt that the vision is a genuine, primordial experience, regardless of what reason-mongers may say. . . . It is true symbolic expression--that is, the expression of something existent in its own right, but imperfectly known."

⁸⁸ C. S. Lewis, preface to The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity Reason and Romanticism [sic] (London, 1956), p. 13.

⁸⁹ C. S. Lewis, "On Science Fiction," in Of Other Worlds, p. 72.

both deal with relationships between material and immaterial things. But in allegory, intangibles, such as human passions, are given material form as personifications so that they may be expressed. This is one way in which the mind can deal with the equivalence between the material and the immaterial. The other way of treating it, which C. S. Lewis has called sacramentalism or symbolism, is nearly the opposite of allegory.

If our passions, being immaterial, can be copied by material inventions, then it is possible that our material world in its turn is a copy of an invisible world. As the god Amor and his figurative garden are to the actual passions of men, so perhaps we ourselves and our "real" world are to something else. The attempt to read that something else through its sensible imitations, to see the archetype /sic/ in the copy, is what I mean by symbolism or sacramentalism. . . . The allegorist leaves the given--his own passions--to talk of that which is confessedly less real, which is a fiction. The symbolist leaves the given to find that which is more real. To put the difference in another way, for the symbolist it is we who are the allegory. . . . the world which we mistake for reality is the flat outline of that which elsewhere veritably is in all the round of its unimaginable dimensions.⁹⁰

Sacramentalism or symbolism are synonyms of the mythopoeic art--awaking the awareness to the reality beyond what we see as the real world and which contains it. It is a vision of the true nature of all things visible and invisible, natural and super-natural, which form one ultimate Reality, at least for those with strong religious beliefs. In an allegory, a single meaning is invested in a personification;

⁹⁰C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (London, 1951), p. 45.

there is a one-to-one relationship between material and immaterial, and they are easily separated, like the halves of a nut falling apart. But in symbolism and mythopoeism, an image may compress a variety of related significances into itself, in an attempt to mirror a complex higher reality, to encapsulate, so to speak, the greater within the lesser.⁹¹ Image and meaning are organically interwoven, the image giving visible shape to meaning, and meaning investing the image with vitality. Greville MacDonald said of his father's symbolic utterance that "to him a symbol was far more than an arbitrary outward and visible sign of an abstract conception: its high virtue lay in a common substance with the idea presented."⁹² Thus, to take an example, the weeping, muffled figure of Mara, Mother of Sorrow, in Lilith, is more than an allegorical embodiment of the idea of lonely repentance, i.e., of an inner state of man. She is a symbol of paternal/maternal divine sorrow over sin (static aspect) and of the divine law which requires that sinners be sought out and given the chance to come to a true knowledge of themselves,

⁹¹Cf. William York Tindall, The Literary Symbol (Bloomington, Indiana, 1967), pp. 11-12: "Though definite in itself and generally containing a sign that may be identified, the [literary] symbol carries something indeterminate and, however we try, there is a residual mystery that escapes our intellects. As Carlyle said . . . the symbol at once reveals and conceals."

⁹²George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 481-482. Cf. George MacDonald, Lilith, ch. xlv: "Every growing thing showed me, by its shape and colour, its indwelling idea--the informing thought, that is, which was its being, and sent it out." It is interesting to note the parallel between MacDonald's understanding of symbol and the modern concept of archetype-symbols. The appeal of both lies in their being tangible reminders of a dimly-discerned, but strongly-felt, common heritage. For MacDonald this was the eternal working of divine law; for the moderns it is the collective unconscious and race memory.

which in itself is inevitably painful, but good if it leads to salvation (active function). Thus, at times, she sits and weeps, and at others, as when Lilith undergoes the ordeal of looking into her own soul, Mara sees the sinner through her trial, both relentlessly and mercifully. In MacDonald the meaning lives in the image.⁹³

C. S. Lewis said of him:

The quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live.⁹⁴

G. K. Chesterton also felt this to be true:

The commonplace allegory takes what it regards as the commonplaces or conventions necessary to ordinary men and women, and tries to make them pleasant or picturesque by dressing them up as princesses or goblins or good fairies. But George MacDonald did really believe that people were princesses and goblins and good fairies, and he dressed them up as ordinary men and women. The fairy-tale was the inside of the ordinary story and not the outside.⁹⁵

Having considered the two sides of MacDonald's nature, romanticism and religiousness, which interlock in his fantasies, and his special talent of fusing the imagery of the former, the

⁹³Cf. Greville MacDonald's statement, in his introduction to Phantastes (London, 1940), p. viii: "Once a lady, well known in the educational world, asked the author of Phantastes if he could tell her in a few words what might be its meaning? His reply was to the effect that he had written the book with the sole object of giving her its meaning. Herein one may perceive one purpose of the fairy tale in general: to serve, namely, as antithesis to the text-book."

⁹⁴Lewis, preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 21.

⁹⁵G. K. Chesterton, introduction to George MacDonald and His Wife, by Greville MacDonald, p. 11.

message of the latter, and the supernaturalism of both into a creation which achieves the level of myth, we are in a better position to refine C. S. Lewis' definition of literary fantasy to fit MacDonald. His kind of fantasy is a mythopoeic narrative that uses impossibles and preternaturals to embody the Christian moral cosmos and to convey its teaching. It is Christian mythopoeism (almost devoid, however, of any specific mention of God or Christ). It is meant to entertain and to teach while it entertains, in the tradition of didactic imaginative literature. MacDonald is a supreme Christian preacher as well as a romantic, and so takes the theme of mutability which the romantics bewailed and "goes on and discovers what it was made for."⁹⁶ All his work, of which fantasy and fairy tale forms only a small part, is infused with evidence of an inspired preacher, which, to all accounts, he was.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 19. Cf. George MacDonald, quoted in Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 375, and in F. R. Dean, "George MacDonald," Papers of the Manchester Literary Club, LXVII (1948-1949), 76: "'People find this great fault with me—that I turn my stories into sermons. They forget that I have a Master to serve before I can wait upon the public.'"

⁹⁷See, for example, Coulson Kernahan, op. cit., p. 64, where he says of MacDonald, whom he had heard speak, that he was "directly inspired by the Holy Spirit"; also Mary Gray, "A Brief Sketch of the Life of George MacDonald," The Bookman, XXIX (November 1905), 66: "It is difficult to exaggerate the persuasive power of his preaching . . . and his reading of the Bible was magnificent." He drew large and appreciative audiences especially when he came to America in 1872-1873 (see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, Bk. VIII, chs. ii-iv, *passim*). See, for example, The Boston Daily Globe, October 17, 1872, p. 8: "Hearing his lectures one wonders what his sermons must be like and whether there are many sinners left in his parish . . ." For a collection of some of the best passages from MacDonald's non-fantastic novels and his sermons, see George MacDonald: An Anthology, ed. C. S. Lewis. It should be noted that Lewis, in the preface to this book, mentions (p. 17) that "necessity made MacDonald a novelist, but few of his

When he combined his natural bent as a moral teacher with his talent for fantasy, he did his best work, creating a new kind of fantasy in English, cosmic Christian fantasy.

novels are good and none is very good." Lewis is dealing here only with the non-fantastic novels. He has written elsewhere that in certain times a dominant literary form "tends to attract to itself writers whose talents would have fitted them much better for work of some other kind. Thus the retired Cowper writes satire in the eighteenth century; or in the nineteenth a mystic and natural symbolist like George MacDonald is seduced into writing novels" (The Allegory of Love, p. 232). W. D. Geddes ("George MacDonald as a Poet," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXLIX / March 1891 /, 364) points out that "George MacDonald is not the first poet hailing from benorth /sic/ the Tweed, who has allowed himself in his literary course to be whirled off into the region of Fiction out of the empyrean of the Muse," conjecturing that this may have been due to a desire "to influence opinion theologically as a preacher rather than as a poet." But the reason was more practical. Cf. MacDonald's own statement (quoted by Dean, op. cit., p. 77): "I do not like novel writing, but I have to earn my bread. My business is poetry." And, finally, MacDonald's statement, in a letter dated January 4, 1891 to his daughter Lilia (Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 518): "I have still one great poem in my mind, but it will never be written, I think, except we have a fortune left us, so that I need not write any more stories--of which I am beginning to be tired."

Chapter III. Themes and Fantasy Modes in George MacDonald

What he does best is fantasy—fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic. And this . . . he does better than any man.¹

". . . the Bible and mythology are constellations of one orbit."²

George MacDonald was born at Huntly, in Aberdeenshire, Scotland on December 10, 1824 and died in his eighty-first year, on September 18, 1905.³ His background was that of strict Scottish Presbyterianism, and with his family, as with those of many of the Scottish farmers and crofters, there was, even at the best of times, "never much money at home, notwithstanding an abundance of the bare necessities of life."⁴ Nevertheless, MacDonald attended King's College, Aberdeen, where he excelled in chemistry and natural philosophy; lack of money prevented him from studying medicine. This interest in the natural sciences, a "logical honesty regarding facts," coexisted in harmony with deep religious faith and an "imaginative grasp of undemonstrable truth."⁵

During these years, MacDonald began to grow away from his Calvinistic background. After obtaining his M. A. in 1845, and unable

¹C. S. Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 14.

²Novalis, Henry of Ofterdingen, Part Second, p. 123. The original reads: "'die Bibel und die Fabellehre sind Sternbilder Eines Umlaufs'" (Novalis, Schriften, I, ed. Kluckhohn and Samuel, 333).

³Unless otherwise indicated, the biographical data on MacDonald are taken from Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife.

⁴Ibid., p. 71.

⁵Ibid.

to pursue a medical career, he engaged in teaching for a short while, but ultimately turned to the ministry, pursuing his studies at Highbury College, a Congregationalist institution, and was ordained in 1851. His views were considered unorthodox, however; the congregation at Arundel, where he had his first formal pastorate, took issue with his view that provision was made for the heathen after death, and—a more serious charge—his being "tainted" with German theology.⁶ He resigned the Arundel pulpit in 1853 and moved on to Manchester, where he earned a livelihood for his growing family through preaching engagements, lectures, and teaching. In 1855, his first original work, a lengthy dramatic poem entitled Within and Without, was published. A pulpit where he could preach freely was finally offered to him, but a worsening of the lung disease which plagued him throughout most of his life, and which more than once brought him near death, made it impossible for him to take the assignment.⁷

Unable, by reason of his heterodoxy and his ill health, to continue in the ministry, MacDonald eventually moved to London, where he turned to writing. This, together with lecturing and teaching,⁸

⁶MacDonald published his translations of Novalis' Songs in 1851. "Today we hardly realize," wrote Greville MacDonald (George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 98), "how large a factor in daily life were matters of religion at that time, and how important was correctitude upon doctrinal points."

⁷Two of MacDonald's brothers, a half-sister, and four of his children died of tuberculosis, which he grimly wrote of as "'the family attendant'" (ibid., p. 470, note).

⁸Largely, though not exclusively, in the field of English literature. He occupied, for instance, the Chair of English Literature at Bedford College in London for some years. His lecture tour in America (1872-1873) was a series of talks on Burns (the most popular of the lectures), Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, and Tom Hood. However, just as his frequent preaching from dissenting pulpits earned

was his means of livelihood thereafter; he also continued to preach, but for this he would accept no fee. His letters, many of which were published by his son Greville after his death, attest to a lifetime of financial worry, constant work pressure, and frequent family sorrow, but also to MacDonald's great happiness in his family and to the "'rainbow hope'"⁹ of his faith, which, many times tested by circumstances and by intellectual doubt, remained one of extraordinary strength.

Poetry was his preferred mode of expression in writing,¹⁰ as it was, later, Charles Williams'.¹¹ His first book of poems was published in 1857. But he, like Williams after him, who also was constantly under financial pressure despite a hard work schedule of writing,¹² was obliged for the most part to grind out works which would be more likely to sell, i.e., novels. A great many of MacDonald's

him the disapproval of various churchmen, so his unorthodox religious views kept him, on one occasion, from securing the Edinburgh Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, despite his reputation as a lecturer and representative Scottish writer, and despite the support of such men as John Ruskin, who wrote to MacDonald concerning his candidature, in a letter of 16 August 1865: "if keen and prophetic understanding of the emotional part of literature, and the power of explaining clearly such understanding to others, fits for this Rhetorical position, that understanding and power you assuredly have: and I am sure no man would . . . make the Professorship a means of more active good so far as way was open to its influence and authority'" (Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p.355). MacDonald continued lecturing until 1891, when he was nearly sixty-seven.

⁹Ibid., p. 80; quoted from the Edinburgh Quarterly.

¹⁰See chapter II, footnote 97.

¹¹On Charles Williams' gravestone, in St. Cross churchyard in Oxford, is inscribed the word "Poet."

¹²In addition to full-time employment as an editor at the Oxford University Press.

prose works, however, are sprinkled with poems.

Forced into the novelist's mode, the minister made a virtue of necessity. His strong bent for teaching suffuses his novels, as may be seen from the numerous tiny sermons--many no more than a line or two in length--which they contain.¹³ Faith and encouragement was the keynote of all his works--poetry, novels for adults, stories for children, and sermons. As with Williams, all of MacDonald's writing, regardless of the genre in which it was cast, was an expression of his own religious outlook, sometimes stated in a directly didactic form, as in the novels of everyday life, and sometimes in parabolic form, as in Phantastes, Lilith, and the children's stories. Both writers seem to have had a compelling need to communicate their beliefs and to teach.

It must be emphasized, however, that the faith which MacDonald preached in his writings was not denominationalist. "Of theology there is none in his novels, of doctrine there is much," K. N. Colville remarked, "but it is never more than the dramatic situation permits."¹⁴

¹³The effectiveness of MacDonald's preaching, as already mentioned, was great; similarly, the "moral" passages in his novels are often beautiful, although, since many of them are in the form of interpolated comment by the author, they often violate the concept of true novel-writing. Several collections of excerpts from MacDonald's books were published during his lifetime. Bulloch, op. cit., pp. 730-732, cites ten collections, seven of which were published while MacDonald was alive. One of these (Selections from the Writings of George MacDonald, or Helps for Weary Souls, compiled by J. Dewey [New York, 1885?]) is still available, through University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. See also George Macdonald: An Anthology, ed. C. S. Lewis.

¹⁴Fame's Twilight: Studies of Nine Men of Letters (Boston, 1924?), pp. 238-239. This is not to say, however, as MacNeice maintains (op. cit., p. 97), that "MacDonald does not talk about God, let alone Christ, in his parable writing"; for he does, in several chapters of Lilith (e.g., chs. vi, xxix, xxxix-xl, and xlii-xlvii).

The path which led him from the Presbyterianism in which he was reared to Congregationalism, in which he was ordained, and to Anglicanism, which he ultimately embraced, was a personal spiritual exploration.

His letters to his father reflect the questioning nature of the young pastor:

"I firmly believe people have hitherto been a great deal too much taken up about doctrine and far too little about practice. The word doctrine, as used in the Bible, means teaching of duty, not theory. . . . We are far too anxious to be definite and to have finished, well-polished, sharp-edged systems--forgetting that the more perfect a theory about the infinite, the surer it is to be wrong, the more impossible is it to be right. I am neither Arminian nor Calvinist. To no system would I subscribe."¹⁵

"I have no love for any sect of Christians as such. . . . And independent I mean to be, in the real sense of the word. . . . There never was Reformation but it came in a way people did not expect and was cried down and refused by the greater part of the generation amongst whom it began."¹⁶

Similarly, MacDonald took issue with those who regarded the Bible as a directive for faith:

"Do not suppose that I believe in Jesus because it said so-and-so in a book. . . . The vision of him in that book, and, I trust, his own living power in me, have enabled me to understand him, to look him in the face, as it were . . . The Bible is to me the most precious thing in the world, because it tells me his story; and what good men thought about him who knew him and accepted him. But the common theory of the

¹⁵Quoted in Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 155.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 197. The italics are Greville MacDonald's.

/divine/ inspiration of the words, instead of the breathing of God's truth into the hearts and souls of those who wrote it, and who then did their best with it, is degrading and evil; and they who hold it are in danger of worshipping the letter . . . of being idolaters of the Bible instead of disciples of Jesus. . . . The book is indeed sent us by God, but it nowhere claims to be his very word. If it were--and it would be no irreverence to say it--it would have been a good deal better written."¹⁷

MacDonald's essential romanticism shows itself in this insistence on the individual's relationship to God, on the particularly personal way in which he supposes the leaven of Christ's example to work on the individual soul. His concern was with the church's relation to individuals; he accepted the Church of England because, in his view, it allowed the individual "a greater freedom in faith than any other Christian organization" and provided the nearest approach to what Greville MacDonald called theocratic individualism.¹⁸

This view of religion as an intensely personal relationship between the Supreme Being and the individual was partly structured on the belief that all men have the chance to attain salvation, if they choose. The doctrine of universal redemption was of course unacceptable to the Scottish clergy in MacDonald's younger days, being diametrically the opposite of the doctrine of predestination and the elect. It remained, nevertheless, an important part of his belief and preaching,

¹⁷Ibid., p. 373, from a letter to a lady who had inquired if he "had any of the old faith left." The italics are Greville MacDonald's.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 401. Cf., however, the following statement (ibid., p. 367), which MacDonald wrote to the secretary of a Congregational church in London (undated): "I am a member of the Church of England, but care neither for that nor any other denomination as dividing or separating."

although, it must be pointed out, he also believed that repentance was an essential requirement.¹⁹ In Lilith, for example, the title character, whose crimes are as black as her beauty is radiant, and who is the embodiment of self-delusion, selfishness, and evil, is not only made to see herself as she really is, but is also given the chance to atone.

MacDonald's religious outlook, therefore, was both broad and romantic in its insistence on the inviolable individual dialogue between man and God. The conviction that each individual has a capacity for spiritual receptiveness is also reflected in his statement that all men are poets; for "though perhaps they cannot write poetry, they can listen to it, hunger for it and love it"; a poet "is just more of a man than most."²⁰

It has been said that MacDonald did for Scotland what St. Paul did for Asia Minor: "he opened the windows."²¹ G. K. Chesterton sums up his originality with respect to the history of religion by comparing him with another Scot, Carlyle, who "never lost the Puritan mood even when he lost the whole of the Puritan theology," whereas MacDonald escaped from both.

¹⁹See Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 79, and Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 20. Regarding the discussion on universalism between the character of MacDonald and C. S. Lewis in Lewis' The Great Divorce, see Clyde S. Kilby, The Christian World of C. S. Lewis (Appleford, Abingdon, Berkshire, England, 1965), pp. 49-50.

²⁰Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 541.

²¹Ibid., p. 264.

He evolved out of his own mystical meditations a completely alternative theology leading to a completely contrary mood. . . . MacDonald had made for himself a sort of spiritual environment, a space and transparency of mystical light, which was quite exceptional in his national and denominational environment. He said things that were like the Cavalier mystics, like the Catholic saints, sometimes perhaps like the Platonists or the Swedenborgians, but not in the least like the Calvinists. And when he comes to be more carefully studied as a mystic, as I think he will be when people discover the possibility of collecting jewels in a rather irregular setting, it will be found, I fancy, that he stands for a rather important turning-point in the history of Christendom.²²

"He was one of the men who helped to overthrow the old despotic idea of God," one critic wrote shortly after MacDonald's death, "and to put in its place the fatherly idea of him." This was "the great change in theology in the latter half of the nineteenth century."²³

In taking up the cudgels against Scottish Calvinism, and adopting the belief that God is Love, MacDonald not only was driven out of institutional Christianity--at least, as Grierson has pointed out, as a pastor and teacher--but he also came up against the problem of reconciling the idea of a loving God with the fact of a world filled with pain and sorrow. He could not solve it, but he tried, in everything which he wrote, "not to prove, that is impossible, but to suggest, to collect evidence which . . . justifies the faith that, in the closing words of 'Phantastes': 'What we call evil is the only and best shape which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed

²²G. K. Chesterton, introduction to George MacDonald and His Wife, by Greville MacDonald, pp. 12-13.

²³W. Garrett Horder, "George MacDonald: A Nineteenth-Century Seer," Review of Reviews, XXXII (December 1905), 688.

by the best good."²⁴

Just as C. S. Lewis was unable to classify MacDonald's genius,²⁵ so Chesterton stated that he would not attempt to fix MacDonald's place in literature, this being, in any case, most difficult. "He wrote nothing empty; but he wrote much that is rather too full"--an apparent reference to his parabolic, or mythopoeic, writings--"and of which the appreciation depends rather on a sympathy with the substance than on the first sight of the form. As a matter of fact, the mystics have not often been men of letters in the finished and almost professional sense."²⁶

It is true that MacDonald, who was one of the most widely-read writers of the latter half of the nineteenth century,²⁷ and acquainted with the literary figures of the time,²⁸ has not earned a strong literary

²⁴H. J. C. Grierson, "George MacDonald," The Aberdeen University Review, XII (November, 1924), 5 and 6.

²⁵See Lewis' preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 16.

²⁶Chesterton, introduction to George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 14-15; italics mine.

²⁷Kernahan, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁸For example, he knew Matthew Arnold and Tennyson; H. G. Wells corresponded with him (see ch. IV, footnote 3); Ruskin was a close friend (see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 323, 328-341, 355, 381, 417-418, 423 note, 439 note, 472, 487, 496, and 497). Ruskin is quoted (ibid., p. 497) as having referred to MacDonald's Diary of an Old Soul as "a proof that Faith and Poetry were still united--"quaint, full of devotion, high in tone, the best example of the survival of faith in this sceptical age." Charles Kingsley, author of Water Babies, and Lewis Carroll were other friends. It was to the MacDonald children, in fact, that Alice's Adventures Underground was read in manuscript (Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 342). References to outings with the MacDonalds and their children are scattered throughout Carroll's (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson's) diaries. It is interesting to note that MacDonald's fantasy for children differed from that of both these writers, although one may wonder whether the mirror to the other world, in Lilith (1895), may not owe something to Alice through the Looking-Glass (1872).

reputation as a novelist,²⁹ except in the realm of fantasy for children.³⁰

Auden is of the opinion that although there are many writers far greater than he, his permanent importance in literature is assured because of his unusual gift of being able to "create an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony or moralistic";³¹ a characteristic which, it may be noted at this point, Charles Williams shared. Chesterton, in an article written a few days after MacDonald's death, described him as "not so much a man of letters . . . as a man with something to say."³² In his view, MacDonald was "one of the three or four greatest

²⁹See, for instance, Coulson Kernahan's prediction, quoted above in the Introduction, footnote 6, and MacDonald's own remark on himself as a novelist, quoted in ch. II, footnote 97. Cf. also Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 14, regarding MacDonald as a novelist: "If we define Literature as an art whose medium is words, then certainly Macdonald has no place in its first rank . . . Bad pulpit traditions cling to it; there is sometimes a nonconformist verbosity, sometimes an old Scotch weakness for florid ornament . . . sometimes an over-sweetness picked up from Novalis." But this "does not quite dispose of him even for the literary critic. What he does best is fantasy--fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic. And this . . . he does better than any man." It is of interest to note that Lewis criticized Charles Williams for literary faults that were not unlike those he found in MacDonald's non-fantastic novels: "He [Williams] is largely a self-educated man, labouring under an almost Oriental richness of imagination . . ." (Lewis, Letters, p. 197); "don't imagine I didn't pitch into Charles Williams for his obscurity for all I was worth" (ibid., p. 212 [letter of 22 December 1947 to Owen Barfield]).

³⁰Cf. Jane Douglass, "Dealings with the Fairies: An Appreciation of George MacDonald," The Horn Book Magazine, XXXVII (August 1961), 327: "Superb phantasiast that he is . . . it is as a writer for children that he will be most honored;" and (p. 331): "J. F. Darton, in his authoritative study, Children's Books in England . . . says, 'More than any prose-storyteller for children of that period, George MacDonald brought serious imagination into the fabric of his tale.'"

³¹Auden, "Afterword," op. cit., 177.

³²G. K. Chesterton, "George MacDonald," The [London] Daily News, September 23, 1905, p. 6. The article, coming so soon after MacDonald's death, was in the nature of a eulogy as well as an evaluation, and is therefore somewhat more emotional in tone than the introduction which Chesterton wrote for Greville MacDonald's biography of George MacDonald, published nineteen years later. Cf. also Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 17: "the author, though a poor novelist, is a supreme preacher."

men of 19th century Britain," in that he was a member of a rare breed,

a type of man who is a pillar of simple societies, but whom complex societies tend to turn into something else. I mean the sage, the sayer of things. . . . The things he produces form an artistic class by themselves; they are logia or great passionate maxims, the proverbs of philosophy. Confucius was a man of this kind, and the real Socrates and most of the founders of the great religions. But in our modern and respectable and highly-specialised world we do not like to leave an old gentleman loose about the streets merely saying things. The man who is naturally and spiritually of this type is in our time forced to pretend to be something else, a minor poet or novelist, or some sad kind of political reformer. . . . MacDonald was not so much a man of letters, then, as a man with something to say. But unfortunately for him--or, rather, unfortunately for us--the thing that he had to say was something not easily understood in this particular time. He was what is called . . . a mystic.³³

The term mysticism, as Chesterton uses it, refers not to vagueness or (the Celtic) twilight, but to a concern with absolutes.³⁴

Critics are agreed, then, that MacDonald was essentially a man with a spiritual message, which he couched most successfully in his fantasy writing. It is almost impossible to analyze completely in what MacDonald's mythopoeic gift consists,³⁵ but an attempt may be

³³Chesterton, "George MacDonald," p. 6. Williams also, as will be seen, had something to say not easily understood, or at least not easily acceptable, in his time.

³⁴Ibid. Grierson (op. cit., 11) considered that MacDonald, like so many of his generation, was "a quester after a mystical solution rather than a mystic" (in the sense that Blake, Boehme, and St. Paul were mystics, i.e., they had passed through the mystical experience).

³⁵Even C. S. Lewis, noted for his ability to analyze and pin down the most elusive of material, does not seem to have been able to pierce to the heart of MacDonald's mystery: "It / MacDonald's mythopoeic art / goes beyond the expression of things we have already felt. It arouses in us sensations we have never had before, never anticipated having, as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness

made by stating that it is the melding of a specific set of spiritual and religious convictions, supra-sectarian and universalist in nature, with a particular romantic symbolology.

In literary terms, a symbol in vacuo may contain a variety of potential meanings. The author's specific purpose determines which of these he will highlight in order to convey his message. Such usage can vary in complexity, of course, according to the number of meanings, or interrelated main and ancillary significances, which the symbol is permitted to retain. But while this selective process may reduce a symbol's hydraheadedness, in which its shimmering vagueness so often consists, it is also true that the intended message, in passing into the code form of the symbol, may become less accessible and itself acquire an aura of mystery, of implying other meanings which are related to it or which flow from it. For, while one may speak of writers "using" symbols or "permitting" them to retain certain meanings to the exclusion of others, it is not always possible to exercise complete control. Symbols, especially those from folklore, pagan or Christian, which constitute so many of MacDonald's motifs, have a life of their own, a set of associations which date so far

and 'possessed joys not promised to our birth'. It gets under our skin, hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives" (preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, pp. 16-17). Lewis was not the first critic to describe MacDonald's gift as that of a mythopoeist. Cf. Colville, op. cit., p. 253, where he speaks of MacDonald's "talent for combining mythmaking with pure story telling, if indeed the story element be not the prime element in all good myth" (italics mine; Colville seems to have anticipated Lewis' observation that, in myth, it is the pattern of events, and not the medium in which they are communicated, which counts).

back in time and which are so deeply rooted in the consciousness, that they cannot always be prevented from adding subtle overtones to the writer's message.

But what is it about the particular amalgam of message and symbol in MacDonald's parables that prompts the use of the term "mythopoeic,"³⁶ and which "hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions"? The answer seems to lie in the particular nature of his message and the overtones of the particular symbols (fantasy motifs) which he used.

First, the message conveyed in his books and sermons deals with matters of universal concern: that there is a God and that each man has a soul; that temporal life is the soul's journey either towards reunion with God ("getting home") or away from Him; that God is "easy to please and hard to satisfy;"³⁷ and that while man is free to choose God or reject Him, the way back to Him is always open through repentance. None of this is tied down to any body of dogma or ritual,³⁸ nor, if one

³⁶I.e., myth-evoking, as explained in chapter II, where Lewis' definition of myth is discussed.

³⁷A saying of MacDonald, quoted by Chesterton in his introduction to George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 12. Greville MacDonald quotes it as "God is not hard to please, but it is impossible to satisfy Him" (Reminiscences of a Specialist [London, 1932], p. 30). The meaning seems to be that while even the smallest spiritual effort is pleasing to God, He requires that we try ever harder.

³⁸It is important to remember that there is no mention of God or Christ in Phantastes and that the name of God does not appear often in Lilith until the final chapters. Although Adam is a character in the latter work, he undergoes so many transformations and his powers are so preternatural (although meant to reflect a belief in the purification of the soul and in resurrection), that he seems very much unlike the familiar biblical Adam.

looks closely, is it exclusively within the Christian framework, but rather is applicable to all mankind, envisaged as children of a cosmic and universal Father.³⁹

MacDonald chose symbols which could be used to embody his cosmic religious views. A good many of these are old and familiar motifs from folklore. In Jungian terms, they are archetype figures which spring from the collective unconscious, i.e., the common inner source of experience in the deeper stratum of the human psyche; the Jungian view is that these archetypes are "the organizing structures of this psychic source of experience."⁴⁰ If this is true, and the

³⁹It will be remembered, for instance, that one of the heterodox views which cost MacDonald his Arundel pastorate was that there was room for the heathen in the kingdom of heaven. To the believers of his day, MacDonald provided renewed hope and encouragement, as is repeatedly attested in letters and articles; to agnostics, he was perhaps no more than the source of some regret at not being able to accept what seemed to be only wishful thinking. Ruskin, for example, commented to MacDonald on his Unspoken Sermons: "'They are the best sermons--beyond all compare--I have ever read, and if ever sermons did good, these will. Pages 23, 24 are very beautiful--unspeakably beautiful. If they were but true . . . But I feel so strongly that it is only the image of your own mind that you see in the sky! And you will say, 'And who made the mind?'" (letter of December 18, 1865, quoted in Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 337).

⁴⁰David Elkind, "Freud, Jung and the Collective Unconscious," The New York Times Magazine, October 4, 1970, p. 96. These structures, Jung posited, provide the pattern for dreams, phantasies, and imagination and are most clearly elaborated in myths; thus there are archetypal characters, archetypal themes, archetypal settings, archetypal plots, and archetypal moods. According to Elkind, Jung believed that archetypal patterns were inherited, but that there were not enough data to justify conjecture about the possible biological nature of this inheritance, an attitude which won him the label of 'mystical'--a euphemism for 'unscientific and soft-headed' (*ibid.*). "Beyond . . . [the working of the intellect]," Jung states, "there is a thinking in primordial images--in symbols which are older than historical man; which have been ingrained in him from earliest times, and . . . still make up the groundwork of the human psyche. . . . Science and these symbols are incommensurables. They are indispensable conditions of the imagination; they are primary data" (Jung, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-130).

shape of the archetypes is determined by a common deep-seated psychic mechanism, there is nothing mysterious in the fact that conscious use of the archetype will awake in most people an automatic response of recognition of the underlying meaning, without their being able to explain why. This process could be described, in Lewis' words, as affecting us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions. "Even if the explanation of the symbols' appeal lies elsewhere--in, for example, associations arbitrarily derived from the repetition of stock figures and ideas in tales read early in life"⁴¹--the fact remains that they evoke a common associative response.

MacDonald added a new feature to the archetypes. The traditional archetypes, in the folkloric sense in which we have been discussing them, are not set within a religious, moral, or ethical framework. In MacDonald they are. The motifs which he chose--probably intuitively--proved to be extremely adaptable to the religious significance (chiefly, but not exclusively, Christian) which he gave them.

It is of course impossible to offer conclusive proof of the way in which MacDonald's fantasies evoke the kind of subjective emotional reaction which readers such as C. S. Lewis have described. But, for the sake of argument, let us accept the following premisses: (1) that the collective unconscious exists; (2) that an innate religious instinct also exists;⁴² (3) that both of these are highly responsive to certain

⁴¹Leaving aside the question of why these figures and ideas took the shape they did and had such universal appeal and longevity as to become stock motifs.

⁴²The case for the existence of a religious instinct is probably just as valid, and as unprovable, as that for the existence of the collective unconscious, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into the historical/anthropological data which could be used to support this view.

stimuli; and (4) that such activation can arouse a strong and involuntary emotional reaction. One may then conjecture that MacDonald produces the effect which Lewis describes by simultaneously activating deep-seated psychological responses and the basic religious instinct (or, depending on one's point of view, the superstitious instinct) through the use of archetypes which, after his "Christianizing" of them, are powerfully evocative, affective, and effective on both levels. The sustained effectiveness of his fantasy technique seems to consist largely in the skill with which he maintains—again, probably intuitively—an exquisite balance between the twin functions of his symbols. The extraordinary double consciousness which this process induces seems to be a unique and satisfying experience for readers who, like C. S. Lewis, enjoy mythopoeic fantasy.

MacDonald's skill in lending Christian significance to non-religious folklore motifs⁴³ is illustrated by his use of the figure of the ancient wise woman, who is both wrinkled and beautiful, and very old but eternally young, and who possesses magical powers. She appears several times in Phantastes: there is, for example, Anodos' great-grandmother (many times removed), who may assume whatever size she chooses, who must not be touched because it would hurt the one who touched, and who enables Anodos to enter fairyland (ch. i); another example is the ancient woman with the beautiful eyes and sweet voice who lets Anodos pass through the four doors of her magic cottage (ch. xix).

⁴³He would probably have taken the view that the Christian meaning was already innate in the motif, and that he could not put into it what was already within it.

The figure of the wise old woman who directs the hero on his way occurs in many folktales. Her intentions are in some instances kindly, and evil in others. If she is benevolent, she is generally referred to by a term such as wise woman; the evil figures are referred to as witches, ogresses, or the like. (The term "good witch" is generally foreign to these tales.) Both types are, however, very old, and, if one explains them in terms of archetypes, the former might be said to be related to the principle of benevolence contained in the figure of the protective Earth Mother, and the latter to the Shadow, already discussed briefly. Whatever their source, they clearly represent a contrast between what is helpful and protective to man on the one hand, and what is inimical and hurtful to him, on the other; both are conceived of as possessing powers which are beyond his understanding.

An added complication in these folktale figures is that a witch, though evil at heart, may be beautiful in appearance; and, conversely, a well-disposed enchantress may take the shape of an ugly crone.⁴⁴ The theme of illusion and the untrustworthiness of surface appearances is thus common even in the old tales.

In MacDonald's fantasies the old women figures lose none of their folktale associations, but become more complex in conception, because, unlike their folktale prototypes, whose magical powers seem largely self-endowed, MacDonald's women are supernatural beings who have been assigned missions by some higher guiding authority. They

⁴⁴Cf. the folktale motif of the Loathly Damsel, well known through such stories as Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Tale.

are "neither goddesses nor angels nor enchantresses nor fairies but something of all four,"⁴⁵ and, although they are timeless, like their prototypes, and "exist in a way outside normal time" but "slip into our time or allow us to slip into theirs,"⁴⁶ they are not self-created. They embody principles which MacDonald clearly regarded as inherent in a universe created by a knowing, good Power, in much the same way that Charles Williams later regarded such principles as the concept of the City and the related doctrines of spiritual co-inherence, substitution, and exchange of spiritual burdens as universal.

Keeping the fairy association of almost inconceivable age, MacDonald's good supernatural women, by dint of their moral function, imply that they are as old as man's transgression. The function of the woman with the many-doored cottage in Phantastes, for instance, is to usher her guests into past or future, where they may experience a true vision of their faults through tears, sighs, and dismay, i.e., recognition and repentance. She suffers with Anodos before he undergoes his trial and rescues him when he goes through the door of the Timeless (death, apparently) because, although remorse has brought him nearer to losing his evil shadow, i.e., freeing him from his baser self, he must complete his pilgrimage before he may die. The old woman is therefore a spiritual guide, and her magic cottage a way-station for spiritual self-questioning. She pities and comforts Anodos, although she makes no attempt to shield him from the unpleasant experiences she knows he will undergo; he recognizes in her a comforting

⁴⁵MacNeice, op. cit., p. 99.

⁴⁶Ibid.

and beautiful mother, her beauty deriving from the nobility of her function, and her youth-in-age from the joy which she takes in that function.⁴⁷

The Alder-Maiden in Phantastes, on the other hand, is an example of an ancient witch who wears a beautiful mask. Her function is to secure victims for the Ash-Tree, a devil-like spirit whose appetite for blood is only increased with his consumption of victims.⁴⁸ On the surface, this is a folktale situation. In MacDonald, it acquires spiritual overtones. Anodos, despite some uneasiness of mind, spends the night with the Alder-Maiden in her cave. Having allowed himself to become illusion's victim, his eyes are opened to the fact, too late, that she is beautiful only in front (which she presents as an enticement), and hideously corpse-like behind, a fact which she no longer cares to conceal when, as she thinks, the victim is past rescue.

⁴⁷She may be regarded as an earlier version of Mara, the Cat-Woman, in Lilith, who, as already mentioned, weeps for the sins and inevitable suffering of those who must be chastised through her agency. Mara, whose name seems meant to recall the Latin adjective for "bitter" (amara, feminine form), and who dwells in "The House of Bitterness" (Lilith, ch. xxxviii), is derived more nearly from the Christian figure of the Magdalene or Lady of Sorrows. She is referred to as the Mother of Sorrow and the Lady of Sorrow (ch. xxxix); she is spoken of as hurting but not unkind (ibid.), of having the loveliest face in the world (ch. xl), and of being both the voice that cried in the wilderness before the Baptist came and "the shepherd whose wolves hunt the wandering sheep home ere the shadow rise and the night grow dark" (ch. xliv). Cf. also Jung, op. cit., p. 197 (chapter on "Psychology and Literature"): "The archetypal image of the wise man, the saviour or redeemer, lies buried and dormant in man's unconscious since the dawn of culture; it is awakened whenever the times are out of joint and a human society is committed to a serious error."

⁴⁸Cf. the character of Screwtape, in C. S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters.

The parable is fairly obvious; but what is especially interesting is that the Alder-Maiden is not merely an allegorical personification of illusion, or of man's tendency to let himself be led astray by his weakness for what seems pleasant, even when he knows in his heart that it is not so. She is a traditional folktale image into which the allegorical function has been absorbed.

A third example of the old wise woman in Phantastes, whose function falls midway between the very good and the very evil, may also be cited: the ogress in the cottage where Anodos acquires his unwanted shadow. She has neither the beauty of the Alder-Maiden nor the youth-in-age of the lady of the cottage with four doors, but is an ugly old woman with long white teeth (which Anodos does not actually see until it is too late), who sits mumbling to herself from "a dark old volume," concerning the inevitable triumph of darkness over light. Anodos disobeys her warning not to look into a certain closet; upon doing so, he sees a dark figure rushing towards him from far off; once it has come to Anodos, it is henceforth his companion. It is interesting to note that the ogress is almost a neutral figure; she does not conceal Anodos' danger, but her warning is almost casual.

Anodos' successive meetings with the Alder-Maiden, the ogress, and the lady of the cottage form a logical spiritual progress, all the turning-points of which hinge upon his exercise of free choice. There is, first, the meeting with evil, to which he yields because he is taken in by its illusory appearance of beauty; then the moment of renewed disobedience when he opens the ogress' closet. The point is clearly made here that while he might avoid trouble, by obeying the ogress' warning, his encounter with the Alder-Maiden has reduced

the possibility of his being able to do so.

"It is only your shadow that has found you," she replied. "Everyone's shadow is ranging up and down looking for him. I believe you call it by a different name in your world: yours has found you, as every person's is almost certain to do who looks into that closet, especially after meeting one in the forest, whom I daresay you have met."⁴⁹

The man who yielded to illusion is now tormented by his shadow, i.e., "the maleficent part of him that vulgarises all it touches";⁵⁰ it begins to darken and distort his ability to distinguish the true nature of people and objects around him, showing them in their most commonplace and unbeautiful aspect and causing him to commit acts of cruelty. Ultimately, Anodos' visit with the third lady sets him on the road to atonement, freedom from the shadow, and recovery of his ability to see what is beautiful.

Just as MacDonald suffused folktale motifs with Christian meanings, so he broadened the concept of certain biblical figures by means of fairytale elements. Mara, in Lilith, is, as already mentioned, a case in point. Lilith herself, of whom more will be said later, is a particularly important example of this. She is, as in the early Jewish writings, Adam's first wife. Like the traditional Lilith, she is excessively proud, and therefore left Adam to join with Satan (the Shadow). MacDonald makes her the wicked ruler of a terrorized land. The traditional Lilith is also associated with the serpent

⁴⁹Phantastes, ch. viii.

⁵⁰Greville MacDonald, introduction to Phantastes, by George MacDonald, p. vii.

(her lamia aspect). MacDonald makes two references to this: Lilith's limbs transform themselves, or dissolve, into serpents (ch. x); and it is also explained (ch. xv) that she imprisoned the waters in her land because a snake had been killed. Water in this context is clearly a symbol of purification, redemption, and grace. Lilith, i.e., illusion, hides it from men's eyes, but it continues to flow underground and can be heard. In making Lilith a hater of water, MacDonald also lends her the witch-like attribute of being almost fatally vulnerable to running water. Like the traditional Lilith, again, she is relentless in seeking out and destroying the newborn; MacDonald supplies a motivation for this by making Lilith herself the mother of a child whom she hates because of a prophecy that she will die through its agency. This of course occurs, but the death involved is a rebirth into a cleaner spiritual state. The traditional Lilith is a vampire, as is MacDonald's, but in MacDonald's story her thirst for blood to keep her beauty radiant is understood to mean that illusion feeds on the substance of men's souls. MacDonald's Lilith also has the ability to transform herself into other shapes, mainly that of a spotted leopard; this appears to be his addition. All these elements--folktale associations, rabbinical tradition, and Christian overtones--have been blended into a portrait of pride and self-delusion.

This consideration of some examples of MacDonald's method of adapting folktale fantasy motifs may also be taken to illustrate what C. S. Lewis was describing when he spoke of MacDonald's fantasy as hovering between the allegorical and the mythopoeic. The Christian facet of his fantasy motifs tends toward the allegorical, whereas the

archetypal nature of these same motifs, considered apart from their Christian connotation, is mythopoeic. Thus the third wise woman in Phantastes might, when viewed as a Christian figure, be construed as, at least in part, a representation of human penitence. But a simple one-to-one allegorical equation fails to apply; she is also a representation of something more than human, the idea of divine compassion. At the same time, in her non-Christian archetypal aspect, she recalls a kind of benevolent earth-mother principle. In this, as in other of MacDonald's fantasy motifs, the archetypal and allegorical aspects constantly interweave, the open-endedness of the former tending to blur the simple definitiveness of the latter, while itself taking on some definition from the Christianizing "pull" of the allegorical component. Both aspects operate simultaneously and are superimposed in such a way as to make it extremely difficult to determine where the one fades into the other. This is not, of course, to say that MacDonald consciously evolved this technique. His view was that everything that arises in man's mind is created within the mind of God. This would no doubt have applied as well, to his way of thinking, to the theory of archetypes and their provenance. In other words, the Christian God would be at the root of the archetype, and it would be only another emanation of Him. Thus the conception comes round full circle. MacDonald perhaps would not even have distinguished between the allegorical and the mythopoeic in his own work, since he looked upon all human thought as a continuum flowing from a single Source.

Phantastes, the fantasy novel of MacDonald's youth, and Lilith, the fantasy novel of his old age, offer a rich field for the analysis

of symbol into its allegorical and mythopoeic components. Since the purpose of this study, however, is not to analyze MacDonald's fantasies in depth, but rather to highlight the characteristics which made his work unique within the genre until the appearance of Charles Williams' novels, the following discussion is restricted to (1) a consideration of the dominating doctrinal motifs in Phantastes and Lilith, which are (a) that man's main concern is salvation; (b) that the main obstacles on the spiritual journey are the many faces of illusion (an idea which entails a discussion of MacDonald's use of the Shadow, the role of Lilith (simultaneously illusion and self-delusion, or corruption of soul, hell being equal, in MacDonald's view, to total self-absorption), the ambivalence of surface beauty and ugliness, and the question of true identity); and (2) a brief but fairly comprehensive review of the varieties of fantasy motifs which MacDonald used to embody the doctrine.⁵¹

A clue to the theme of Phantastes lies in the name of its hero, Anodos, a transliteration of the Greek word ἀνόδος, meaning, in the metaphysical sense, "the ascent of the soul to its original source."⁵² By means of this not readily apparent generic

⁵¹In view of the relative inaccessibility of Phantastes and Lilith, detailed summaries of their plots are given in Appendix I.

⁵²A Greek-English Lexicon, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, I, ed. Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford, 1940?), p. 145. Cf. also, in Lilith, the name of one of Vane's ancestors, Sir Upward, who first discovered the way through the mirror into the world of seven dimensions. MacDonald, however, generally avoided the use of blatantly moral-allegorical names (cf. the characters of Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid in another Victorian fantasy, Charles Kingsley's Water Babies.) Anodos actually is the only major character even given a name in Phantastes. The fact that the other characters are referred to in terms that express only what they are--e.g., an enchanted lady, a disgraced knight, an ogress--rather than who they are, heightens their symbolic content and the archetypal nature of the story.

term, the hero is designated as Everyman, the human soul on its spiritual journey back to its creator, i.e., getting home.⁵³ It was MacDonald's view, as it was later Charles Williams', that the journey must be undertaken. This is true of both of MacDonald's heroes--Anodos, as well as Mr. Vane in Lilith--who tell their stories in flashback, as it were, but who are, at the novels' end, still just short of their ultimate goal.

"Home is ever so far away in the palm of
your hand . . . But you will get there;
you must get there; you have to get there.
Everybody who is not at home, has to go
home. . . .

"Enigma treading on enigma!" I exclaimed.
"I did not come here to be asked riddles."

.

"And you must answer the riddles!" he
continued. "They will go on asking them-
selves until you understand yourself. The
universe is a riddle trying to get out, and
you are holding your door hard against it."⁵⁴

An inward longing urges them onward through the difficulties of the

⁵³Both Phantastes and Lilith are written in the first person, a fact which normally tends to bring the events of the narrator's life closer to the reader. But, although the events in the lives of Anodos and Vane are felt to be deeply relevant to every individual, they do not cause the reader to be caught up imaginatively in either character as an individual; and, as mentioned, this is true of persons in a myth, according to C. S. Lewis. MacNeice (op. cit., p. 95) holds the view that these first-person narratives are "the parable equivalents of the intimate journals of someone who is basically a mystic but also constitutionally melancholy." This is, of course, to view the stories psychoanalytically vis-à-vis MacDonald himself, rather than in terms of his conscious purpose as a writer--a tempting line of inquiry, perhaps, but one outside the scope of this study.

⁵⁴Lilith, ch. ix.

journey. Once in fairyland, i.e., the spiritual country, "there is no way of going back. [One] . . . must go on and go through it"; something, Anodos notes, "compels me to go on, as if my only path was onward."⁵⁵

These are a few examples, out of a great many, of statements of the dominating doctrinal theme in MacDonald's mythopoeia: that the basic goal of man is dying into life, or attaining salvation. Death in this context refers to conquering one's selfishness and self-will, as well as learning to obey what one knows is right. The spiritual journey of life--in Phantastes, a journey through fairyland, and, in Lilith, an adventure in a world of seven dimensions--is therefore a process of dying in more than just the physical sense. The death of the soul's uglier urges is a rebirth; hence the phrase, dying into life.⁵⁶ This process, in MacDonald's view, is continuous, and physical death is, for some, the final stage of passing into true life, i.e., contemplation of God; for others, it is another stage in the soul's journey, as the skeletal dancers in Lilith (ch. xvi) seem to indicate. Thus the concept of death in MacDonald is one of "good

⁵⁵Phantastes, ch. vii. The sense of returning to a country which is somehow familiar is conveyed in Lilith, for instance, by Vane's instantly understanding the meaning of the poem which Raven/Adam reads aloud, although it seems to be in a language Vane has never heard (ch. xxix). At the end of Phantastes and Lilith both, when the hero has returned to the everyday world, he speaks of his hope to find the other world again one day and to remain there forever.

⁵⁶Cf. Eve's words to Vane (Lilith, ch. xlv): "'Pure life has no weakness to grow weary withal. The Life keeps generating ours.-- Those who will not die, die many times, die constantly, keep dying deeper, never have done dying; here all is upwardness and love and gladness.'"

Death," as C. S. Lewis phrases it;⁵⁷ it is neither negative nor the final ending, but a transition in the spiritual journey. As implied in the quotation from Novalis, already cited and frequently used by MacDonald, life is no dream, i.e., it is real enough;⁵⁸ but one day, after the passage into the sleep of physical death, a truer reality will be experienced, so that what went before will, in comparison, seem dream-like. This is plainly the significance of the cold and deathly sleepers who remain in Adam's care, in Lilith.

MacDonald was, therefore, deeply concerned with the main obstacles on the spiritual journey: the darker side of the individual human soul and of the nature of the human race, and the many faces of illusion; as well as with the factors which guide man on to the good road: repentance and willing obedience.

The theme of evil, both in Phantastes and in Lilith, is embodied in the concept of the Shadow, a predominating fantasy motif. Attributing a sinister nature to shadows did not, of course, originate with MacDonald; he used an old convention and built on it in an interesting manner.

In Phantastes, the Shadow is, first, the spirit of the Ash-Tree, whose spidery, clutching limbs darken and inspire a sense of fear in those who happen to be near it. It watches them greedily; gnawing

⁵⁷Preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 21.

⁵⁸Cf. the knight's description of fairyland (=life) in Phantastes, ch. xxiii: "'Somehow or other . . . notwithstanding the beauty of this country of Faerie, in which we are, there is much that is wrong in it. If there are great splendours, there are corresponding horrors; heights and depths; beautiful women and awful fiends; noble men and weaklings. All man has to do, is to better what he can.'"

voracity is its main drive; its maw is bottomless, and its hunger only increases with feeding. As an entity in and of itself, it is probably equivalent to the externalized principle of evil, man's enemy constantly in pursuit of his soul, i.e., the devil. His chief companion and seducer of victims, the Alder-Maiden, is a representation of illusion: the face she presents to the world is beautiful, but her true nature (her hidden back) is gruesome. What the Ash-Tree (evil undisguised) cannot achieve by direct pursuit, the Alder-Maiden does by deceit, for Anodos yields to her beauty, despite the promptings of his instincts. As already mentioned, this act, followed by disobedience to the ogress' warning, renders him vulnerable to the coming of his own Shadow. The latter is a physical, externalized manifestation of Anodos' worse nature; it is therefore simultaneously real and abstract, or allegorical, within the story framework itself. (In much the same way, it may be noted at this juncture, the Principles in Charles Williams' The Place of the Lion are simultaneously manifestations, in the real world, of ideal Strength, Wisdom, and other qualities, and physically visible entities, the prototypical Lion and Serpent, among others.) The coming of Anodos' shadow is an index to the Ash-Tree's success in awakening in him that which is most like the Ash-Tree. Anodos' shadow is a special kind of doppelgänger, resembling him, but only a part of him, deepening or lightening according to where he is or how he is feeling; its power to destroy and distort teaches him that this side of one's nature, once released, is a powerful weapon for hurt, not easily leashed. Greville MacDonald defined Anodos' shadow as "the maleficent part of him that vulgarises all it

touches by darkening the Light that lighteth every man and transfigures all,"⁵⁹ i.e., it is the darker self which obscures even God's love (Anodos' shadow blots out even the sun at times [ch. ix]). R. W. Wolff considers the shadow to be, at first, the "intellectual skepticism that withers the imagination," and that it develops successively into "conscience or consciousness of self," and eventually "personal pride, or a misconception of one's true role in the world."⁶⁰ But why should Anodos' encounter with the Alder-Maiden bring out only intellectual skepticism? MacDonald's point is that once one has disobeyed one's better instincts, one yields more easily to preexisting spiritual weaknesses. All aspects of the shadow—skepticism, pessimism, pride, what used to be called the old Adam—are always within it at all times. The shadow does not evolve, nor is it merely an outward projection of latent personality traits. It is not valid to divorce an interpretation of MacDonald from its religious base. The shadow is Anodos' lower self, of which he wishes to be quit:

"Shadow of me!" I said; "which art not me, but which representest thyself to me as me; here I may find a shadow of light which will devour thee, the shadow of darkness! Here I may find a blessing which will fall on thee as a curse, and damn thee to the blackness whence thou hast emerged unbidden."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Introduction to Phantastes, by George MacDonald, pp. vii-viii.

⁶⁰ Wolff, op. cit., p. 103.

⁶¹ Phantastes, ch. xi. MacDonald's use of the shadow theme may be partly due to his fondness for German romantic literature, in which the idea of the shadow as a spiritual possession frequently occurs. In Adalbert von Chamisso's story of Peter Schlemihl, Peter sells his

It is not until Anodos has undergone many adventures and much spiritual and bodily suffering that he reaches the state of self-knowledge and humility which constitutes the death of his shadow. Imprisoned in a tower by a knight who is a simulacrum of himself, a shape which Anodos' own prideful imaginings have given his shadow the power to assume, he is finally released by obeying the words of a song a woman sings outside the tower: "'From the narrow desert, O man of pride,/Come into the house, so high and wide.'" ⁶² He realizes that it was always in his power to open the door of his prison; the message here is plainly that man through pride creates his own prison and therefore also holds the key to freedom, if he chooses to renounce pride. (As will be seen, this is a favorite theme in Williams as well.) The singer proves to be a young woman whom Anodos hurt cruelly, but who, by sleeping in the fairy palace, has acquired the ability to sing joyous songs which deliver people from bondage. ⁶³ She has forgiven Anodos, and continues on her way, singing a song which also echoes MacDonald's thesis that everyone is journeying to a common goal:

shadow to the devil for a purse that is always full. In Hoffmann's story "A New Year's Eve Adventure," Schlemihl briefly appears, to be taunted by a man who has let himself be inveigled out of his reflection. In both of these stories, however, the lost image is mourned. On the other hand, in Jean Paul Richter, who, it will be remembered, was one of MacDonald's favorite writers, the shadow is equivalent to man's mortal part, and the doppelgänger "a personification of the ego's self-awareness" (see J. W. Smeed, Jean Paul's "Dreams" [London, 1966], pp. 41-42 and 74). Anodos, however, "suffers as many miseries from finding his shadow as ever Peter Schlemihl did from losing his" ("Mr. George MacDonald's Novels," The North British Review, already cited, 7).

⁶²Phantastes, ch. xxii.

⁶³Cf. the cleansing and purifying sleep slept by those who rest in Adam's house, in Lilith.

"Thou goest thine, and I go mine--
 Many ways we wend;
 Many days, and many ways,
 Ending in one end.

"Many a wrong, and its curing song;
 Many a road, and many an inn;
 Room to roam, but only one home
 For all the world to win."⁶⁴

"With a sad heart, soothed by humility,"⁶⁵ Anodos lays aside the armor trappings of his knighthood, hastens to leave the tower behind him, and takes his "unknown way, eastward through the woods."⁶⁶ He feels himself a failure and wishes it had been his shadow, rather than himself, that he had lost. He has his wish at last.

I looked round: the shadow was nowhere
 to be seen. Ere long, I learned that it
 was not myself, but only my shadow, that
 I had lost. I learned that it is better,
 a thousand-fold, for a proud man to fall
 and be humbled, than to hold up his head
 in his pride and fancied innocence. I
 learned that he that will be a hero, will
 barely be a man; that he that will be
 nothing but a doer of his work, is sure
 of his manhood. . . . Another self seemed
 to arise . . . from the dumb and trampled
 self of the past. . . . Self will come to

⁶⁴Phantastes, ch. xxii. The lady is not named. Note that the second stanza of this poem is also sung by Eve to Mr. Vane in Lilith (ch. xlii), when he has finally come to Adam's house, to sleep. Unlike Phantastes, however, in which there is no specific mention of God as the soul's ultimate goal, although this is implied, Lilith contains several instances of specific Christian ritual, such as the partaking of bread and wine before Vane goes to sleep.

⁶⁵Phantastes, ch. xxii.

⁶⁶Ibid., In the chastened spirit of this passage, there seems to be an echo of Milton's Adam and Eve setting out on their long journey: "They looking back, all th'Eastern side beheld/Of Paradise, so late thir happy seat/ . . . They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,/Through Eden took thir solitary way" (Paradise Lost, XII.641-642 and 648-649).

life even in the slaying of self; but
there is ever something deeper and
stronger than it, which will emerge at
last from the unknown abysses of the
soul . . .⁶⁷

The lesson that he who is content to do his proper work is sure of his manhood expresses MacDonald's view that action is the key to becoming the person (soul) one was intended to be. This theme, which was later taken up by Charles Williams, is carried through into Lilith as well. "'How am I to begin that [making myself at home] where everything is so strange?'" Vane asks the Raven, who replies, "'By doing something . . . anything; and the sooner you begin the better!'"⁶⁸ He only comes to realize the truth of this later, after spending a night in Mara's house (the house of repentance).

But what mattered where while everywhere was the same as nowhere! I had not yet, by doing something in it, made anywhere into a place! I was not yet alive; I was only dreaming I lived! I was but a consciousness with an outlook! Truly I had been nothing else in the world I had left, but now I knew the fact! I said to myself that if in this forest I should catch the faint gleam of the mirror [the passage between the world Vane has left and the one he is now in], I would turn far aside lest it should entrap me unawares, and give me back to my old existence: here I might learn to be something by doing something! I could not endure the thought of going back, and with so many beginnings and not an end achieved.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Phantastes, ch. xxii. This passage is an excellent example of the way in which MacDonald folded little sermons into his stories which advance the action while they expound and elucidate. Williams was to employ much the same device.

⁶⁸Lilith, ch. iii.

⁶⁹Lilith, ch. xvi.

In MacDonald's stories, spiritual progress is contingent upon the hero's taking the plunge into action; and, as later in Williams, each action is noted and weighed by the moral authority which is imagined as overseeing all creation; there are guideposts and helps along the way, so that mistakes may be avoided, or repaired, if they are made. One is reminded again of MacDonald's view that God is easy to please but hard to satisfy. He is conceived of very much like a kind but exacting parent, who understands his child's stumbling steps and the pain of the bruises he may sustain, but who continues to teach him so that he may learn to walk properly. And, of course, one day the child understands why it had to be so. Achievement of the final goal is therefore a combination of effort on the part of the learner and encouragement on the part of the teacher.

Anodos and Vane receive their share of helpful warnings against the faces of evil and illusion, which they may obey or not, as they choose. The theme of voluntary obedience to what one knows to be right is uppermost in both of MacDonald's novels, as it is in all of Williams'.⁷⁰

In summary, Anodos' encounter with evil and illusion (the Ash and the Alder), resulting in the coming of his shadow (the partial triumph of the Ash and the Alder, the individual shadow being a mark of kinship with the greater Shadow), and his eventual banishment of his shadow, is a reenactment in little of the fall of man through

⁷⁰ Insistence on this theme is of course reminiscent of the Miltonic view, particularly as expressed in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.

sin and his redemption through suffering and repentance. The whole is narrated with a skilful blending of religious base and psychological overtones.

The theme of illusion as the tool of evil, in order to hinder attainment of final salvation, is uppermost in Lilith as well. In this novel, however, the Shadow and his companion-servant reappear in somewhat different form, less romantic and more nightmarish. The Shadow in this instance is an entity in itself, stalking the streets of Lilith's city, Bulika. Wolff maintains that,

so far from carrying any of the symbolic or allegorical connotations that Anodos' shadow carries in Phantastes, [it] seems to be no more than a devil, perhaps the devil himself, one of those with whom . . . Lilith is in league, to put an end to the race.⁷¹

Possibly the Shadow in Lilith is a somewhat less mysterious and interesting image than his counterpart(s) in Phantastes, since he is explicitly the principle of evil externalized. Nevertheless, he is more than a representation of the devil, in the old sense of a fallen angel who continues to war with God by attempting to destroy man; his touch awakens in each man what is most like himself. Within the story, he is a being in his own right; in the subtext, he is a concentration of all mankind's black impulses, the sum total, as it were, of Anodos' shadow and all its fellows. He is another example of the curious ambiguity with which MacDonald was able to endow his motifs; their related connotations are inseparably blended, yet distinct. Thus, this black being--like MacDonald's wise women--

⁷¹Wolff, op. cit., p. 349.

has both psychological and religious overtones.⁷²

"He wasn't a man," said Odu; he was
a shadow . . . He was all black through
between us, and we could not see one
another; and then he was inside us. . . .
I wanted to tear Sozo to pieces . . . And
then I suppose I ran away . . . Then I
knew that I had run away from a shadow
that wanted to be me and wasn't . . ."73

The Shadow is both tangible and a phantom, capable, for instance, of creating simulacra or eidola of Lilith, a body of armed men, and Mara herself, in an attempt to deflect Vane from his mission of burying Lilith's hand. When these fail to deceive or frighten him, the Shadow shows himself in his full grim aspect, but Vane, as a result of the suffering caused by his many misjudgments and disobedient actions, is determined not to be deceived or frightened out of the true path again.

A cold wind smote me, dank and
sickening . . . I seemed to pass
through him, but I think now that
he passed through me: for a moment
I was as one of the damned. Then a
soft wind like the first breath of
a new-born spring greeted me, and
before me arose the dawn.⁷⁴

A further aspect of the Shadow, which does not appear in Phantastes, is that he too must one day die into life (Lilith, chs. xl and xli), a thesis which may be taken as an expression of MacDonald's

⁷²See also chapter II, footnote 72, on Jung's use of the term shadow to sum up what is most abhorrent to the individual in his own psychical makeup. The collective aspect is then imaged in the devil or some other symbol of wickedness.

⁷³Lilith, ch. xxxvii.

⁷⁴Lilith, ch. xli.

universalism.⁷⁵

The Shadow's cohort is Lilith, the evil princess. Indeed, the Shadow is spoken of as Lilith's slave and as having made her queen of Hell (ch. xxix).⁷⁶ Like the Alder-Maiden, she searches out victims for her companion, and, like the Alder-Maiden, she is extremely beautiful, but with the mark of corruption on her (the Alder-Maiden is corpse-like behind, and Lilith has a dark spot on her side, which gradually enlarges). Lilith is a much more complex creation than her prototype, however, in that she fulfills two

⁷⁵Cf. W. H. Auden, introduction to The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald, p. ix: "If unorthodox on certain points—for example, he believed, like Origen, in the ultimate salvation of the Devil—he never, like many 'liberals' of his day, abandoned the Christian doctrines of God, Sin and Grace for some vague, emergent 'force making for righteousness' or a Pelagian and secular belief in 'Progress.' Lilith is a surprisingly tough book." Cf. the remark by the anonymous critic reviewing twelve of MacDonald's works in (Littell's) Living Age, XCVI (March 21, 1868), 713: "The idea of eternal perdition is abhorrent to MacDonald's mind, and he never hesitates to proclaim his faith in ultimate restitution."

⁷⁶The traditional Lilith was a "female demon of Jewish folklore, equivalent to the English vampire," her personality and name ("night monster") being derived from a Babylonian-Assyrian demon, Lilit or Lilu (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1966 ed.). In the rabbinical literature, she was associated with the serpent and was conceived of as a vampire who looked to destroy the newborn; she was also traditionally the first wife of Adam, but, demanding equality with Adam, left him and married Satan, whose name in the Kabbalah is Samael (A. M. Killen, "La Légende de Lilith et quelques interprétations modernes de cette figure légendaire," Revue de littérature comparée, Douzième Année [1932], 278 note, 288, 291 note, 296, and 299; and Edward Langton, Satan, A Portrait: A Study of the Character of Satan through All the Ages [London, 1946], p. 17). The epigraph to the first edition of Lilith makes specific reference to the Jewish literature: "'Off, Lilith!'—The Kabala." In MacDonald, all of the above associations are retained, as discussed above. Lilith's association with the Shadow therefore tends to strengthen the conjecture that the Shadow is the devil. Lilith uses the word "Samoil" as an angry oath (ch. xix); the term is never repeated or explained, but the allusion is clear.

functions: she represents the principle of illusion and self-delusion, figured forth in her vampirism and self-adoration; but she is also a person in her own right, and therefore serves to illustrate a particularly horrendous kind of spiritual journey. These two aspects are extremely involuted. As illusion, she must be shown as destructive and self-destructive. The people over whom she rules in Bulika are her victims, in that they think themselves happy, honorable, and prosperous, although she has in fact taught them to live selfishly and dishonestly (ch. xv). Lilith herself must feed on increasing amounts of blood in order to preserve her youth and beauty (ch. xxiii), and, determined to avoid the prophecy that her own child will be her destruction, feeds on children's lives. This may be taken to mean that illusion must feed constantly and ever faster if it is to retain the semblance of truth. At the same time, it means that Lilith, as a person, is her own victim. Her deformed, clenched hand symbolizes her defiance of the good; but what she clutches is, ironically and horribly, nothingness. Even she, however, when forced to see herself in her true hideousness, is brought to repentance, and finally to peace, when the hand has been severed. Once it is buried, water flows again in the land. The meaning is obvious: when man unhardens his heart, grace may flow in.

The use of Lilith as the representation of illusion and as a character who is the victim of illusion, i.e., as a real and an allegorical person, was, as will be seen, a device also adopted by Charles Williams in respect to the same character, in Descent into

Hell.⁷⁷

The theme of illusion is further exemplified in MacDonald by his preoccupation with the ambivalent nature of beauty and ugliness and the fact that neither bears an absolute relation to truth. What seems beautiful to the eye--the Alder-Maiden or Lilith, for example--can be a mask for evil. What is ugly--the wrinkles of the young-old lady in the mysterious cottage (Phantastes, ch. xix), for example--can be the face of good. Even the grotesque goblins in the underground country (Phantastes, ch. xvii) are goads to test and temper Anodos, whose noble response to their taunts elicits from them sounds "of unexpected and disappointed approbation."

A further extrapolation of illusion, as has been seen, is the theme of true identity and of multiple identity, the creation of false images and eidola, a theme with which Williams was also concerned, especially in his last two novels, Descent into Hell and All Hallows' Eve.⁷⁸

The concept of the soul's journey and of the temptations and tests which lie in its path was, for MacDonald, exciting in

⁷⁷In this novel, she is Mrs. Lily Sammile, a thinly-disguised modernization of Lilith, wife of Samael, or Satan.

⁷⁸According to Fuller (op. cit., p. 228), All Hallows' Eve was written and discussed with C. S. Lewis at the same time that Lewis was writing The Great Divorce, in which MacDonald is a chief character. Both works were discussed in weekly meetings. The word eidolon, meaning a false or insubstantial image, is used frequently by Williams; the concept is used fairly frequently in MacDonald, but the word itself only rarely, e.g., Lilith, ch. xxvii: "A wild shriek rang through the echoing place, and with the fall of her eidolon, the princess herself, till then standing like a statue in front of me, fell heavily, and lay still."

itself, as Williams, too, later thought. In MacDonald's fantasy novels, as also in all of Williams' novels, a second kind of excitement is generated by using various kinds of preternaturals to embody the basic spiritual story.⁷⁹ Both authors, that is, used the fantastic in order to teach entertainingly. MacDonald called his imaginative stories for adults romances,⁸⁰ a word which for him apparently conveyed the idea of truth presented in the guise of fairytale and the marvellous.⁸¹ The modes of fantasy which embody

⁷⁹MacDonald's didacticism is of course far more directly presented in his non-fantastic novels. Since all of Williams' novels are in the fantasy genre, it is impossible to say whether his didacticism would have been more or less in evidence had he written a "straight" novel. It was his intention to do so, but he died before he was able to carry this out (see Michal / Florence = Mrs. Charles / Williams, "As I Remember Charles Williams," Episcopal Churchnews, CXIX / April 12, 1953/, 13).

⁸⁰The subtitles of Phantastes and Lilith are, respectively, A Faerie Romance for Men and Women and A Romance. One early anonymous critic of MacDonald found this return to romance unsurprising: "George MacDonald, with his bent towards the moral mysticism of unorthodox Christianity . . . trespassed beyond the barriers of actuality, but, as one might . . . anticipate . . . there is an unacknowledged reversion to the atmosphere of romance" ("The Supernatural in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," op. cit., 399). The writer apparently failed to notice MacDonald's subtitles.

⁸¹As already discussed, MacDonald looked upon the fantastic imagination as the ability to invent another world with its own consistent set of laws. There is, then, no connotation of mere riotous imagining in his use of the word Phantastes as a title. Remarking on the quotation from Phineas Fletcher's Purple Island ("Phantastes from their fount all shapes deriving, / In new habiliments can quickly dight") which is an epigraph to the book as a whole, Greville MacDonald states that reference to the context of the word within Fletcher's poem "leaves no doubt in the mind that Fletcher's Phantastes stands for Imagination" (Introduction to Phantastes, by George MacDonald, p. viii). Fletcher's Phantastes is, like so much of his work, derived from Spenser (cf. F.Q.II.ix.50-52). In Fletcher and Spenser, it must be admitted, Phantastes is connected with idle thoughts and fancies, an association, however, which MacDonald's choice of excerpt indicates he did not wish to carry over.

the doctrine are extremely varied, as are their workings.

A discussion in any detail of the effects achieved by these motifs is beyond the scope of this study, and belongs more properly to a study in depth on MacDonald. But a brief consideration of some of the categories from among which he selected his fantasy motifs is not only interesting for their extreme variety—a fact which also applies to Williams' novels—but, as will be seen, cogent in that some of these same categories supplied the fantasy motifs for Williams' novels.

Folktale elements constitute a good many of MacDonald's motifs. There are supernatural beings (fairies, goblins, and giants); supernaturally wise women; magic, and sometimes talking, animals, e.g., the talking raven and the monsters of the Bad Burrow, in Lilith; sentient plants, e.g., the talking flowers and semi-human trees in Phantastes (the Beech, who protects Anodos, and the malevolent Ash and Alder); magic places, such as forests and cottages in the wood; magic objects, e.g., the protective talisman of leaves which the Beech-Tree gives to Anodos (Phantastes, ch. iv), the two magic mirrors in Phantastes and Lilith, a magic healing sword (Lilith, ch. xl), food which enables one to understand the speech of animals (Phantastes, ch. v), and magic fire which holds back rising waters (Phantastes, ch. xix); and, finally, magic signs, e.g., the symbol which marks Anodos' way back into the many-doored cottage (Phantastes, ch. xix), and the gestures with which Lilith can stun Vane and Raven can quell Lilith (Lilith, chs. x and xxix). There are also magic transformations, e.g., those of the Raven-librarian in Lilith, of Lilith herself into a spotted leopard, and that of the beautiful girl who reveals herself as a goblin woman (Phantastes, ch. xvii); and invisibility, as when Anodos looks on unseen during a

knight and lady's conversation (Phantastes, ch. xix).

A particularly important category is that of mysterious admonitions, supernatural warnings, and prophecies, which may be classified as taboos, since to disregard them entails severe consequences. There are many in both Phantastes and Lilith; for example, the knight in rusty armor warns Anodos against the Alder-Maiden (Phantastes, ch. vi), Raven admonishes Vane not to ride off on his splendid horse (Lilith, ch. xxxi), and Vane is instructed not to look behind him or to speak, or to lay down Lilith's severed hand until he buries it (Lilith, ch. xli). Whereas, in old tales, these devices were often arbitrary taboos, MacDonald uses them to provide ordered guideposts in a spiritual country.

Certain elements are Celtic in origin, e.g., the rudderless boat (Phantastes, chs. x and xviii); the otherworld (fairy) palace, with invisible retainers, which disappears (Phantastes, chs. x and xvi); a fair summer country (Phantastes, ch. xviii); and the return from fairyland to the normal world (Phantastes, ch. xxv), to find (a) that one is on the summit of a hill (corresponding to the fairy mound, which was often the doorway into and out of the Celtic otherworld), and (b) that time in the other world is not the same as in this one (although, in Anodos' case, the time in fairyland seems to have been measured in years rather than in days, whereas, in most stories, the reverse is true). Related to this group are a few elements of Arthurian romance, such as the questing of knights and the slaying of

a dragon ⁸² (Phantastes, chs. iii, vi, ix, xix, xxi, xxii, and xxiii).

Other motifs relate to witchcraft and black magic, a category of fantasy elements which looms large in the novels of Charles Williams. Lilith is a witch, and like many witches, she cannot cross water without injury, and she lives on blood, especially children's (e.g., Lilith, chs. xix, xx, xxvi, and xxx).⁸³ There are evil spells, such as those which keep a sleeping lady imprisoned in alabaster (Phantastes, ch. v) and compel Cosmo's beloved to enter the magic mirror, to be viewed by its owner (Phantastes, ch. xiii); and black magical incantations from within a charmed circle, to summon the lady out of the mirror (Phantastes, ch. xiii).

Related to this category are motifs characteristic of the Gothic supernatural. Motifs from this source include: ghosts and midnight "revels" of the dead, e.g., the skeletons' battle and the skull-headed dancers in Lilith (chs. xi, xvi, and xvii); phantoms (Lilith, ch. xli); the theme of the vampire, which is an aspect of Lilith; and intuitive foreboding of evil,⁸⁴ as when Anodos is made uneasy by the fact that,

⁸²Jacques Bousquet (Les Thèmes du rêve dans la littérature romantique (France, Angleterre, Allemagne): Essai sur la naissance et l'évolution des images / Paris, 1964 /, pp. 213-214) cites MacDonald's description of a dead dragon as a "bonne et rare description" and quotes the passage in its entirety.

⁸³Cf. Stith Thompson, op. cit., p. 251: "A few habits of witches are believed in almost everywhere they themselves are known. Such are the fact that they love to steal children . . . and to suck blood . . . They can never cross a stream . . ."

⁸⁴This is distantly related to the Scottish concept of second sight, a theme MacDonald dealt with in The Portent. In Phantastes and Lilith, however, this premonition, besides providing a thrill on the purely story level, is meant to indicate Anodos' (or Everyman's) natural sensitivity to the little ways in which masked evil betrays itself. There may also be some relation to the tradition that a witch's creation can never be entirely perfect, but must have a flaw, however small.

in some way, the voice of the beautiful lady he has met in the woods (the Alder-Maiden) does not vibrate properly (Phantastes, ch. vi). The general concept of the shadow may be included in this group.

Certain motifs belong to what has come to be called science fiction, i.e., the interpenetrating of worlds, and worlds of more than three dimensions: in Lilith, the "real" world and that of Mr. Raven are coexistent in space and interpenetrate; the latter possesses seven dimensions (Lilith, chs. iii and xliii),⁸⁵ and, among its odder attributes, several moons, one of which rolls down the heavens and suddenly goes out (ch. xxx).

A few motifs are immediately recognizable as basically Christian symbols, e.g., the hidden waters in Lilith and the stream which is nearly fatal to Lilith when she leaps over it; as already mentioned, water here is plainly a symbol of Christ's grace, which is fatal to illusion. The bread and wine given to Vane just before he lies down to sleep in Raven/Adam's house (Lilith, ch. xlii) is the eucharistic nourishment. Also, possibly, the form of the white leopard which Mara frequently takes may be meant to evoke the occasional medieval practice of likening Christ to a panther.⁸⁶ Lilith herself,

⁸⁵ An early draft of Lilith was subtitled "A Tale of the Seventh Dimension." For H. G. Wells's remarks on the coincidence of MacDonald and himself working on the same idea simultaneously, see chapter IV, footnote 3.

⁸⁶ Cf. The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century, tr. and ed. T. H. White (New York, 1960), p. 15 (section on the Panther, interpretation): "The true Panther, our Lord Jesus Christ, snatched us from the power of the dragon-devil on descending from the heavens." The section on the pard or leopard immediately precedes that on the panther. In a note on the former (p. 14), White remarks that panthera and pardus were both Latin names for leopard, and quotes Bartholomeus Anglicus: "'The perde varieth not fro the pantera, but the pantera hath moo white speckes.'"

as already discussed, was traditionally regarded in the rabbinical literature as Adam's first wife, as she is depicted in the novel.

Finally, there is a group of motifs which seem to have had a peculiar personal significance for MacDonald and which he employed to lend an air of mystery and otherworldliness to his fantasy novels: doors, mirrors, libraries, staircases, and the moon.

In MacDonald's stories, doors lead easily into other worlds, and sometimes into the past or future; they are symbolic of easy accessibility to spiritual adventures—some forbidden, others not—and attainment to different spiritual states. Anodos' story begins with his opening a door to a secret desk drawer, from which the tiny lady who will send him into fairyland appears (Phantastes, ch. i). On three occasions, severe punishment results when he disobeys warnings not to open a door: when he disregards the ogress' warning not to open her closet door, his Shadow comes speeding to him out of its depths (ch. viii); when he rushes through the forbidden door in the fairy palace (ch. xvi), he finds himself alone in the midst of a wasteland; and when he heedlessly rushes through the door of the Timeless in the old woman's cottage (ch. xix), he nearly dies. However, the other doors in the old woman's cottage lead him to chastening adventures in other time dimensions, including his own past (ch. xix). Finally, when Anodos tries the door of the tower in which he has been imprisoned, he discovers that it has always been unlocked (ch. xxii). In Lilith, the closet door with the cut book-fronts, in Vane's library, is actually one of the portals through which he and Raven pass from this world to the seven-dimensional one where most of his adventures take

place.⁸⁷ On the morning when Vane leaves Mara's house, its door becomes invisible, at least to him, i.e., he may not linger at that stage in his journey (Lilith, ch. xv). Very near the end of the story, when Vane is climbing up to the throne of God, he is gently pushed back into his own world through a door with a golden lock.⁸⁸ Doors are symbolic of the power which the human soul has of self-imprisonment and release. The sound of a closing door, says Anodos, is "the saddest of all sounds sometimes" (Phantastes, ch. xvi).

Mirrors are, in a sense, another form of door. Vane passes through a non-reflecting mirror to the other world. "All mirrors are magic mirrors," says Anodos, in that the reflections they contain are "lovelier than what we call the reality. . . . The commonest room is a room in a poem when I turn to the glass. . . . There must be a truth involved in it, though we may but in part lay hold of the meaning" (Phantastes, ch. x). Mirrors, that is, hint at the fact that there is something beautiful inherent in all that seems commonplace; they are windows onto spiritual truth.⁸⁹

Libraries figure both in Phantastes and Lilith; there is the fairy palace library in Phantastes, where Anodos reads the tale of

⁸⁷Note that no name is given, either in Phantastes or Lilith, to the other world, although the magic country in Phantastes is referred to as fairyland or Faerie, and Lilith's city is specifically named Bulika.

⁸⁸Cf. MacDonald's tale of The Golden Key.

⁸⁹Phantastes was published in 1858, thirteen years before Through the Looking Glass, and Lilith, in which the mirror motif is much more important than in Phantastes, twenty-three years after Carroll's book.

Cosmo and the magic mirror; and Mr. Vane's library in Lilith, which is one of the focal points of his comings and goings between two worlds.⁹⁰ They are conceived of as places where strange things may happen because the knowledge which they furnish can affect spiritual development, as Cosmo's story makes a deep impression on Anodos (Phantastes, ch. xiii).

Staircases play a less important role in Phantastes and Lilith than they do in some of MacDonald's other fantasies, such as The Princess and the Goblin. Like doors, they lead to mysterious regions, as the staircases in Vane's house lead ultimately to the garret which contains the mirror through which one may step into another world. By their very nature, stairs must lead to a higher or a lower level, and this fact may be used symbolically; although, it may be remarked, a journey downwards, such as Anodos' into the goblin underworld (Phantastes, ch. xvii), is sometimes necessary before ascent is possible.⁹¹ The entrance to that underworld (=the depression attendant upon remorse and regret) is down a well-like and apparently bottomless chasm:

⁹⁰ MacDonald's predilection for libraries is carried through several of his other novels as well, e.g., The Portent, David Elginbrod, Wilfrid Cumbermede, There and Back, and Donal Grant (see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 72-73; it is interesting to note that the library MacDonald catalogued in 1842 "in a certain castle or mansion in the far North of Scotland" has itself remained a mystery, despite his son's efforts to identify it, and that a query for information about the library's contents and present whereabouts appeared in The Times Literary Supplement as recently as 9 April 1971 [p. 430]).

⁹¹ Bousquet, op. cit., p. 276, calls attention to the similarity between MacDonald's underground country and the subterranean universe in the world of the German romantic, Ludwig Tieck.

a sort of natural staircase . . . led round and round the gulf, descending spirally into its abyss. I saw at once that this was my path; and without a moment's hesitation, glad to quit the sunlight . . . I commenced my tortuous descent.⁹²

MacDonald himself admitted to "a passion for stairs" and was fond of climbing cathedral towers, to see the beauty of the city laid out below.⁹³

The moon, in Lilith, appears to be a symbol of divine benevolence. (In the strange world in which Vane wanders, there are actually several moons.) The monsters of the Bad Burrow, which Vane takes for phantoms, are actually real and are held in check only by the moonlight.

She was not the same moon I had known on the earth; her face was strange to me, and her light yet stranger. . . . Though hers was no primal radiance, it so hampered the evil things that I walked in safety. For light is yet light, if but the last of a countless series of reflections!⁹⁴

Similarly, Vane's headlong ride on the sexton's great horse is a safe one, until the moon begins to roll rapidly down the heavens and disappears (ch. xxxi). It evidently corresponds to a conception of an

⁹²Although it is far from the intention of this study to put any psychological interpretation, Freudian or otherwise, on MacDonald's use of such symbols as mirrors, doors, and staircases, there is no denying that his evocative handling of these motifs heightens the sense of his heroes' adventures taking place in some interior landscape of mind and soul.

⁹³Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 347-348, 349, 481, and 530. Cf. also MacDonald's verses (ibid., p. 485): "'Let us go on. We do not care/For aught but life that is all one with love:/We seek not death, but still we climb the stair/Where death is one wide landing to the rooms above.'"

⁹⁴Lilith, ch. x. It is noteworthy that the conception of the moon as a watchful protector in no way detracts from the Gothic eeriness of the many moonlight scenes in Lilith, as, for example, the scene of the dancing apparitions (ch. xvi).

overseeing power, conceived of as light, holding in check the powers of darkness, which are voracious and destructive. The Shadow, for instance, is spoken of as having gone "'home into the night where there is no moon.'"⁹⁵

It may safely be said, with respect to the fantasy motifs which MacDonald culled from various sources, that he invested them with a parabolic meaning consonant with his own religious outlook, building on qualities traditionally associated with these images. A few of the more important correspondences have been pointed out. For instance, MacDonald took the traditional folktale motif of the mysterious warning, which, when disregarded, results magically in catastrophe (or, if obeyed, in success) and wove it into the theme of pride and disobedience in opposition to humility and chosen obedience. Every time Anodos disregards a warning, some evil results: he succumbs to the Alder-Maiden (becomes the victim of illusion), is found by his Shadow (becomes a prey to his baser self), loses the lady he loves, is cast out of the fairy palace, and nearly dies when he rushes through the door of the Timeless. Similarly, Vane's forgetting or disregarding Raven's warnings causes him to be deceived by Lilith, to be cast back into his own world, and to bring about Lona's death; each transgression results in a temporary spiritual setback. The magic food that enables Anodos to understand the animals is equivalent to that gift of fairyland (the spiritual progress through which all must go) which feeds and nourishes true understanding. The Gothic idea of the vampire feeding on blood is used to make physical (in Lilith) the idea of illusion, pride, and wrongheadedness which destroy man

⁹⁵Lilith, ch. xxxvii. Possibly an echo of Matt.xxii.13: "'... cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

by destroying his true life, i.e., his soul. The tradition of a witch being unable to cross water is at the root of Lilith's collapse in crossing the warm stream, water being the symbol of baptism and grace, which crushes out evil and illusion. When Lilith's clenched hand, the symbol of spiritual pride and defiance, is severed by the sword of the archangel Michael, her spiritual healing begins immediately, i.e., when chastisement cuts off sin, regeneration begins; and when the hand is buried, i.e., her willing submission is complete and illusion is dead, the subterranean waters burst forth, free again, and form a lake over the bad burrow, so that the monsters lie at its bottom, quiescent (grace is abounding and quells the baser instincts).

The range of fantasy motifs is extremely heterogeneous, but, unlike the heterogeneity of image that occurs in actual dreams, it is consciously ordered. In melding traditional motif with Christian interpretation, MacDonald was often successful in creating images with multiple layers of meaning.⁹⁶ But the traditional motifs do not always harmonize with each other within the fairy landscapes that provide the framework for the novels. The selection is too vast, the subsidiary meanings and associations too varied, to be absorbed entirely as a group into an overriding Christian, or Christianized, symbolism. This was a problem with which Charles Williams also dealt, with varying degrees of success. It is a problem inherent in writing supernatural Christian fantasy, since the preset associations in a traditional symbol can be a double-edged weapon. They may, in some cases, fit harmoniously into a new framework;

⁹⁶ According to Michael Harrington ("From the New Nineteenth Century," New Republic, December 6, 1954, pp. 27-28), what makes MacDonald's work "more than a children's story or a simple allegory is Macdonald's own sense of ambiguity" and the fact that "the strange, dreamlike allegory . . . never descends to the level of typology."

in others, they may generate resistance to the grafting on of new or extrapolated meanings. Considerable skill is therefore required to weave these together in a consistent manner. When a variety of related and unrelated traditional motifs are juxtaposed, the problem is compounded many times. On the other hand, however, it would be virtually impossible to invent a completely new constellation of motifs, free of traditional associations.

Phantastes and Lilith have been both praised and blamed for their richness, or, in some critics' view, their overrichness and resultant obscurity of meaning.⁹⁷ The blame is couched in less gentle terms with

⁹⁷Cf. Edward Stanley Robertson, op. cit., 308: "'Phantastes' is one of the greatest works of pure imagination to which the Victorian era has given birth." Henry Holbeach ("George Mac Donald," The Contemporary Review, XIX [December 1871], 43 and 44) found the symbology somewhat too easy to interpret and not always harmonious: "In richness and variety of conception 'Phantastes,' which received a warm word—perhaps many warm words—from Dickens,* takes so high a place in the collection [of MacDonald's Works of Fancy and Imagination], that we hardly know what should rank before it. The symbols are easily read by an apprehensive mind; and how rapidly and easily they succeed, and 'hang on,' and interweave in this wonderful story of the man who went out to seek his ideal, and ended by being glad at having lost his shadow! Yet . . . the symbols have not nested long enough to get warm and full-feathered . . . The intellectual ground-plan shows too plainly through the symbols . . . Neither can we relish a Greek name for a knight in fairy-land, and the 'chamber of Sir Anodos' jars." The anonymous author of a lengthy review of some of MacDonald's works in (Littell's) Living Age, XCVI (March 21, 1868) also had no difficulty in listing (p. 720) a few of Phantastes' main positions: "that selfishness is the bane of moral worth, and essentially at variance with the nature of love; that action is better than speculation; that conceit and vanity are weaker than humility; that presumption heralds failure; that a noble death is better than a degraded life." With respect to Lilith, Harold Child wrote in 1924 (The Times Literary Supplement,

*Note: A check of Household Words, a weekly journal which Dickens conducted for several years, ending in May 1859, some seven months after the publication of Phantastes, failed to provide any written evidence of his admiration for the book. One critic has gone so far as to claim that Dickens exerted a degree of influence on MacDonald (H. Crago, "Charles Dickens and George MacDonald: A Note," Dickens Studies, V [May 1969], 86-90).

respect to Lilith, possibly because its imagery, unlike that of Phantastes, with its familiar witches, forests, and fairy palaces, is often unsettling, verging at times on the nightmarish. Without pretending to derive any significant psychological truth from this fact, one may yet point out that Phantastes was written when MacDonald was still in the prime of life (though ill) and young as a writer; Lilith was written nearly four decades later, during which time MacDonald had experienced unremitting financial pressures, constant illness, and the deaths of several of his children. His own faith was severely tried, and, if his optimism survived, it was not without difficulty.⁹⁸ Phantastes reflects a young man's optimism, Lilith an old man's, hard-won. All question of agreeableness aside, however, Lilith is, perhaps, as Auden points out, a more satisfactory, i.e., structurally well-made, book than Phantastes because "its allegorical structure is much tighter: there seems no particular reason, one feels, why Anodos should have just the number of adventures which he does have--they could equally be more or less--but Mr. Vane's experiences and his spiritual education exactly

May 29, 1924, p. 330): "The story is so packed with meaning, so full of images of which the meanings seem inexhaustible, that it is marvellous to see how George MacDonald keeps it, as a story, moving, and is ever ready with some new and strange vehicle of beautiful or grotesque or horrible imagination." Yet a contemporary reviewer wrote of Lilith that it was "not less than grievous to find the sweet bells jangled, and the imagination, once lofty and penetrating, declined to the incoherent and grotesque," and that "a regard for the preservation of sanity prevented us from dwelling on the shifting phases of nightmare, which is all the narrative recalled to us. That some high purpose pervades this strange farrago we are willing to believe, but its method of presentment [*sic*] seems to be neither lucid nor edifying" (anonymous review of Lilith, in The Athenaeum, 106 [November 9, 1895], 639).

⁹⁸ See, for example, Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 373-374, 475-476, 495, 507-508, 530, and 560.

coincide."⁹⁹

This study has gone into some detail in considering the dominating themes of MacDonald's novels and the main categories of fantasy motifs which embody his themes and doctrine, primarily in order to focus attention on those elements which distinguish his fantasies from other kinds and which made him a forerunner of the group of English writers of religious fantasy of the 1930's and 1940's, with whom Charles Williams became associated. A full analysis of the structure and meaning of Phantastes and Lilith, separately and in comparison with each other, and of the ways in which MacDonald blends modes of fantasy to achieve a story with several layers of meaning, has, after all these years, yet to be done. Very little can be said here regarding the workings of his modes of fantasy; but it may be pointed out that, in freely using motifs from many fantasy genres and in adding to their traditional characteristics elements derived from his own parabolic imagination, MacDonald was able to fuse the whole into a many-layered fantasy which is simultaneously an entertainment and a parable-sermon. To take but one instance: The phantom dancers in Lilith (ch. xvi) are described in terms of a ghostly and grotesque midnight revel, in the accepted Gothic tradition. They are phantoms who retain the physical appearance of live people, except for their heads and faces, which are skulls, in which live eyes are still set, and on which the hair is still beautifully dressed.

Had they used their faces, not for communication,
not to utter thought and feeling, not to share

⁹⁹Introduction to The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald, p. vi. It is questionable, however, whether, or to what degree, this is a criterion of how satisfying the book is, in comparison with Phantastes.

existence with their neighbours, but to appear what they wished to appear, and conceal what they were? and, having made their faces masks, were they therefore deprived of those masks, and condemned to go without faces until they repented?¹⁰⁰

The idea of using the skull-face to indicate spiritual poverty, and the gradual refleshing of it to signal spiritual progress, seems to be MacDonald's own. The ghosts are clearly meant to enhance the eeriness of the story by providing a striking visual element that is partly traditional and partly new. The element which MacDonald has added not only heightens the Gothic grotesquerie, but also makes these creatures into an embodiment of the purgatory experience, as are the mutually recriminating skeleton couple whom Vane overhears quarrelling (ch. xvii). These are related to the skull-headed dancers, but are many centuries behind them in their growth into spiritual knowledge, as is witnessed by their being completely skeletal and unclothed. When the man finds that he needs his lady to help him walk, he begins to undergo change.

"In their day" [says Raven] "they were the handsomest couple at court; and now, even in their dry bones, they seem to regard their former repute as an inalienable possession; to see their faces, however, may yet do something for them! . . . they cannot now get far away from each other, and they see none else of their own kind: they must at last grow weary of their mutual repugnance, and begin to love one another! . . . [The others Vane saw] are pretty steadily growing more capable, and will by and by develop faces; for every grain of truthfulness adds a fibre to the show of their humanity."¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Lilith, ch. xvi. Cf. the title of C. S. Lewis' Christian reinterpretation of the Cupid and Psyche story--Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold, published in 1956. The probability that the title is an echo of this passage in MacDonald seems very strong.

¹⁰¹Lilith, ch. xvii.

The recounting of the skeletons' conversation and their ludicrously proud actions, which are imaginatively detailed, reflect MacDonald's personal sense of humor, rather sardonic in this context, but basically kind. These queer creatures are not only an embodiment of the purgatory experience, but are themselves beings on a spiritual journey. And, finally, they serve as an object lesson, a way station, in the journey of Vane, the narrator and principal spiritual traveller. Of course, the entire story, on all levels, is basically designed to plot the journey of the hero towards his goal--"getting home." The stages of spiritual advancement of MacDonald's heroes are, briefly, an awakening to the existence of the spiritual life (Anodos' entering fairyland, Vane's passing through the mirror); a slow progress towards deeper spiritual perception¹⁰² and greater humility, marked by mistakes and setbacks generally contingent upon disobedience, which are nevertheless useful in the long run, as lessons that will not be forgotten; achievement, for a brief time, of the ultimate spiritual bliss (for Anodos, sentient death; for Vane, a glimpse of the throne of God); and a final awakening, in the real world, to a period of waiting, marked by a longing to return permanently to the other world. Lilith is a subordinate heroine, although not of the rather simpler Everyman type represented by Anodos and Vane. That aspect of Lilith which represents a soul on a journey is, as already pointed out, only one of the functions which she fulfills.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Note, in this connection, that Anodos' sight actually grows keener and his poetic gift of song blossoms as he travels through the fairy country: the allegorical point is made by calling a physical and a non-physical faculty into play.

¹⁰³The difficulties of handling the character simultaneously from a number of points of view are evident also in Williams' handling of the Lilith figure, in Descent into Hell, discussed below.

It should be noted at this point that the heroes in Williams' novels nearly always follow much the same journey, i.e., upward. In Williams, however, there are some characters who travel in the opposite direction; the importance of deliberate choice is, however, constantly stressed, and the point is made that each has the power to reverse his course if he chooses.

The theme of choice is one of a number of doctrinal themes which run through both MacDonald and Williams. Since a general picture of MacDonald's approach to and practice of the writing of fantasy has now been outlined, it remains to see how this genre of fantasy found its modern echo in the novels of Charles Williams.

Chapter IV. The Relationship Between MacDonald and Williams: General Observations

There is a tender vagueness to the writing of Macdonald and Williams, a shimmering ambiguity, a haunting hint that God's ways are always half veiled and that in his dealings with humans we see only the part of the iceberg above the waters of the boundless ocean; in these two writers there is also an understanding of the mysteries of love--human and divine--and its paradoxes . . . The Christian universe of his /C. S. Lewis'/ two mentors is open-ended, open-sided in a way that Lewis's is not.¹

MacDonald's particular kind of moral fantasy for adults was unique in his day. In the three and a half decades which elapsed between the appearance of Phantastes (1858) and Lilith (1895) no one else ventured into the same rarified atmosphere of visionary fantasy. Almost forty years more elapsed before Charles Williams' fantasy novels began to appear (1930). There were, of course, other English writers, such as Charles Kingsley (like MacDonald, a clergyman), who wrote moral fantasies for children; and there were many English writers in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, such as M. R. James, Algernon Blackwood, and Arthur Machen, who specialized in writing fantasies in the weird and ghostly vein, or what has been called the supernaturalism of imaginative terror.² Others, such as H. G. Wells, wrote fantasy of the science fiction

¹Chad Walsh, "C. S. Lewis: The Man and the Mystery," in Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams (Carbondale, Illinois, 1969), p. 11.

²"The Supernatural in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," op. cit., 400.

variety.³ One looks among them in vain, however, for the kind of otherworldliness found in MacDonald, and later in Williams. Perhaps the most important difference between the otherworldliness of the terror school and the work of MacDonald and Williams is that, in the former, the supernatural is usually presented as inexplicable and unpredictable, except, perhaps, in terms of some set of dark or pagan laws which remain unknown;⁴ whereas, in MacDonald and Williams, the supernatural is a natural part of an ordered moral universe. In the one case, the intention is to arouse terror by activating the superstition or fear of the unknown which so often underlies the materialist mind,⁵ simply in order to evoke

³Cf. Wells's statement in a letter of September 24, 1895 to MacDonald, quoted in Greville MacDonald, Reminiscences of a Specialist, pp. 323-324: "I have been reading your Lilith with exceptional interest. Curiously enough I have been at work on a book based on essentially the same idea, namely that, assuming more than three dimensions, it follows that there must be wonderful worlds nearer to us than breathing . . . Your polarization and mirror business struck me as neat in the extreme. . . . In my own book The Wonderful Visit . . . I have done the complement of Lilith. You make a man go out of this world of three-dimensions and I make a visitor from outside come into it. . . . It's curious, is it not, that after this new idea has been lying neglected for years, it should be worked at simultaneously in this way?"

⁴"The one test of the really weird," as stated by H. P. Lovecraft, a master of the supernatural horror story (Supernatural Horror in Literature [New York, 1945], p. 16), is "whether or not there be excited in the reader a profound sense of dread, and of contact with unknown spheres and powers." A true horror tale arouses this fear of the unknown by depicting events which cannot be explained away by natural means, with "a hint . . . of that most terrible conception of the human brain—a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

⁵Cf. Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction (New York, 1965), p. 6: "Modern man disavows the old superstitions . . . Yet beneath the thin varnish of modern culture still smoulders the evil fire of ancient creeds. They are ever ready to recapture their ascendancy over the human mind, whenever some momentary illusion upsets man's more civilised beliefs. The feeling that the supernatural is ever present, communicating its warnings and meting out punishment, persists in us."

a chill or shudder. In MacDonald and Williams, there is always the sense of a rational, stern, but loving universal presence from which all laws, including both those immediately intelligible to man and those which are beyond his ken, radiate, and into which they return.

The amount of parable or moral fantasy for adults written since MacDonald's time has not been large. The genre tends in fact to be regarded as old-fashioned and even somewhat naive. This is not surprising when one recalls the oft-repeated statement that by the early twentieth century the western world had for the most part relinquished its belief in a theological universe ruled by a Mind for the concept of a scientific one governed by impersonal physical laws. It is unlikely that such an age would be either particularly receptive to or productive of the specialized kind of writing which, at its best and highest level, requires that the parabolist "must have some sort of [religious] world-view which engages his deepest feelings."⁶

Whatever the explanation, it is true that, with perhaps a few exceptions, such as some of the work of G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), especially his The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare (1908), and T. F. Powys (1875-1953),⁷ the writing of English moral fantasy for adults languished until the appearance of the fantastic novels of Charles Williams.

6

MacNeice, op. cit., p. 97.

⁷ Author of, inter alia, Mr. Weston's Good Wine (1928). MacNeice (op. cit., p. 115) notes that "this curious book definitely is an allegory and of an old-fashioned kind. T. F. Powys is as much concerned as George MacDonald with love, death and eternity, and more concerned than he is with lust, greed, brutality, spite, envy and sheer crass hatred." Mention should also be made of Sylvia Townsend Warner's Lolly Willowses (1926)

There are striking resemblances between MacDonald and Williams as fantasists. Indeed, some eminent critics, including W. H. Auden and William York Tindall, consider MacDonald to have been a direct influence on Williams.⁸ The present study is mainly concerned with the similarities between the two writers, however, rather than with the question of influence, which, while tantalizing, remains elusive. For example, there seems to be no published evidence of Williams' having been familiar specifically with Phantastes or Lilith. That he knew of MacDonald, however, there could be no question, since he included one of MacDonald's poems, "The Yerl o' Waterydeck," in an anthology which he edited in 1927.⁹ A very brief biographical note on MacDonald is given in the notes at the back of the anthology.¹⁰ Beyond this, however, there appears to be no

and Evelyn Underhill's The Column of Dust (1909). Charles Williams admired Evelyn Underhill, and there are some resemblances between The Column of Dust and Williams' novels, which are dealt with below, in chapter XI; Williams' technique, however, is much more skilful.

⁸See Introduction, p. 4. On the other hand, A. M. Hadfield, one of Williams' friends and biographers, who states that Williams did refer to MacDonald (in conversation, presumably) and admired him, feels that she could not say that MacDonald had been influential on his mind (information in a letter of December 13, 1971 to the author).

⁹A Book of Victorian Narrative Verse, Chosen by Charles Williams (Oxford, 1927). See also notes 8, 13, 20, and 22.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 320: "Born 10 December 1824 at Huntly, West Aberdeenshire. He was ordained a Congregational minister in London in 1850, but resigned, retired to Manchester, and gave himself up to literature in 1853. His most famous work was his novels, both those which deal with humble Scottish life and those which are fantastic and semi-mystical. But he also wrote a good deal of verse which sometimes achieved poetry. He died at Ashted on 18 September 1905" (italics mine). The reference to MacDonald's fantastic and semi-mystical novels, by which Williams must mean Phantastes and Lilith, is, as far as the author has been able to determine, the only such reference by Williams in print. It would not, of course, necessarily imply that Williams was familiar with their texts.

direct reference to MacDonald in Williams' writings;¹¹ it also seems to be the only published evidence that Williams had heard of MacDonald before he met C. S. Lewis in 1936.¹² Williams was nineteen when MacDonald died (1905), and would almost certainly have been familiar with MacDonald's children's books, in view of their popularity; indeed, a friend and biographer of Williams states that she is sure that he did know them.¹³ According to another biographer, Williams' reading of MacDonald was extensive: "Certainly he had read At the Back of the North Wind and the Curdie books [The Princess and the Goblin and The Princess and Curdie] and I think all of GMD" (italics mine).¹⁴

¹¹In the thirties Williams wrote a great many reviews of mystery novels, including those of Philip MacDonald, a grandson of George MacDonald. There is nothing in these reviews to indicate that Williams was aware of this fact (see the [London] News Chronicle, April 6, 1931, p. 5; September 7, 1931, p. 4; November 17, 1931, p. 4; October 7, 1932, p. 4; January 31, 1933, p. 4; and April 26, 1933, p. 4, for Williams' reviews of MacDonald's The Choice, The Wraith, Harbour, Rope to Spare, Death on My Left, and R.I.P., respectively. The same is true of Williams' reviews of Mystery at Friar's Pardon and Mystery in Kensington Gore (News Chronicle, October 7, 1931, p. 4 and March 7, 1932, p. 4), both of which MacDonald wrote under the pseudonym of Martin Porlock. (Information on Philip MacDonald's relationship to George MacDonald and on his nom(s) de plume is taken from a biographical notice in Philip MacDonald, Guest in the House [Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1964], p. 1).

¹²The acquaintance began when Lewis and Williams happened simultaneously to write each other a letter of congratulation, the one on Williams' The Place of the Lion, and the other on Lewis' The Allegory of Love (see C. S. Lewis, preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. viii; and Alice Mary Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams [London, 1959], p. 156. The coincidence is also remarked upon by W. H. Lewis, C. S.' brother, in a letter to the author, March 27, 1971).

¹³Information in a letter to the author from Anne Ridler, September 8, 1971. She also states that she mentioned to Williams one of MacDonald's non-fantastic novels, Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood, and that Williams probably discussed Phantastes with C. S. Lewis.

¹⁴Information in a letter of December 13, 1971 from Alice Mary Hadfield to the author.

One other established point of contact between the two writers was C. S. Lewis. His introduction to George MacDonald: An Anthology states plainly that he considered MacDonald to be his master, and that he had never written a book in which he did not quote from him.¹⁵

Lewis was also a close friend and colleague of Charles Williams; a moving account of their friendship is given in Lewis' preface to a book of essays collected in Williams' memory.¹⁶ After Williams' death in 1945, Lewis published a study of his two volumes of Arthurian poetry, Taliessin through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars.¹⁷ During

¹⁵P. 20. Of the many echoes of MacDonald to be found in Lewis, the following two may be mentioned. The subtitle of That Hideous Strength, the third novel in Lewis' fantasy trilogy for adults, is "A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups"; cf. the subtitle of Phantastes: "A Faerie Romance for Men and Women." And, as already mentioned, the title of Lewis' Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold is strongly reminiscent of the passage from Lilith (ch. xvi, "A Gruesome Dance"): "And, having made their faces masks, were they therefore deprived of those masks, and condemned to go without faces until they repented?"

¹⁶Essays Presented to Charles Williams (Oxford, 1947). The contributors, besides Lewis, were Dorothy Sayers, J. R. R. Tolkien, A. O. Barfield, Gervase Mathew, and W. H. Lewis. Cf. also Lewis' referring to Williams shortly after his death (Letters, p. 206) as "'my great friend Charles Williams, my friend of friends . . .'" and Lewis' poem "To Charles Williams," reprinted in C. S. Lewis, Poems, ed. Walter Hooper (London, 1964), p. 105. W. H. Lewis, C. S.' brother, states that C. S. had "a near-fanatical devotion to Charles Williams" (introductory memoir to Letters of C. S. Lewis, p. 18). Lewis wrote Williams' obituary for The Oxford Magazine (May 24, 1945, p. 265), as T. S. Eliot did for the London Times (May 17, 1945, p. 7; information confirmed in a letter to the author from T. S. Eliot, December 4, 1962). Admiration for Williams' work was the cause, and not the effect, of their friendship (C. S. Lewis, "Dedication to Charles Williams," in A Preface to "Paradise Lost" [London, 1961], p. v). Lewis, whose own work in the field of Milton criticism is of considerable importance, acknowledged his debt to Williams, whom he credited with "the recovery of a true critical tradition [with respect to Milton] after more than a hundred years of laborious misunderstanding" (ibid., pp. v-vi).

¹⁷C. S. Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad," in Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso (London, 1948). An attempt at further detailed study of the Arthurian material in Williams' poems has been made in Joyce Hines, "The Arthurian and the Grail Themes in the Poetry of Charles Williams," unpublished M. A. thesis (Columbia University, 1952).

the war, when the Oxford University Press, for which Williams worked, moved to Oxford, where Lewis taught, Williams joined the Inklings, a group of Lewis' literary friends (including J. R. R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Gervase Mathew) who met frequently to discuss each other's works in progress.¹⁸ According to Edmund Fuller, Lewis' short moral fantasy The Great Divorce, and Williams' last novel, All Hallows' Eve, were written simultaneously during the Oxford period.¹⁹ As already mentioned, George MacDonald appears in The Great Divorce as a guide to the mores of souls in the other world. The likelihood that MacDonald formed the subject of discussion between Lewis and Williams in their literary meetings would therefore be great;²⁰ this hypothesis is confirmed by Tolkien.²¹ Gervase Mathew, moreover, states that he

¹⁸"They [the Inklings] are (or were) a small v. [ery] informal club of men who used to meet on Thursdays in one another's rooms during the war" (letter to the author from C. S. Lewis, June 25, 1952). See also C. S. Lewis, preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, pp. v and viii-ix; Lewis' Letters, p. 197; W. H. Lewis, introductory memoir to Lewis' Letters, pp. 13-15; and Roger Lancelyn Green, C. S. Lewis (London, 1963), pp. 31-32. Williams' The Forgiveness of Sins (1942) is dedicated to the Inklings.

¹⁹Fuller, op. cit., p. 228.

²⁰W. H. Lewis considered it extremely unlikely that his brother and Williams did not discuss MacDonald (letter to the author from W. H. Lewis, March 27, 1971), a thesis shared by Williams' son, Michael, who confirmed that his father knew of MacDonald (letter to the author, July 9, 1971); Owen Barfield "would go a little further . . . in thinking it almost inconceivable that C. S. L. and C. W. did not at some time discuss George MacDonald" (letter to the author from Owen Barfield, May 27, 1971). Such discussions, however, never took place in their presence. With regard to reading George MacDonald, Roger Lancelyn Green feels that none "of C. S. Lewis's closer friends could have avoided doing so--if they had not done so already!" (letter to the author, November 23, 1971).

²¹"George MacDonald was of course discussed by the Inklings" (information in a letter to the author from J. R. R. Tolkien, May 6, 1971). It should be mentioned that some years after the present study was initiated, and while the present text was being typed for submittal, the writer was gratified to note that the thesis that George MacDonald is the nineteenth-century forerunner of the Oxford fantasy school has also been voiced in a recently published essay by Glenn Edward Sadler, "The Fantastic Imagination in George MacDonald," in Imagination and the Spirit: Essays in Literature and the Christian Faith presented to Clyde S. Kilby, ed. Charles A. Huttar (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971), p. 216.

"can vouch that Charles [Williams] knew and admired Macdonald."²² Lewis seems never to have compared the two, although he wrote on them separately; he also acknowledged their influence on himself, but also separately.²³ It is interesting to note that he found them both impossible to classify.²⁴

Therefore, although there is testimony that Williams admired MacDonald and discussed him, there is no evidence that MacDonald influenced him in his novel-writing career (begun in the mid-1920's),

²²"But," he continues, "I doubt if he meant so much to him as he did to Lewis and I never heard them discuss him together" (information in a letter to the author, May 30, 1971).

²³ See preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 20, on MacDonald, and Letters, p. 287, on Williams. Their common influence on him seems to have been spiritual, in their enduring faith and near-mystical world-views. "No event," says Lewis, "has so corroborated my faith in the next world as Williams did simply by dying. When the idea of death and the idea of Williams thus met in my mind, it was the idea of death that was changed" (preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. xiv). He did not, however, advance any suggestion of literary influence of the one on the other. He was cautious in approaching the question of literary influence in general, even where a highly plausible case for a relationship could be made out: "'how much Quellenforschung in our studies of older literature,'" he wondered, "'seems solid only because those who knew the facts are dead and cannot contradict it?'" ("Books for Children," letter to The Times Literary Supplement, 28 November 1958, p. 689, quoted in C. S. Lewis, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," in Christian Reflections [London, 1967], p. 160, note).

²⁴ See preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 16 and preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vi. Some evidence that his thoughts passed naturally from the one to the other is given in a letter of July 9, 1939 (Letters, p. 167): "'Do you know George Macdonald's fantasies for grown-ups (his tales for children you possibly know already): Phantastes and Lilith I found endlessly attractive and full of what I felt to be holyness [sic] before I really knew what it was. . . . [sic] One of his novels, Sir Gibbie (Everyman), though like all his novels often amateurish, is worth reading. And do you know the works of Charles Williams? Rather wild, but full of love and excelling in the creation of convincing good characters.'"

either directly or through Lewis. Despite this circumstance, the resemblances between them in their approach to and use of fantasy are, as will be seen, remarkable.

Before embarking, however, on an examination of Williams and, ultimately, a comparative examination of interior resemblances between the two writers, it is useful to note in somewhat more detail the similarity of the climate of the times in which they wrote and how this resulted in their being minority writers.

Both authors were displaced, in the sense that they were men with mystic leanings, who wrote in the religious vein, sometimes using the form of fantasy, or parable, in an age of rationalist enlightenment. In such times, to which the nineteenth century (after Austen, as C. S. Lewis maintains) and the twentieth century belong, truth tends to be measured in terms of demonstrable fact, as already mentioned; subjective evaluation is looked upon as of doubtful validity; and religiousness is regarded as a mode of subjectivity. It is noteworthy that, as G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, moderns in certain contexts use the word subjective when they mean false.²⁵

Enlightenment literature is, as MacNeice has stated, essentially secular,²⁶ i.e., non-religious, and realistic, i.e., "true-to-life." At such times, works such as MacDonald's and Williams', which are grounded on a structure of religious belief and a deeply-felt world view, are

²⁵"Man and Mythologies," p. 214. Cf. also Chiari, *op. cit.*, p. 16: "The use of the word realism is complicated by the fact that it is used as if it were synonymous with naturalism."

²⁶Varieties of Parable, p. 103.

particularly vulnerable in their uncompromising emotionalism, fierce strength of faith, and eagerness to impart what their authors regard as basic truths. Moreover, to write religious works in the form of fantasy in an age which sets a high value on literary verisimilitude is to invite the charge of being doubly unreal, or, more accurately, doubly unrealistic. And to direct religious fantasy at adults might seem to verge on the hubristic, to an age which tends to regard fantasy, whether religious or secular, as fit only for children or for childish minds, on the double assumption that what is unrealistic must be unreal, i.e., invalid, and that therefore only immature minds would waste time on it, or take it seriously. Not only is there condescension in the use of the term juvenile, and approbation in the term adult, as if only the latter were "good," but there is also a tendency to forget that, as C. S. Lewis pointed out, "the whole association of fairy tale and fantasy with childhood is local and accidental," and that, in fact, "in most places and times, the fairy tale has not been specially made for, nor exclusively enjoyed by, children."²⁷ As the epigraphs to

²⁷"On Three Ways of Writing for Children," p. 26. "Fairy tales," an early (1866) reviewer of MacDonald remarked, "are serious things, or they are nothing; and this age will not treat them in a serious spirit" ("Mr. George Mac Donald's Novels," The North British Review, New Series, VI [September 1866], 3). For a refutation of the charges of juvenility and "escapism" which have been leveled against fantasy, see the aforementioned essay by Lewis, pp. 24-32; also Lewis' "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said," p. 38, and "On Juvenile Tastes," in Of Other Worlds, pp. 40-41, as well as "On Realisms," pp. 68-73; and, especially, Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," pp. 34-35, 42-43, and 50-61. Cf. also Penzoldt's statement, op. cit., p. 254, which concerns the English short story of the supernatural, but which is equally applicable to MacDonald's and Williams' work: "It is pointless to discard weird fiction with such slogans as 'escapism', or to reproach the tellers of weird tales with their apparent lack of interest in problems of actuality and so-called reality. The fact is simply that they deal with realities deeper and more ancient than

chapter II state, not all fantastic books need be children's books, just as only some children's books are fantastic; fantasy will appeal to some readers at any age, and to others never. Moreover, says Lewis, concern with what was exceptional, rather than ordinary or realistic, "was the spirit of nearly all stories before the nineteenth century"; therefore "most of the great fantasies and fairy-tales were not addressed to children at all, but to everyone."²⁸ Williams wrote no fantasies for children; and even those of MacDonald's fantasies that are appealing children's stories, notably The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie, At the Back of the North Wind, and several shorter tales of fancy and the imagination, can only be fully interpreted by the adult mind.²⁹ Phantastes and Lilith, on the other hand, are unashamedly directed to adults; the subtitle of Phantastes is, as already mentioned, A Faerie Romance for Men and Women. "For my part," said MacDonald, "I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five."³⁰ The adult seriousness of intention behind

those apparent. . . . Their writings are among the finest and most profound in modern literature." Fuller (op. cit., p. 136) has expressed this similarly: "Good fantasy is not escapist in the pejorative sense of that word. . . . if it is of depth, we are brought to a deeper pondering and insight into central aspects of our actual lives."

²⁸"On Realisms," pp. 63 and 70. Cf. C. G. Jung, op. cit., p. 76: "All the works of man have their origin in creative fantasy. What right have we then to depreciate imagination?"

²⁹Cf. Anne Fremantle, "Within and Without: George MacDonald," The Commonweal, XLIII (November 23, 1945), 144: "Throughout the materialistic nineteenth century the stream of interior life that waters English literature so fruitfully, from Piers Plowman to Perelandra [the first volume of C. S. Lewis' fantasy trilogy], was to a great extent driven, not underground, but into writing for children."

³⁰MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," p. 317.

his and Williams' work cannot be overemphasized. They took the risk of using fantasy because their special world-views required it.

Both men, then, wrote some works in a specialized genre which ran counter to the literary tastes of their day and to its pessimism.

One early reviewer of Phantastes expressed this with respect to MacDonald:

There is a cry as of despair in much of our literature; a cry which is loud and bitter in the latest works of Ruskin and Carlyle. With our much cultivation we have overlaid the simple, original instincts of our nature; we want . . . better proof of God, freedom, immortality than exists in the very structure of our nature . . . A child-like, believing, rejoicing, yet brave and powerful nature like MacDonald's is in days like these, a very precious boon of Heaven.³¹

But whereas MacDonald stood virtually alone as a Christian fantasist in his time, Williams has not been quite alone.³² He was in the vanguard of a new upsurge in the writing of moral fantasy. According to Mark Hillegas, Williams, along with C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, "belong[s]" to the broad cultural movement which, gaining momentum in the twenties and thirties, turned from dreams of reason, progress, science and the perfectibility of man to tradition and the doctrine of original

³¹"Works by George MacDonald [Within and Without: A Dramatic Poem; Poems; Phantastes: A Faerie Romance; The Portent; David Elginbrod; Alec Forbes of Howglen; Adela Cathcart; Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood; Unspoken Sermons; Robert Falconer; Guild Court; and another volume of Poems]" (anon. rev.), (Littell's Living Age, XCVI (March 21, 1868), 724. MacDonald "came to an age of great religious unrest . . . at the very time when the traditional faith was yielding under the searching scrutiny of modern days" (Horder, op. cit., 686).

³²Cf. MacNeice (Varieties of Parable, p. 103): "But in our time, while there are far more people in reaction against both the assumptions of the rationalist Enlightenment and the sort of realism these encourage in literature, there are far fewer people who can express such a reaction in traditional Christian terms."

sin."³³ Each writer, unique in style and technique, and distinguished by the seriousness with which he regards fantasy as "a mode valuable for presenting moral or spiritual values, which could not be presented in realistic fiction," appeals, in Hillegas' opinion, to many persons who, "although the Christian mythology now seems dead to . . . them . . . long for some myth to bring meaning again to the universe and human existence."³⁴

Williams, Lewis, and Tolkien form what might be called the Oxford group of fantasists. As already mentioned, during the war years (1939-1945), they met frequently to discuss their current writing projects. By 1939 Williams had already published six of his seven fantastic novels, although the last, and best, was written during these years. Lewis had published the first volume in his interplanetary trilogy (Out of the Silent Planet, 1938), and was working on The Great Divorce. Tolkien was working on "the new Hobbit book" (The Lord of the Rings). Lewis has written of Williams, Tolkien, and himself: "'To be sure, we had a common point of view, but we had it before we met. It was the cause

³³Mark R. Hillegas, ed., introduction to Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams, p. xvii.

³⁴Ibid., pp. xiv and xvi. This view is also put forward by Charles Moorman (Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and T. S. Eliot / Berkeley, 1960 /, pp. 2-3). Cf. also C. S. Lewis' somewhat tongue-in-cheek remark regarding the critics' apparent ignorance that the fall of the Bent One, in his fantasy Out of the Silent Planet, was not an idea of his own invention: "'If there only was someone with a richer talent and more leisure I think that this great ignorance might be a help to the evangelisation of England; any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people's minds under cover of romance without their knowing it'" (Letters, p. 167).

rather than the result of our friendship."³⁵ Hillegas groups them together as having managed, like Eliot, "to hang on to the Christian myth. . . . (the fantasies of Lewis and Williams are overtly Christian and, although Tolkien's are probably not, his Christian faith is implicit)." Therefore, "it is not hard to understand the appeal of their fantasies, in which the universe is alive with meaning."³⁶

Thus, although it may be convenient to group them together, there are, nevertheless, many differences among the fantasy worlds which they created. It is not the purpose of this study to examine these differences, which are deserving of a full study on their own. But let us adopt Hillegas' division between Tolkien, on the one hand, and Williams and Lewis, on the other. Even between the overtly Christian worlds of the two latter, there are differences. In Lewis' trilogy,³⁷ as Hillegas points out, Lewis successfully built "a strong bridge from our real to his imaginary worlds, which are both solid and internally

³⁵Lewis, Letters, p. 288. The letter was written on May 15, 1959 to Charles Moorman, who was proposing a literary enquiry into a group of writers. Lewis wrote (p. 287): "Charles Williams certainly influenced me and I perhaps influenced him. But . . . no one ever influenced Tolkien--you might as well try to influence a bandersnatch." In the matter of Williams' influence on Lewis, Chad Walsh has asserted that Williams' novels "served to convince Lewis in his belief that the fantastic novel could be used for serious philosophic purposes" (C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics [New York, 1949], p. 136).

³⁶Hillegas, op. cit., pp. xvi-xvii. Roger Sale ("England's Parnassus: C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams and J. R. R. Tolkien," The Hudson Review, XVII, 2 [Summer 1964], 203) states that the Anglo-Oxford group of which Williams became a part had, in the twenties and thirties, "already withdrawn into orthodox Christianity" and that they "sought to replace the humanistic with the pious, the broad public appeal of the novel with the more private iconography of fantasy, the New with the Old."

³⁷Out of the Silent Planet (1938), Perelandra (1943), and That Hideous Strength (1945).

consistent," whereas, in Williams, "there is no clear line of demarcation between natural and supernatural."³⁸ Lewis' fantasies, Hillegas also points out, are written in "an almost archetypally lucid, clear prose."³⁹ This is in agreement with Chad Walsh's observation that Lewis' novels "have clarity and clean edges."⁴⁰ In saying this, Walsh puts his finger on an important difference not only between Lewis and Williams, but, ironically, between Lewis and MacDonald as well: Lewis, even in writing fantasy, never abandoned perfect lucidity and ruthless logic for mysticism.⁴¹ Lewis, who so often acknowledged his debt to MacDonald, does not resemble him, as far as fantasy-writing is concerned; whereas Williams does, and, all question of influence aside, is MacDonald's spiritual heir. And, indeed, critics have begun to discern the kinship between them. Walsh, in the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, attempts to pin down the resemblance: "a tender vagueness" to their writing, "a shimmering ambiguity," and "understanding of the mysteries of love--human and divine--and its paradoxes," and an open-ended Christian universe. These are qualities which are more easily felt than analyzed. But what Walsh would seem to be saying,

³⁸Hillegas, op. cit., p. xv. He admits, however, that in the final volume, Lewis was moving closer to something more akin to Williams' "theological thrillers." This opinion had already been voiced by Roger Lancelyn Green (op. cit., p. 31).

³⁹Hillegas, op. cit., p. xiv.

⁴⁰Walsh, "C. S. Lewis: The Man and the Mystery," p. 11.

⁴¹Cf. Lewis, Letters, p. 212 (to Owen Barfield, December 22, 1947, two and a half years after Williams' death): "'Don't imagine I didn't pitch into Charles Williams for his obscurity for all I was worth.'" Lewis once said that needless obscurity was one of the faults he least easily forgave in other men's books (preface to The Pilgrim's Regress, p. 5).

and what this study maintains, is that their common achievement and strongest point of resemblance was the writing of visionary (mythopoeic) Christian fantasy.

The main themes of MacDonald's fantasies have been examined, not only for the interest which they present in themselves, but with a view to pointing up the ways in which they foreshadow Williams. It is now proper to examine Williams' work, following which it will be possible to present in some detail an ordered and comprehensive comparison of the main resemblances in these two writers' work, with respect to substance and technique. At present, some of the broader resemblances may be summarized.

For instance, in Williams, as in MacDonald, the theologian and the romantic, the sermonizer and the lover of fantasy, merge. Preternaturals and impossibles are the framework on which is woven the Christian ethical view of life, that one must struggle towards salvation through the exercise of free choice. In both, the finished product is greater than the sum of the parts, being not predominantly romantic or theological, but mythopoeic, presenting in little the higher reality. The term "spiritual explorations," which MacNeice applied to MacDonald's fantasies,⁴² is equally descriptive of Williams'. Both were concerned with the problem of the nature of good and evil, especially the seeming transposition of these through the operation of illusion.

⁴²Varieties of Parable, p. 97.

In MacDonald the action, or spiritual exploration, unfolds almost exclusively in a dream-like country of the mind and soul, outside of normal time. When, as happens from time to time in Lilith, the scene shifts to the real world, which in MacDonald is only a kind of waking dream,⁴³ it is only for a brief interlude. The boundaries between worlds are shadowy, and, since the worlds interpenetrate, the doors leading from one to the other are sometimes unexpected, as when, in Lilith, Mr. Vane falls from a treetop in the other world and finds himself tossing on the waters of a fountain in this (ch. xxvii). MacDonald's are worlds of symbol, and although one could conceivably chart maps of the spiritual journeys of Anodos and Mr. Vane as nineteenth-century pilgrims making their progress through the pitfalls of the world, the flesh, and the devil, these would, for reasons already explained, have to be more than maps of allegorical countries whose place-names

⁴³A careful examination of chapter ii of Phantastes, in which Anodos sees his bedroom change gradually into a clearing in a forest in what proves to be fairyland; and of chapter xxv, in which he finds himself lying on a hill back in the real (i.e., everyday) world, reveals that MacDonald nowhere indicates that Anodos is dreaming that he is in fairyland. This ambiguity, in view of MacDonald's fondness for the Novalis quotation already referred to several times, was no doubt deliberate. Wolff (op. cit., p. 40) refers to Phantastes as a dream romance, yet speaks (p. 46) of Anodos beginning his adventure in a thinking state "between waking and sleeping." Bousquet (op. cit., pp. 312, 351, 540, 138, and 276 note) refers to Phantastes as a long dream ("le long rêve qu'est 'Phantastes'"), all a dream ("entièrement onirique"), and a dream-novel ("rêve-roman"), but also, in a more hesitant moment, as "more or less a dream [*italics mine*]" ("plus ou moins un rêve"). His uncertainty on the point is reflected also in the statement that "the whole of Phantastes is situated within the framework of a dream, but MacDonald often forgets this point of departure, and his descriptions are no longer at all dreamlike" ("L'ensemble de 'Phantastes' se situe dans le cadre d'un rêve; mais, souvent, Mac Donald oublie ce point de départ et ses descriptions n'ont plus rien d'onirique").

reflect moods of the heart and soul and which are populated by personifications of virtues and vices. It is important to note that in MacDonald the phantasmagoria has no more than a surface resemblance to actual dreams. The wide variety of fantasy motifs which it contains⁴⁴ might be likened to the unrealness of a dream; but it is a conscious and ordered phantasmagoria and rational, in that its purpose flows from the author's conscious intention.⁴⁵

Williams' stories take place within the realistic framework of twentieth-century London life, but in these also, the boundary line between this world and the spiritual one is not sharp. They also are superimposed, as when, in Descent into Hell, Pauline sees and speaks to her ancestor as he is martyred at the stake; here, however, there is the additional concept of interpenetration of time. The supernatural, or more correctly, super-natural, in Williams' understanding, as in MacDonald's, is a natural part of that which governs the universe, i.e., although it is neither visible nor entirely comprehensible to the human mind, it is fully as natural as the phenomena to which the term is commonly applied. One immediate effect of this is that the

⁴⁴Cf. Jung, op. cit., p. 189: "It is therefore to be expected of the poet that he will resort to mythology in order to give his experience its most fitting expression. . . . Since the particular expression can never exhaust the possibilities of the vision, but falls far short of it in richness of content, the poet must have at his disposal a huge store of materials if he is to communicate even a few of his intimations."

⁴⁵As already mentioned, Tolkien distinguishes between fantasy (fairy tale) and dreaming, in which there is no art. Cf. also G. K. Chesterton's description of a dream as possessing "'an utter discordance of incident combined with a curious unity of mood; everything changes but the dreamer'" (quoted in [Peter Brook's?] "Comments on the Play" / A Midsummer Night's Dream (Royal Shakespeare Company production) / Playbill, VIII (February 1971), 23.

universe of the narratives opens out beyond the material one. A corollary effect is that the super-natural, understood to be part of an organic whole ruled by laws, must function within those laws. Therefore, whatever paraphernalia of marvels the author may choose in which to embody the super-natural (whether it is the supernatural in its usual sense of outré-tombe, ghostly apparitions, or any of many other kinds of preternaturals), there is never any question of using it to inspire superstitious fear of the inexplicable.

Neither in Williams' nor MacDonald's fantasies is there much denominational discussion of God or Christ. Nevertheless, in MacDonald, Christian doctrine controls the seeming phantasmagoria; and at the heart of Williams' novels there are particular Christian beliefs, on which he has elaborated. (These are discussed in chapter VI.) They are the inescapable principles which, in Williams' view, govern the flood of human life and action. Like MacDonald, he draws upon a wide range of preternaturals and impossibles, or fantasy motifs, to image these truths and to give the super-natural a local habitation and a name; and, like MacDonald, his work reflects the problems inherent in attempting consistently to harmonize the traditional associations of some of these motifs with his doctrinal purpose. Each of Williams' novels is a twentieth-century Pilgrim's Progress, involving several pilgrims, each of whom reaches the place or stage he chooses. In each, the real world is both the physical world and the country of the spirit.

Both authors, through romantic moral fantasy, developed sophisticated narratives of the spiritual journey. The direction of the action is determined by individual choice, and, both in the fairy universe of MacDonald and the "everyday" world of Williams, each

freely-chosen thought or deed is noted, weighed, and rewarded or punished by a supreme moral authority.

Clearly the different meanings of the word "real" are of prime importance in this context. In both authors, the world which exists beyond the one which we perceive through the senses is the pure or higher reality; the tangible world is the everyday or lower reality. (In Phantastes the sensate world is in a fairyland, a fact which may at first glance complicate the matter somewhat.) The unseen world responds to the actions performed in the sensate world, and the visible world (whether in fairyland or in waking London) is definitely something less than the invisible, although it is a picturing of it. This is the sacramentalist or symbolist handling of the relationship between the material and the immaterial, already discussed. And since the invisible world in both MacDonald and Williams is that of Christian doctrine, theirs can be considered a Christian mythopoeic approach.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Cf. Fuller's statement (op. cit., p. 148) concerning the reality structure which C. S. Lewis presents through fantasy and symbol: "to the Christian it is truth, to the non-Christian, a tale." The same may be said of MacDonald's and Williams' work.

Chapter V. Charles Williams: A Biographical Note

George MacDonald has become, and Charles Williams has remained, the focus of interest of a fairly restricted following, partly, it would seem, for reasons explained in an earlier chapter, i.e., their doctrinal themes and fantasy formats are counter to the scientific and literary currents of the time; and partly because, although both might be described as writers of major importance, neither can be described as a major figure in the practice of any of the literary forms in which he wrote.¹ Anne Ridler's explanation of this latter point vis-à-vis Williams is equally applicable to MacDonald: "this is partly because the ideas he was expressing were always more important to Charles Williams than the medium of expression, and the choice of a medium (apart from poetry) was governed for him by the demands of the moment--that is, chiefly by the need to earn money . . ."²

Critical interest in Williams' writings has been growing slowly but steadily since his death in 1945, as is witnessed not only by the volume of scholarly articles written on him, but by several recent full-length studies on his doctrines, as well as his relationship with

¹Cf. Anne Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, by Charles Williams (London, 1958), p. x: "The religious writings, the plays Seed of Adam and Cranmer, certain passages from the novels, some of the criticism of Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, and Wordsworth, and above all the series of Taliessin poems--these alone would make a good claim for him . . . as a writer of major importance. It is when we come to apply the adjective to any particular form, to speak of him as a major poet or a major critic, that the doubt arises."

²Ibid. It has already been pointed out that poetry was the preferred medium of expression of both men, but that MacDonald turned to writing novels to support his family. Williams, according to A. M. Hadfield, began to write novels to pay for his son's school fees (An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 76).

such writers as Tolkien, Lewis, and Barfield; nor is MacDonald's name absent from these studies.³

Most of Williams' chief works--and certainly his novels--are easily accessible. Since, however, biographical data are less easily obtained, it may be useful to include some of these here, for general information on Williams' background, as well as to note, without over-emphasizing, a few important parallels with MacDonald's life.⁴

Charles Walter Stansby Williams was born in London on September 20, 1886, and was brought up in a deeply religious household; according to Hadfield, Williams even as a child took an eager and natural pleasure in the ritual of church-going, prayers, and Bible reading. Like MacDonald, he enjoyed a close relationship with his father,⁵ who introduced him to the Bible and the classics--Dickens,

³See, for example, Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams, ed. Mark R. Hillegas (1969), already mentioned, containing twelve essays by as many authors, four of which are devoted to Williams; R. J. Reilly, Romantic Religion: A Study of Barfield, Lewis, Williams, and Tolkien (Athens, Georgia, 1971); and Gunnar Urang, Shadows of Heaven: Religion and Fantasy in the Writing of C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien (London, 1971). See also the bibliography to the present study.

⁴The one full-length biography of Williams published thus far (Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, already cited) is out of print. A good deal is, however, also contained in Ridler's introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, by Charles Williams. The biographical information given below has been taken from these sources, except where otherwise indicated. See also Lewis, preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams.

⁵On MacDonald's relationship with his father, see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, Book II, ch. vi; Book IV, ch. vii; and passim. Note also MacDonald's tribute to his father in the dedication of his long poem A Hidden Life ("To My Father"), written in 1857, when MacDonald was in his thirty-third year, and which reads, in part: "Take of the first fruits, Father, of thy care,/Wrapped in the fresh leaves of my gratitude/Late waked for early gifts ill understood;/Claiming in all my harvests rightful share/. . . Thou hast been faithful to my highest need;/And I, thy debtor, ever, evermore,/Shall

Macaulay, Coleridge, Bunyan. "The lower shelves of the bookcase," says Hadfield, "were for Charles to pick from at will, and Walter [his father] supplied them with every possible subject, all of which Charles read and, with the phenomenal memory he inherited from his father, remembered."⁶

Williams received his education at the St. Albans Grammar School and attended University College, London, working towards an arts degree.

never feel the grateful burden sore./Yet most I thank thee, not for any deed,/But for the sense thy living self did breed/That fatherhood is at the great world's core" (George Mac Donald [sic], Poems [London, 1857], p. iii). MacDonald showed his poetry to his father (see, for example, Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 207), as did Charles Williams--"the highest proof of youthful confidence," Hadfield states (An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 20). Cf. Williams' poem to his father in his early collection of verse, Divorce, published in 1920, when Williams was, coincidentally, also thirty-three; the volume is addressed to his father, as is the title poem, which reads in part: "Each to his teachers,--nor of mine,/Though long and lofty be the line,/ Shall any, sir, be set/More high in this poor heart than you/Who taught me all the good I knew/Ere Love and I were met:/ . . . O if in holier hours I meet/Your happier head in Sarras' street,/When our blind years are done,/What song remains shall run to pay/Its duty, sir, from me that day,/Your pupil and your son." In the poem, Williams speaks of the "great divorce"--the separation of flesh and spirit--as beginning in his father. It will be remembered that one of C. S. Lewis' fantasies, written in Oxford during the time he knew Williams there, and in which MacDonald is a main character, is entitled The Great Divorce. It is not the purpose of this study to trace the influence of Williams upon Lewis, but it would seem useful to mention the above coincidence, since the writer has not seen it mentioned in the literature on Williams and Lewis.

⁶Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 14. Cf. C. S. Lewis' remark on Williams' memory (preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. xi): "Malory, Shakespeare, Milton, Johnson, Scott, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Patmore, and Chesterton he seemed to have at his fingers' ends. Before he came [to Oxford] I had passed for our best conduit of quotations: but he easily outstripped me." T. S. Eliot (introduction to All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams [New York, 1948], p. xii) notes that "when it was pertinent to the matter in hand, he could declaim long quotations from one or another of his favourite poets, for his memory for poetry was prodigious and accurate."

His university career was broken off for financial reasons, and at the age of twenty-one, he joined the editorial staff of the Oxford University Press, with which he remained until his death thirty-three years later.⁷ He continued his education through evening classes at the Working Men's College in London. In 1943 he received an honorary M. A. degree from Oxford University; the Press had moved to Oxford for the duration of the war, and Williams, while carrying out his editorial duties, also became a lecturer and private tutor in the university.⁸ Nevertheless, "he is largely a self-educated man labouring under an almost oriental richness of imagination," C. S. Lewis wrote in 1941.⁹ After Williams' death, he referred to this again:

He was also, though not a professional scholar, one of the best informed of us all [the Inklings] and will always stand in my mind as a cheering proof of how far a man can go with few languages and imperfect schooling. On the ancients and on the early Middle Ages there were one or two present with whom he could not compete, nor had he an exact knowledge of any of the great philosophers: but in history, theology, legend, comparative religion, and (above all) English literature from Shakespeare down, his knowledge was surprising. Malory, Shakespeare,

⁷Williams joined the Press on June 9, 1908, and died in Oxford on May 15, 1945 (information in a letter to the author from R. C. Goffin, assistant publisher at the Oxford University Press, January 11, 1952).

⁸Lewis, preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. ix; and information in a letter to the author from Mrs. Florence S. Williams, March 4, 1952.

⁹Letters, p. 197.

Milton, Johnson, Scott, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Patmore, and Chesterton he seemed to have at his fingers' ends.¹⁰

To this list Dante should be added, since the study of religion and love in this author was one of Williams' central interests.¹¹

The range of Williams' writings, especially his critical and literary essays, would do credit to any university-trained man, and Lewis' initial remarks on Williams' schooling seem misapplied when one comes upon them after becoming familiar with Williams' work.¹²

Among these are seven volumes of poetry, including the two volumes on Arthurian themes, already mentioned, three volumes of poetry criticism, more than a dozen plays (poetic dramas),¹³ seven biographies, several volumes of theology, a variety of works edited and/or anthologized, and

¹⁰Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. xi. Williams himself held a dim view of academic snobbism. Cf. his portrait of Damaris, a young woman preparing her doctoral thesis, arranging her facts in neat pigeonholes, without feeling or understanding: "It wasn't her fault; it was the fault of her time, her culture, her education--the pseudo-knowledge that affected all the learned, the pseudo-scepticism that infected all the unlearned, in an age of pretence, and she was only pretending as everybody else did in this lost and imbecile century" (The Place of the Lion, ch. vi).

¹¹See, in particular, his The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante (first published in 1943), and "Religion and Love in Dante: The Theology of Romantic Love" (first published in 1941, and reprinted in Nottingham Mediaeval Studies, ed. Lewis Thorpe, IX [1965; Dante Centenary Number], 55-70).

¹²A bibliography of Williams' major works, together with a selection of his minor writings, is given in Appendix III.

¹³One of these, Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury, was produced at the Canterbury Festival in 1936, the year succeeding the production of Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral. It was from this time that Eliot's own acquaintance with Williams grew stronger (see Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams, p. x). Auden considers Williams' play superior in some respects to Murder in the Cathedral (W. H. Auden, "By the Grace of God and Henry Tudor, Archbishop," Holiday, August 1967, pp. 99-100 and 102).

innumerable articles and reviews; in addition, of course, to the seven novels which are the concern of this study. Williams began to write novels when he was nearly forty; his writings prior to that time were limited mainly to poetry, four volumes of which were published between 1912, the year his first published volume appeared, and 1924. The seven novels were written and published over a span of twenty years, as shown below. The last novel, All Hallows' Eve, appeared a few months before Williams' death.¹⁴

(1925	<u>Shadows of Ecstasy</u> written)	¹⁵
1930	<u>War in Heaven</u> published	
1931	<u>Many Dimensions</u> published	
1931	<u>The Place of the Lion</u> published	
1932	<u>The Greater Trumps</u> published	
1933	<u>Shadows of Ecstasy</u> published	
1937	<u>Descent into Hell</u> published	
1945	<u>All Hallows' Eve</u> published	

In addition to his full-time editorial work and his own writing, Williams began, after his son was born in 1922, to lecture in the evening at the City Literary Institute and the Balham Commercial Institute, and continued to give evening classes for many years;¹⁶ like MacDonald, he was under great economic pressure.

How, with his exacting daily work in a publisher's office, with his evening lectures and with his economic anxieties, he managed to write so much and so well as he did, remains incomprehensible to me [writes T. S. Eliot]. Some of his books--such as his Life of Henry VII--were frankly pot-boilers; but he always boiled an honest pot. And . . .

¹⁴Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxx.

¹⁵Mary McDermott Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966), p. 4. Hadfield mentions that three were written and one published by 1930 (An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 76).

¹⁶See Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xix; Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xii; and the obituary notice on Williams (written by Eliot) in the London Times, May 17, 1945, p. 7.

much of his work, especially for the theatre, was done without expectation of adequate remuneration and often without expectation of payment at all. . . . Yet he left behind him a considerable number of books which should endure, because there is nothing else that is like them or could take their place.¹⁷

Williams was, to all accounts, an absorbing lecturer, as was MacDonald, and, in Eliot's words, aroused in his pupils "not only a warm devotion to himself, but an excited interest in the literature to which he introduced them."¹⁸ C. S. Lewis wrote admiringly of his ability in this field:

"On Monday, Charles Williams lectured, nominally on Comus but really on Chastity. Simply as criticism it was superb . . . But it was more important still as a sermon. It was a beautiful sight to see a whole roomful of modern young men and women sitting in that absolute silence which can not be faked, very puzzled, but spell-bound."¹⁹

¹⁷Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁸Ibid., p. xii.

¹⁹Letters, p. 177. In another letter (pp. 196-197), he reverts to this subject: "'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. . . . I have seen his impress on the Milton papers when I examined. . . . [Lewis quotes an excerpt from one of these.] (Compare that with the sort of bilge you and I were proud to write in Schools).'" On the Oxford lecturing, George Every has written: "Charles Williams ceased to be seer in the congregation or in a gathering of ardent souls eager for adult education . . . When he met a similar ardour armed with the weapons of information, candid criticism must have sharpened the weapons of communication. This he did find in Oxford, not only among his contemporaries, but among some of the students who tramped through any amount of wind and weather to listen to an interpretation of Comus" ("Charles Williams: II. The City and the Substitutions," Theology, LI [April 1948], 148). Cf. also Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxii: "What his pupils learned from him as a general habit of mind, apart from the profit they derived from his wisdom and his knowledge in particular instances,

Williams lived out his life working, writing, and lecturing chiefly in London, the locale, almost exclusively, of his novels.

According to Ridler, he had, if not fame, at least a share of recognition in the thirties.²⁰ Of his friendships with well-known literary

figures, such as Lewis and Tolkien, a good deal has already been said.

Dorothy Sayers was also a friend.²¹ Auden has written admiring personal reminiscences.²² The warmth of Eliot's twenty-year friendship with

was a vigilance in the use of words, and about commonly accepted opinions, which made them sharply sensitive to cant in all its forms. No one, taught by him, could ever again use the word mystical as though it meant mysterious . . . or use the word love when they merely meant like, without at least an inward plea to the Truth for forgiveness." Cf., finally, Eliot's obituary notice on Williams, op. cit., p. 7: "In this profession [lecturing] also he excelled: his torrential enthusiasm, his unusual gift for extended quotation, the power and the humility of his personality and his radiation of goodness, both won the hearts of his pupils and inspired in them a love for the literature of which he spoke." A vivid and interesting memoir on Williams as a teacher and lecturer, by one of his students at Oxford, may be found in John Wain, Sprightly Running: Part of an Autobiography (London, 1962), pp. 147-152.

²⁰Introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxviii.

²¹Ibid. Note also that she contributed an essay to Essays Presented to Charles Williams (" . . . And Telling You A Story": A Note on The Divine Comedy").

²²See W. H. Auden, "Charles Williams: A Review Article," The Christian Century, May 2, 1956, pp. 552-554. It is interesting that, although, according to Ridler (introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxvii), Williams was practically unknown to Auden's generation, Auden, in the voluminous notes to the original version of New Year Letter (London, 1941, p. 154), quotes from Williams, adding: "For this quotation and for the source of many ideas in the poem v. Charles Williams, The Descent of the Dove." Auden's notes, unnecessary to the poem though fascinating, in Williams' view (review of New Year Letter, in The Dublin Review, CCIX, 418 [July 1941], 100), are no longer included in editions of the poem. Cf. also Auden's use of Williams' doctrines of co-inherence, the City, and the Way of Affirmation (discussed in the following chapter) in For the Time Being (1941-1942).

Williams is attested to in Eliot's introduction to the American edition of All Hallows' Eve, as well as in the obituary notice on Williams which he wrote for the London Times.²³ Williams' friendship with C. S. Lewis was, as already discussed, a close one.

Charles Williams died, suddenly, on May 15, 1945 in Oxford, and is buried there in St. Cross churchyard.

²³See also T. S. Eliot, "The Significance of Charles Williams," The Listener, 19 December 1946, pp. 894-895; and Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxviii: "he [Eliot] saw Williams's importance as being, above all, in his supernatural insight, for an age which has largely lost that power. I take this opinion from a memorial broadcast which Eliot gave in 1946, in which he said also: 'Williams . . . seemed to me to approximate, more nearly than any man I have ever known familiarly, to the saint.'" Eliot's firm, Faber and Faber, published Williams' last two novels, Descent into Hell and All Hallows' Eve. Some work has been done on the possible mutual influence of Williams and Eliot. Of this Eliot has said (in a letter to David W. Evans, author of an article entitled "T. S. Eliot, Charles Williams and the Sense of the Occult" [Accent, Spring 1954, pp. 148-155]): "It seems to me that your analysis of the literary relations between myself and Charles Williams is very sensible and . . . quite sound. It is quite possible that there were influences in both directions, as well as affinities. For instance, the passage from Shelley is one that has stuck in my mind ever since I first read Prometheus Unbound at the age of 15, and I was startled to find Williams making use of it in Descent into Hell. But at the same time, it is quite likely that if he had not quoted it in his novel, I should never have thought of using it in 'The Cocktail Party.' Certainly I was as publisher partly responsible for Descent into Hell, and read it both in manuscript and proof" (letter quoted in "Autograph Letters, Manuscripts, Documents," Catalogue 54 [1970?], of items offered for sale by Kenneth W. Rendell, Inc., 62 Bristol Road, Somerville, Mass., p. 9; one of three letters dated between August 20, 1953 and November 30, 1955).

Chapter VI. Doctrinal Themes in Williams' Novels

. . . in every writer who possesses intensity of imagination, the imagination is closely bound up with his sense of values--that is to say, ultimately with his notion of the meaning and purpose of human existence.¹

. . . the capacity for recognising the realities to which Williams was trying to draw our attention, is numbed and almost atrophied in the world in which we live today. If this capacity is latent in you, Williams is the writer to bring it to consciousness.²

Reference has already been made to the range of Williams' writings. R. J. Reilly has pointed out that at present there is no consensus as to whether Williams should be regarded primarily as a novelist, a poet, a playwright, a literary critic, or a theologian.³ Eliot, who stated that he knew of no writer who was "more wholly the same man in his life and in his writings," believed that this variety arose from the fact that what Williams had to say was "beyond the resources of language, to say once for all through any one medium of expression."⁴

What it is, essentially, that he had to say, comes near to defying definition. It was not simply a philosophy, a theology, or a set of ideas: it was primarily something imaginative. . . . For him there was no frontier

¹Colin Wilson, The Strength to Dream: Literature and the Imagination (London, 1962), p. 9.

²Eliot, "The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 895.

³Romantic Religion: A Study of Barfield, Lewis, Williams, and Tolkien, p. 151: "Unfortunately for the literary historian, Williams's talent splashes untidily into all these areas."

⁴Introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xi.

between the material and the spiritual world. . . . To him the supernatural was perfectly natural, and the natural was also supernatural. And this peculiarity gave him that profound insight into Good and Evil, into the heights of Heaven and the depths of Hell, which provides both the immediate thrill, and the permanent message of his novels.⁵

Eliot also wrote of Williams that "he was almost alone in his generation, for his peculiar understanding of mystical experience and for a sometimes terrifying insight into good and evil"⁶--words that are equally descriptive of MacDonald.

Williams' doctrinal themes, or world-view, form the central unifying core of all his writings. He worked these out in ever greater detail over the years as he experimented with different forms. His Arthurian poems, for instance, recount the rise, flourishing, and fall of Logres (Arthurian England, but largely a spiritual kingdom) in terms of the ways in which certain universal laws were at first obeyed and then broken. Similarly, his novels show these same laws at work in the lives of ordinary contemporary men and women, and the ways in which they are educated to know them; in this case, the laws are seen to govern and include what is generally referred to as the supernatural. As one continues to read Williams, it becomes evident that, in his view, there is nothing that cannot be explained or interpreted in terms of these universal principles. His theological writings deal with them directly; his fiction simply clothes them in a variety of imaginative

⁵Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv. These ideas are expanded on in Eliot, "The Significance of Charles Williams."

⁶London Times, May 17, 1945, p. 7.

forms. The great virtue of his novels is that the doctrine informs, but does not overwhelm the vessel. As C. S. Lewis has pointed out, they "present, under the form of exciting fantasy, some of the most important things Williams had to say."⁷ Indeed, the novels are probably the best introduction to Williams, and certainly are indispensable to an understanding of his poetry, since they spell out tenets which, in the poetry, are couched in terms that, if one does not have the key, are not always, or not immediately, intelligible.

All the principles derive from the root principle that the universe is an organic interacting whole, governed and guided by an omnipotent intelligence. All created beings are imagined as being, in the old phrase, members of one another, interdependent and living from and by others, whether they in fact do or do not recognize that this is so. Williams calls this concept co-inherence,⁸ and its configuration, which is that of a living whole composed of many single living parts (the "sense of many relationships between men and women woven into a [physical and spiritual] unity"), the City.⁹ To the

⁷Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vii.

⁸See, for example, Charles Williams, "The Way of Exchange," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 150. Note that his Descent of the Dove is dedicated to "The Companions of the Co-inherence."

⁹Quotation from Charles Williams, "The Image of the City in English Verse," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 92. The City "can comprehend all human social groupings, whether large or small" (John Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams [London, 1955], p. 24). Cf. Williams' statement in his review of Education and Social Change, by Fred Clarke (Time and Tide, 23 March 1940, p. 320): "Professor Clarke speaks of society 'cohering'; I should prefer the extra syllable, because it accentuates the utter dependence of ourselves on each other in our Lord. This fact (outside of Christendom) is apt to become totalitarianism. But within Christendom it is Authority. We not only ought to live for others; we do live from others, pre-natally and always. It is a natural and arch-natural fact. It is both religion and law, love and justice."

degree that the City's citizens choose to interact with love--and free choice of the members is itself a primary characteristic of the City--by so much is it in harmony with itself;¹⁰ but the actions of those who deny its laws cannot eliminate or overturn them. As in MacDonald, each choice and action has its effect on, and evokes a response from, the living whole which is the City.

Outgoing love is its coin of exchange, and its chief injunction is for its inhabitants to bear each other's burdens. In Williams' view, "mental burdens can be carried as well as physical; and even physical more than we know."¹¹ This injunction may be translated into the twin doctrines of free exchange and substitution, the concept of helping others through freely offered self-sacrifice (of which Christ is the highest example),¹² and of being helped in one's own moment of need. Thus, Pauline, in Descent into Hell, takes on herself the burden of her ancestor's fear as he is brought to the martyr's stake, and is relieved of her own fear of meeting her doppelgänger when Stanhope, the poet, takes that on himself. Similarly, Lester, in All Hallows' Eve, deflects the pain of a magic spell from its intended victim, Betty, and, in enduring the onslaught herself, during which it seems

¹⁰Cf. Charles Williams, "Anthropotokos," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 113: "Hostility begins to exist, surely, whenever and wherever we forget that we are nourished by, that we live from--whomever; when we think that we can choose by whom we shall be nourished."

¹¹Charles Williams, "The Redeemed City," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 108.

¹²Cf. Williams, "The Way of Exchange," p. 152: "The doctrine of the Christian Church has declared that the mystery of the Christian religion is a doctrine of co-inherence and substitution."

to her that she is stretched upon a cross, saves her.

Substitution and exchange, like all the harmonious actions of the City, spring from free choice. Exchange includes the exchange of pardon, or the renewal of love.¹³ Lester's sacrifice, for example, is in part an expression of gratitude at receiving forgiveness of Betty for once having stood by and not helped her when she might have. Williams called the doctrine of reconciliation, or pardon given and received, by the name of largesse.¹⁴

The City can be regarded in an earthly or temporal sense, as including all men, living and dead, i.e., interpenetrating all times, which are coexistent in the City, as shown by the example from Descent into Hell cited above. Lester, also, is a spirit wandering about in a shadowy London that interpenetrates the tangible London, on her progress towards release into a higher state. In Williams' thinking, the City also has a heavenly counterpart, structured in the co-inherent relationship of man with God, and here also the doctrines of exchange, substitution, pardon, and largesse function.

What is the characteristic of any City?
Exchange between citizens. . . . What
is the fundamental fact of men in their
natural lives? The necessity of exchange.
What is the highest level of Christian dogma?

¹³See, in this connection, Charles Williams, review of a symposium on "War and Christian Ethics" (1940), excerpted in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 145.

¹⁴See Charles Williams, "The Doctrine of Largesse," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 141: "It is easier often to forgive than to be forgiven; yet it is fatal to be willing to be forgiven by God and to be reluctant to be forgiven by men. To forgive and to be forgiven are the two points of holy magnificence and holy modesty; round these two centres the whole doctrine of largesse revolves."

Exchange between men and God, by virtue of
the union of man and God in the single
Person, who is, by virtue again of that
Manhood, itself the City, the foundation
and the enclosure.¹⁵

In the City in the temporal sense, there are two Ways, as Williams terms them, which, if followed properly, can lead to God (the spiritual or heavenly City). The first is the Way of Rejection of Images, i.e., in which one seeks to know God by enduring not only physical hardships, but mental and spiritual ones as well,¹⁶ and by "detaching the soul from love of all things that are not God--the things of the created world."¹⁷ It is, in its purest manifestation, the way of the religious mystic. The other is the Way of Affirmation of Images, i.e., of concern with the nature of things in God, as they appear on earth. The Way of Affirmation recognizes that God is "immanent as well as transcendent . . . everything in the created world is also an imperfect image of Him," and therefore accepts "in love . . . all things, not for their own sake, but as images of the Divine"; this course is no less difficult than the Way of Rejection, since sooner or later it must entail "the affirmation of the images of suffering and loss, along with the others."¹⁸

¹⁵Williams, "Anthropotokos," p. 112.

¹⁶Charles Williams, "The Church Looks Forward," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 155.

¹⁷Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams, p. 15.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 15 and 16. Williams often used the phrase "This also is Thou, neither is this Thou" to express the two Ways. C. S. Lewis states that he may have found it in St. Augustine (C. S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life [Cambridge, 1967], p. 134). Cf. War in Heaven, ch. xvii: "as he faced his enemies, he felt the interior loss which had attacked him at other stages of his pilgrimage grow into a final overwhelming desolation. He said to himself again, as he so often said, 'This also is Thou,' for desolation as well as abundance was but a means of knowing That which was All."

Neither way exists entirely without the other. "The most remote hermit generally has to attend occasionally to his own meal, however frugal. The most overworked doctor has to say the Lord's Prayer with its clauses concerning God in Himself."¹⁹ Nevertheless, each man chooses one main Way. In Williams' novels, plays, and poetry, this choice is dealt with repeatedly. Of the "good" characters, i.e., those who accept, or give willing obedience to, the laws of the City, either instinctively or through the subtle process of spiritual education which they undergo in the course of the story, most are followers of the Way of Affirmation; a few, such as Richardson, in The Place of the Lion, choose the other, symbolized (in his case) by his ultimately disappearing into the archetypal Flame.

The Ways can, however, be warped or perverted by those who deny the laws of the City. It is possible to love images inordinately for their own sake, rather than for God in them, and possible also to condemn or despise them inordinately. Thus, Simon, the magician in All Hallows' Eve, by seeking dominion over the temporal and spiritual world, is an example of the former. Nigel Considine, in Shadows of Ecstasy, is a perversion of the Way of Rejection, in that he seeks, by turning inward all the energies and emotion normally directed to other people and external pursuits, to conquer his own mortality and achieve godhead. The transmutation of energy which should be given outward in love, compassion, or even suffering, is drawn into himself. Both Simon and Considine, like all of Williams' villains, are devourers and seekers

¹⁹Williams, "The Church Looks Forward," p. 155.

after power. The main sin against the City, in Williams' view, is denial of one's inherence and dependence on it, the sin of pride and self-glorification; there is, moreover, a strong vein of irony underlying the fierce (and ultimately hopeless) struggle which the deniers put up against the City.

Although Williams does not put more value on one Way than on the other, he deals in more detail with the Way of Affirmation, which is that of the poet²⁰ and the lover especially, and, particularly, with the implications of the most important experience it offers, that of falling in love. One critic regards Williams' theory of romantic love as the mainspring of his work; to fall in love, in Williams' view, is a religious experience, for the beloved is at that moment "an image of the divine perfection," and every lover is "in some degree, whether consciously or not, a religious mystic."²¹ C. S. Lewis speaks of Williams as being, inter alia, a romantic theologian in the sense Williams gave to this term: "not . . . one who is romantic about theology but one who is theological about romance, one who considers the theological implications of those experiences which are called romantic." Indeed, in Lewis' opinion, "the belief that the most serious and ecstatic experiences of human love or of imaginative literature have such theological implications, and that they can be healthy and fruitful only if

²⁰The figure of the bard Taliessin in Williams' Arthurian poems is a prime example.

²¹Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams, pp. 20 and 21. For Williams' most complete discussion of the Beatrician vision, see The Figure of Beatrice and "Religion and Love in Dante: The Theology of Romantic Love," op. cit.

the implications are diligently thought out and severely lived, is the root principle of all his work."²²

In summary, the City symbolizes the most desirable state of affairs in the individual's mind and soul, among men, and between men and God: ordered, or hierarchical, interdependence. Its basic nature is harmony or love; its basic maxim is that "no man lives to himself or indeed from himself."²³ The manifestations of this love are expressed in the practice of exchange, substitution, and largesse, in recognition of interdependence. The essence of exchange and substitution is to bear one another's burdens; that of largesse, to be generous and to exchange pardon. All generations co-inhere simultaneously in the City, and the equilibrium of its interchange depends upon the degree to which its members freely choose to observe its laws. Within the life of the City, there are two ways to God, implied in the maxim, "This also is Thou, neither is this Thou": the affirmation or the rejection of earthly images, or, in terms of Williams' use of two cards in the Tarot deck (in The Greater Trumps), the way of the Lovers and that of the Hermit. Each way entails sacrifices: it is as difficult to accept unpleasant images as it is to reject pleasant ones. Romantic love is the love inspired by the vision of God in a human being, an earthly image. When the lover enters upon the Way of Affirmation, all images become meaningful because of the first vision.²⁴

²²Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vi.

²³Williams, "The Redeemed City," p. 104.

²⁴For a discussion of Williams' conception of romantic love, see, especially, Mary McDermott Shideler, The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966); Reilly, op. cit., pp. 158-189; and Elizabeth Wright, "Theology in the Novels of Charles Williams," Stanford University Honors Essays in Humanities, VI (1962), 15-59.

Several critics have pointed out that much of Williams' doctrine is what might be called old wine in new bottles. Dorothy Sayers, for instance, described it as traditional and perennial, but that "his apprehension and presentation of it was so individual as . . . to disconcert, perplex, or even antagonize those on whom it did not . . . break as a sudden light."²⁵ Cavaliero also remarked on Williams' originality in his approach to theology:

his writings nowhere reflect a party spirit: indeed they are so totally free from any taint of theological jargon that they appear to the nervously orthodox to smack of heresy. He taught no new doctrines, though he may have stressed some which have been neglected for years: but the received doctrines gain fresh expression at his hands.²⁶

An anonymous critic has stated that "Williams' twin ideas of co-inherence and substitution are in essence an explanation and a restatement of the two doctrines of Incarnation and Atonement."²⁷ Elizabeth Wright, however, points out, with regard to Williams' concept of substitution in emotional or physical terms, that there is no evident outside source.²⁸

It is not the concern of this study to investigate the degree of Williams' orthodoxy, or even the extent to which he gave it new form. It is, however, useful to be aware of the general source of his doctrine.

²⁵Dorothy Sayers, "Charles Williams," Time and Tide, 2 December 1950, p. 1220.

²⁶Glen Cavaliero, "The Way of Affirmation: A Study of the Writings of Charles Williams," Church Quarterly Review, CLVII, 322 (January-March 1956), 27. See also Fuller, op. cit., p. 219.

²⁷"The Philosopher-Poet," The Times Literary Supplement, February 6, 1959, p. 71.

²⁸Wright, op. cit., 49.

From what has gone before, it can easily be seen that Williams also has a strong Miltonic substructure; his analytical criticism of Paradise Lost echoes the substance of his novels.²⁹ In Milton, the universe is an ordered hierarchy of which God is the source and apex; in it the concept of superior and subordinate has nothing of the pejorative, but simply reflects degrees of spiritual excellence; among the orders there is a grave and dignified acknowledgment of obedience due those "above" and courtesy to those "below," and the natural harmony of the hierarchy consists in the exchange of love, courtesy, and chosen obedience, which is true freedom.³⁰ A member of the hierarchy may choose not to obey, and to insist on union with himself rather than to acknowledge derivation from and rejoice in union with his creator, through obedience to Him (as Milton's Satan insists).

Paradise Lost . . . is chiefly concerned with the choice between these two states of being, with the temptations which provoke men and women to that sense of "injured merit", as Eve and Satan are provoked, and with the terrible result of indulging that sense.³¹

If the self-worshiper insists on severing himself from his unrecognized

²⁹See, especially, "The New Milton" (1937) and Williams' preface to the 1940 Oxford World's Classics edition of Milton's poems, both reprinted in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, pp. 19-36. C. S. Lewis' tribute to Williams' contribution to Milton criticism has already been mentioned.

³⁰Cf. Williams, All Hallows' Eve, ch. vii: "They had never exchanged that joyous smile of equality which marks all happy human or celestial government . . . The hierarchy of the abyss does not know anything of equality"; and ch. x: "In her very duty the doctrine of exchange held true, hierarchical and republican."

³¹Williams, preface to Oxford World's Classics edition of Milton's English poems, op. cit., p. 32.

origin, the hierarchy will let him do so; to cut oneself off voluntarily from joy through pride is inevitably hell, and therefore its own punishment. But the hierarchy will not be diminished, nor its serenity disturbed; its joyous laughter will continue.

. . . [Milton] thought pride, egotism, and a proper sense of one's own rights the greatest of all temptations; he was, no doubt, like most people, subject to it. And he thought it led straight to inaccuracy and malice, and finally to idiocy and hell.³²

According to Williams, the two states of being which Paradise Lost studies, in contrast and conflict,

are not only mythological; they are human and contemporary, and thus the poem has a great deal of interest for us. The overthrow of the rebel angels is the overthrow, spiritually, of all in whom that deriving and nourishing Love is dead.³³

Similarly, in Williams' novels, those who obey the laws of the spiritual order to which all men and women belong and who exchange love, courtesy, and forgiveness find joy in obedience to these laws, but the choice between obedience or defiance is left strictly to the individual. Either choice requires an act of the will—to be happy in self-giving, or to be miserably isolated in the hell of self-adoration.³⁴ Chloe, the heroine of Many Dimensions, actively chooses

³²Ibid., p. 31.

³³Ibid., p. 32.

³⁴Cf. Williams, "The Redeemed City," p. 105: "Our Lord expressly reserved to Himself any exclusion from the City. . . . He called that exclusion hell." And "The Way of Exchange," p. 153: "If we insist on it, we can, in His final judgement, be separated. That is hell. But only our selves can put us there."

to submit her will to that of the Stone from the crown of Solomon, in which the Tetragrammaton is written; she consecrates herself to it and is ultimately the vessel whereby all its Types are gathered into it and returned to their divine source. She does this willingly, although her death must result. The spiritual interpretation is clear: only by giving oneself up to the good does one come fully into possession of oneself. In Descent into Hell, on the other hand, Wentworth's unjustified sense of injured merit, like the Miltonic Satan's, draws him down into self-isolation and hell. Like Anodos in MacDonald's Phantastes, he has the power to release himself from his self-imposed prison at any time, but, unlike Anodos, he refuses to do so.

Such, in brief, is the doctrinal framework on which Williams' novels are built, each dealing with the spiritual journey, either ascending or descending. The protagonists are modern Everymen, living and making their choices in the workaday world. In Williams, as in MacDonald, a strong sense of the necessity of making the choice is projected; the journey must be undertaken.

Chapter VII. The Effect of Doctrinal Content on
Narrative Structure and Characterization
in Williams' Novels

"I'm with you on the main issue--that art can teach (and much great art deliberately sets out to do so) without at all ceasing to be art. . . . To me therefore Wells and Thackeray are instances that obscure the issue. It must be fought on books where the doctrine is as good on its own merits as the art--e.g., Bunyan, Chesterton . . . Tolstoi, Charles Williams, Virgil."¹

It has been pointed out several times in the course of this study that Williams, like MacDonald, was chiefly concerned with the idea of "getting home." In light of the doctrinal discussion in the previous chapter, it is evident that, in Williams, this theme is identical with the restoration of the individual to harmony with the City, the organic spiritual order. In essence, the main concern of these novels is not different from the intention underlying the Dialogue of the Body and Soul, Everyman, or Pilgrim's Progress. In W. R. Irwin's phrase, they are "romances dedicated to the propagation of the faith."²

While the novels are concerned with the individual's struggle within himself to repair the rift between flesh and spirit, as well as with the question of defiance of spiritual law, they are also (with the exception of Descent into Hell) concerned with these attitudes in their collective aspect, embodied in the struggle between the City's

¹Lewis, Letters, p. 222.

²"Christian Doctrine and the Tactics of Romance: The Case of Charles Williams," in Shadows of Imagination, ed. Mark R. Hillegas, p. 139.

deniers and its advocates, the former seeking to obtain temporal and/or spiritual power, and the latter resisting and overcoming the onslaught. This struggle provides a major part of the excitement of the novels, although there is never any serious suggestion of a possibility that the divine order can be destroyed.³ Each novel is a reenactment of the original war in heaven (the City), seen from the Miltonic point of view.

The individual spiritual journey is tied in with the cosmic struggle; not only does a character's choice concerning his individual path automatically align him on one side or the other of the larger battle forces, but his awakening spiritual comprehension prompts him to actions which affect the course of the battle. When, for example, Lester (in All Hallows' Eve) offers herself as a sacrifice to Simon's spell, she does so in order to atone for a past wrong to the spell's intended victim, thereby achieving another step on her own journey; but her action also defeats part of the demonic Simon's master plan. Doctrine and narrative are inseparable elements in Williams' novels.

The pattern of the novels follows a recurrent configuration. On the cosmic level, a rift in the harmony of the City begins to appear; the opposing moral factions marshal themselves; the tide of battle swings back and forth, as first one side, and then the other, scores a victory; the rhythm of these skirmishes grows tenser and culminates in a final heightened contest-episode in which the advocates

³As Irwin has pointed out (*ibid.*, p. 140), there is no Manicheanism in Williams. Auden makes the same point ("Charles Williams: A Review Article," p. 553).

of the City are triumphant, not without cost to themselves; and peace is restored, at least for a time. At the level of the individual characters, the novels present a reenactment and examination, in modern terms, of the process of spiritual self-discovery, ending in salvation or self-imposed damnation. Within the story frame, this process begins with a group of ordinary men and women being brought to realize and accept the fact that the supernatural has irrupted into their lives. In the earlier novels especially, the marvellous takes the form of a magical object or objects with Christian associations: the Graal (War in Heaven), the jewel from Solomon's crown, marked with the Tetragrammaton (Many Dimensions), and the archetype Tarot cards and dancing figurines which are a microcosmic representation of the cosmic dance and whose motions are centered in the divine intelligence (The Greater Trumps). In Shadows of Ecstasy (the first novel written), the characters are confronted with the reality of a man who has gone part way towards achieving physical immortality; in All Hallows' Eve (the last novel), with a magician who has already partly achieved temporal and spiritual dominion over the world. Awakened to the realness of things which lie beyond tangible reality, they begin to learn what the nature of the City is, and how its laws operate. As with MacDonald's Anodos and Vane, the characters are thrust into a spiritual country which they must explore. But whereas MacDonald concentrates on the upward spiritual development of one prototypical soul, Williams explores a variety of spiritual narratives, ranging from that of the near-saint, such as Chloe in Many Dimensions, through those who have made extraordinary progress, such as Anthony, the new Adam, in The Place of the Lion, and Lester, in All Hallows' Eve; and on through the orders of the lesser damned, such as the weak-willed

Evelyn in All Hallows' Eve, to the fully self-damned, e.g., Giles in Many Dimensions or Simon in All Hallows' Eve.

The opposing groups therefore form naturally. Each choice or action of the characters simultaneously advances them along their respective spiritual courses and constitutes a skirmish in the battle between the two groups. The tension incident upon this struggle of spiritual forces is heightened and externalized through Williams' use of the paraphernalia of witchcraft (both black and white) and the marvellous. The climax is reached in a scene of final confrontation, culminating in the victory of the lovers of the City, as, for example, the scene of Simon's defeat in All Hallows' Eve, or of Giles' blasting and imprisonment within the Stone, in Many Dimensions. It is sometimes followed by a scene of consecration or apotheosis, such as that of Prester John's Mass in War in Heaven, or Chloe's willing martyrdom in Many Dimensions. The novels end on a note of catharsis, which marks the end of another campaign in the unremitting war in heaven; but, more importantly, for the characters who have undergone profound spiritual change, it marks the end of a stage on a journey whose final goal will now be kept steadily in sight--as Vane and Anodos developed a longing to return forever to the spiritual country which they came to know in the short but intensively-lived period spent in direct physical contact with it.

A major theme in Williams, as in MacDonald, is that of free choice and willing obedience to the divine order, as has been seen. By focusing attention on several spiritual pilgrims, who progress at different rates, and imagining the infinite variety of ways in which the laws of co-inherence, exchange, and the City might act upon them internally and

externally, Williams was able to create a gallery of spiritual portraits. His characters, though hardly monistic, as Irwin maintains⁴--on the contrary, they "show many subtle variations of personality, many sharply observed vices and virtues of human nature"⁵--are less individual personality studies than illustrations of the ways leading towards (and away from) God; they project Williams' belief that "ultimately every soul is in Satan's camp or God's."⁶ As Eliot points out, Williams "sees the struggle between Good and Evil as carried on, more or less blindly, by men and women who are often only the instruments of higher or lower powers, but who always have the freedom to choose to which powers they will submit themselves"; nevertheless, he continues, they have "a reality, an existence in their own right, which differentiates them from the ordinary puppets of the usual adventure story," and as much of each character's reality is given as is relevant.⁷

Williams' men and women therefore tend to fall into one of three groups: (1) those who undergo profound spiritual change for the better; (2) those whose souls deteriorate and die; and (3) those who are so far along their chosen path when the story begins that they have little further to go. The first is the largest category, and may

⁴"Christian Doctrine and the Tactics of Romance . . .," p. 143.

⁵George Parker Winship, Jr., "This Rough Magic: The Novels of Charles Williams," The Yale Review, XL, 2 (December 1950), 291.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Introduction to All Hallows' Eve, pp. xvi and xvii.

in turn be subdivided into two groups: characters whose spiritual experience within the story leads them to embark on, or strengthens them in the resolve to continue on, either the Way of Affirmation of images, or the Way of Rejection of images. The former includes poets and scholars (e.g., Roger, in Shadows of Ecstasy) and lovers (Nancy and Henry, in The Greater Trumps, and Anthony and Damaris, in The Place of the Lion); the latter, martyrs (Chloe, in Many Dimensions) and the mystically-inclined (Richardson, in The Place of the Lion). The strongest portraits in this category are mainly of women: Chloe, Nancy, Pauline (in Descent into Hell), and Lester (All Hallows' Eve).

The number of characters who follow a downward path (aside from the out-and-out villains) are less numerous, but they occur in every novel, except The Greater Trumps; e.g., Frank Lindsay (Many Dimensions), who attempts to use Solomon's stone in order to pass an examination and ultimately is bribed into actual theft; Foster and Miss Wilmot (The Place of the Lion), whose souls are transformed and whose bodies are literally consumed by the principles of killer strength and serpentine malice they individually worshipped;⁸ Wentworth, the snobbish scholar and self-admirer in Descent into Hell, Williams' most detailed and horrifying study of self-damnation and insanity; and Evelyn (All Hallows' Eve), Lester's weak companion in the spirit world, who commits the same errors in her second chance at life (in purgatory) as in her earthly one.

⁸Cf. the scene of Miss Wilmot's transformation into a snake (The Place of the Lion, ch. xii) with Satan's involuntary transformation into a serpent in Paradise Lost, X, 511-532.

The third of the three main categories mentioned above falls naturally into two subgroups: those who are already supremely wise and good; and those who are so far gone in evil as to be irreclaimable. The former are few in number; two are men (Lord Arglay, the Chief Justice, in Many Dimensions, and Peter Stanhope, the poet-playwright in Descent into Hell)--although the figure of the Archdeacon in War in Heaven might possibly also be included in this group--and two are rather uncanny elderly women, Sybil in The Greater Trumps and Margaret in Descent into Hell. Sybil, in fact, bears a strong resemblance to the archetypal wise woman figure already discussed in connection with MacDonald's work.⁹ She is in harmony with the City, whose laws she has learned to understand, love, and obey; she has a great serenity, which derives from the inner peace and joy of being in loving submission to the City; and she is a wise counsellor, and a savior. It is worthy of note that Williams' very good characters, who are so believably drawn, have not had to resort to any of the paraphernalia of magic in order to achieve an exalted state of spiritual development, whereas his villains, for the most part, achieve their power, which is in reality a state of spiritual degradation, by the use of black magic, necromancy, and the like, which are modes of defying the indestructible

⁹Cf. Williams' remark in his review of a murder mystery by M. J. Freeman ([London] News Chronicle, March 15, 1934, p. 4): "Why are old women so effective when they detect? Because there is nothing so marvellous on this earth as a really intelligent old woman. She is always so terrifyingly right./But she is rare . . ."

City.¹⁰ Their magic invariably turns against them and destroys them; the parabolic meaning is clear. The major villains are all men: Con-
sidine, the aspiring anti-Christ (Shadows of Ecstasy); Gregory Per-
simmons, the devil-worshipper (War in Heaven); Sir Giles Tumulty, the
compassionless experimenter (War in Heaven and Many Dimensions); and
Simon the magician (All Hallows' Eve). The villains with passionate
conviction in their warped missions are somewhat more subtly drawn and
credible than those, such as Tumulty, whose dedication to evil and
cruelty is insufficiently motivated.¹¹

All three of the above types of character are basically, or
are implied to have been originally, ordinary men and women. In
addition to these, there is a small category of supernatural beings
whose main function is to trigger spiritual changes in the ordinary
humans. There are two of these, aside from the false woman-image
which Simon conjures up in All Hallows' Eve: Prester John, conceived
of as the guardian of the Graal (War in Heaven);¹² and Lily Sammile,

¹⁰Cf. Charles Williams, review of Harbour, by Philip MacDonald
([London] News Chronicle, November 17, 1931, p. 4): "Since for all
practical purposes we left off believing in the devil, villainy has
become very difficult. The wicked capitalist, the wicked Bolshevik,
are our pathetic modern efforts to supply a substitute. Crime may
have three kinds of villains (1) the good, (2) the legal, (3) the sinful.
Mr. MacDonald's villains are generally sinful." The third type is, of
course, the most old-fashioned, in literary terms; Williams' own villains
fall into this category.

¹¹Tumulty's characterization is an extremely forced conception,
as is witnessed, in part, by the various strained oaths Williams puts
into his mouth.

¹²Originally an imaginary Christian king of the East made famous
in the west by a forged letter of about 1165 (Roger Sherman Loomis, The
Grail from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol [New York, 1963], p. 219).
In Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival (c 1200-1210), he is the son of
the Grail Bearer, Repanse de Joie.

the incarnation of Lilith (Descent into Hell), the only thoroughly villainous female in the novels, of whom more will be said later.

In each novel some characters are exalted and transformed either naturally or through chastisement. Although all are of interest, there is usually one major personage whose psychological and spiritual development is studied in particular detail and whose actions largely determine the outcome of the conflict between the warring factions. Only once is this pride of place given to a follower of the Way of Rejection (Chloe, Many Dimensions). The others are lovers--of poetry, of other people, of the images in the world around them--and this emphasis probably reflects Williams' own preference for the Way of Affirmation, witnessed especially in his poetry and his studies on the theology of love and the Beatrician vision.

In summary, the recurrent plot pattern and balanced character groupings, which, in Winship's phrase, evince a firm sense of design,¹³ are dictated by Williams' religious and ethical world-view. They were the best means he could develop, practicing within the novel form, of giving shape to the process which he believed to be eternal and constantly reenacted: the temptation, fall, and redemption of man. Williams' novels are sometimes referred to loosely as allegories, or fantasies for allegorical purposes.¹⁴ This, however, is inaccurate. There is no question that allegory as a form has been extensively,

¹³George P. Winship, Jr., "The Novels of Charles Williams," in Shadows of Imagination, ed. Mark R. Hillegas, p. 113.

¹⁴See, for instance, Antony Borrow, "The Affirmation of Images: An Examination of the Novels of Charles Williams," Nine (Summer/Autumn 1952), 325.

though not exclusively, used as an instrument for teaching. It does not follow that every didactic fantasy is therefore an allegory. The chief characteristics of allegory--(1) the acting out, by personifications either of human personality traits or abstract qualities and ideas, of a straightforward moral lesson, in a predominantly intellectual manner, for the edification of a prototypical human character, and (2) a neat, immediately apprehensible one-to-one relationship between story element and meaning--are absent from MacDonald and Williams both.

C. S. Lewis' remark about MacDonald's art hovering between allegory and mythopoesism is of relevance here, not only in respect to MacDonald, but to Williams as well. For, although their characters approach the prototypical at times, sufficiently perhaps to recall the term allegorical, they are not reducible to abstractions, nor is the story merely a figurative embodiment of the thoughts, deeds, and desires of men.¹⁵

The novels are, rather, symbolical or sacramentalist in approach (in C. S. Lewis' understanding of ~~these~~ terms, already discussed), that is, they attempt to show that the tangible world is a copy or "sensible imitation" of the invisible or archetypal spiritual world. This is a major characteristic which Williams' fantasies share with MacDonald's. Both authors strove to convey what, by definition, cannot be fully apprehended intellectually: the higher spiritual reality. Their stories are successful in prefiguring a universe whose main laws have

¹⁵Cf. Anne Ridler's remark vis-à-vis Williams' play Seed of Adam: "This play shows to perfection the myth-making power of Charles Williams's mind, for he has succeeded in making his characters both archetypal and particular" (introduction to "Seed of Adam" and Other Plays, by Charles Williams [London, 1948], p. vii).

made themselves known to man, but whose infinite number of interlocking relationships, of which man knows himself to be only a small unit, can never be compassed by the human mind. It is to this characteristic that Chad Walsh may have been referring when he spoke of the "tender vagueness" and "shimmering ambiguity" in the writing of MacDonald and Williams, and of "a haunting hint that God's ways are always half veiled and that in his dealings with humans we see only the part of the iceberg above the waters of the boundless ocean."¹⁶

Having reviewed the doctrinal themes in Williams' novels, and noted certain aspects of his technique as a novelist in so far as structure, characterization, and general mythopoetic approach are concerned, we may proceed to an examination of Williams as a fantasist.

¹⁶"C. S. Lewis: The Man and the Mystery," p. 11.

Chapter VIII. Williams as a Fantasist: I. Technique

Fantasy is an art of equivalents. It says,
 "Reality is like this--but not literally
 this."¹

It may be conjectured that Williams, having decided to turn to novel-writing as a form more likely to earn a better living for his family's needs, chose the type of novel which he considered would be appealing, entertaining, and therefore, perhaps, popular, and still allow him scope for expressing the doctrinal message that was apparently second nature to him.² The fantasy novel allowed him to achieve both of his objectives, to entertain and to teach. This is not to say, however, that his fantasy is merely a sugar coating for a doctrinal pill. Williams obviously enjoyed working in the fantasy vein; this may have been at least partly due to his early and fairly brief association with the Order of the Golden Dawn, a sect of English Rosicrucians, and his admiration for the writings of A. E. Waite. Before Williams was associated with the order, Yeats was a prominent member, as were Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Alistair Crowley, and Waite, whose works on the Cabala, the Holy Grail legend, and occult subjects Heath-Stubbs believes "may certainly be read as source-books for many of Charles Williams's ideas."³ Ridler has pointed out, for instance, that the influence of the Order's symbolism and ritual can be seen in Williams'

¹Fuller, op. cit., p. 137.

²"I can think of no writer who was more wholly the same man in his life and in his writings" (Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xi).

³Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams, p. 12.

use of the Tarot cards, the angelic hierarchies, and the talisman in his novels, and of Merlin's magical operations in The Region of the Summer Stars (the second of Williams' two volumes of poetry on the Arthurian theme).⁴ Williams' general interest in magic as a human preoccupation is shown in his study Witchcraft, published in 1941, which 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, and with the reaction against it."⁵

Just as the content of Williams' doctrine determined structure, plot movement, and characterization in the novels, it also injected itself into his fantasy motifs, giving them new connotations. This chapter will examine Williams' technique as a fantasist and attempt to analyze in what his particular handling of fantasy consists. Attention will also be given to some of the differences between the earlier and later novels in terms of mood, complexity, and imagery, as well as to the most salient characteristics of style which mark Williams' blend of doctrine and fancy.

⁴Introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxiv. Tindall (Forces in British Literature, 1885-1956, p. 184) makes a passing reference to Williams' association with the Golden Dawn. A brief discussion of the history of the Golden Dawn and of Williams' association with it is given in Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, pp. xxiii-xxvi. See also John Senior, "The Occult in Christian Symbolist Literature," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957, pp. 236-240, for a short discussion and bibliography of works on the Order. A title which may also prove to be of interest in this connection is the as yet unpublished Yeats, the Tarot, and the Golden Dawn, by Kathleen Raine.

⁵Witchcraft (London, 1941), p. 9. The book covers, inter alia, the development of the idea of the devil, the Malleus Maleficarum, and the early witch trials.

It would be useful at this point to give some attention to Williams' understanding of the term supernatural in general, and with respect to its treatment in his novels in particular. He considered it unfortunate that the words natural and supernatural have acquired antithetical, rather than complementary, meanings. Since the Christian religion asserts that so-called natural forces are simply elements in the full range of creation, and that what appears to be disharmony among the parts appears so because of sin, the supernatural, in Williams' view, "must . . . in some sense include the natural."⁶ This assumption is central to Williams' writing, as it is to MacDonald's; the two terms refer to spirit and matter, the division between which Williams regarded as due to "the chosen catastrophe which we call the Fall."⁷ Since the City is Williams' image of microcosmic and macrocosmic harmony--of man with himself, of man with other men, and of men with God--it may also be conceived of as the state in which spirit and matter come closest to repairing this division. The world of Williams' novels is, as has been seen, one in which the struggle to heal this rift is unceasing. It is therefore one in which the super-natural and the natural are shown as interacting parts of a whole; the characters accept, or come to accept, this as basic truth. The manifestations of this super-natural element, which (in its higher sense) is always good, are therefore not considered as "magic" or inexplicable. Thus, for example, it is perfectly natural

⁶Charles Williams, "Natural Goodness," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, pp. 75-76.

⁷Ibid., p. 77.

that the Tetragrammaton-inscribed Stone, in Shadows of Ecstasy, which represents the First Matter and, ultimately, the divine source of creation, should be able to move in time and space, and to retain its original dimensions even after parts of it are broken off, and that it should seem to have weight but not register on a scale. Williams makes a statement on the organic nature of the relationship between visible and invisible, and also works out the logical possibilities as to what would happen if the invisible actually took visible form as such a stone.

From this it can be seen that Williams also exploited the concept of the supernatural in its narrower and more conventional sense--of spooky things impossible under the laws of the natural world as we perceive it--on which to base the excitement of his stories. This kind of supernatural, the preternatural, is premised as happening in the everyday world. To provide this excitement, Williams, like MacDonald, chose his fantasy motifs from a variety of categories, including folktales, Arthurian legend, Platonic tradition, and Christian miracle tradition. One of the largest categories is that of witchcraft and the occult--black magic, as opposed to white. The invocation of spiritual power, in the form of prayer, and through the practice of exchange, substitution, and largesse, which Williams regarded as possible in the real world, are made exciting in the novels by his use of the conventional notion of magic to image such invocation. The magic may be of two kinds, according to the purpose: white (theurgic) and black (goetic). It is, of course, the enemies of the City, whose common delusion is that they are independent of it, who practice black magic, a perversion of the laws of the City, in an effort to destroy it.

Part of Williams' skill as a theological novelist, or as an author of "theological thrillers," as the novels have sometimes been called, and a substantial part of their excitement, stem from his ability to imagine how the City may be affected, or even temporarily breached, but never destroyed, by the actions of its rebellious members. In attacking the organic Whole, they unwittingly destroy themselves, since the City must reject its irrevocably diseased members.

The supernatural in its lower sense therefore only provides the fantastic story devices which image forth the ideas included in Williams' larger conception of the supernatural. It hardly seems necessary to mention that, although Williams worked out the implications of the preternaturals and other narrative accidents of his stories meticulously and with careful logic, he did not intend the reader to take them literally, or that he should be understood to believe in their being possible. It is entirely different within the world of the novels themselves, however, where the supernatural, in both its higher and its lower sense, is premissed as being at work in the everyday world.

In Williams' novels, the underlying concept is that the various aspects of seen and unseen reality--the metaphysical, the magical, or occult, and the commonplace tangible--are in fact organically interacting parts of a multifaceted higher reality. Williams' effectiveness as a fantasist lies in his ability to open out the idea of what is real and possible from its narrowest to its widest sense, in a fully credible manner. In Winship's phrase, "it is a feeling for actuality that gives Williams' novels their strength. His wildest fantasy is a

means of approaching realism."⁸ The novels begin in the everyday world of twentieth-century England; the characters are reasonably sophisticated, and, for the most part, secularly-minded creatures of the time. The ordinariness of the milieu and the characters therefore makes the appearance of the extraordinary all the more effective, especially when it is worked in gradually. There is, for instance, nothing jarring, but a good deal that is exciting, in War in Heaven when the Archdeacon realizes that an old and rather commonplace cup in his church is in fact the legendary Holy Graal. Like the spiritual truths of which it is the symbol, it has lain there unrecognized; when it comes once more into the world, it disturbs and opens out the conception of reality for those whose lives it affects. Once this process has begun, it is irreversible. For better or for worse, the characters cannot lapse into ignorance, but must continue on to greater knowledge, nor is there any implication at the end of the books that the action was only a dream or a temporary upsetting of the normal world.

It will be remembered that C. S. Lewis described the working of MacDonald's mythopoeic art as arousing sensations we have never had before or anticipated having, "as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness," and that it "hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives."⁹ This is the experience

⁸"This Rough Magic . . .," 293.

⁹Preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, pp. 16-17.

which the fantastic journeys of MacDonald's heroes afford to the characters themselves, and by which the reader is intended to be similarly affected; the paraphernalia of fantasy fall away, but the questions which the story's message is intended to awaken in the reader's mind remain. The same is true of Williams' novels. Winship has stated that Williams is not content with a willing suspension of disbelief, but demands the destruction of disbelief.¹⁰ It would be perhaps more accurate to say that Williams requires suspension of disbelief and actively seeks to destroy disbelief.

Williams' success in blending the supernatural (in all senses) with the real (in its normal sense) to create a believable whole lies in a skilful use of (1) ambiguity and (2) detailed physical particularizing and description, each enhancing and counterbalancing the other.

The boundary between the supernatural and the real, within the story, is constantly shifting. As Hadfield has pointed out, the action "moves beyond the material world, and develops from relations to, and beliefs in, a world of spirit and ideas," so that they all eventually "pass . . . through the material bounds of normal life, while maintaining normal life in the plot."¹¹

Williams often uses the occult supernatural unambiguously; for instance, Simon does actually create a homuncula and breathe the illusion of life into it (All Hallows' Eve), and the Stone of Solomon does transport Lord Arglay magically through London (Many Dimensions). There are many instances, however, in which the metaphysical supernatural inter-

¹⁰"The Novels of Charles Williams," p. 113.

¹¹An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 78.

penetrates the purely marvellous, so that event and interpretation are inseparable, and the reader is caught up in the actual and the invisible world simultaneously. A good example of this occurs in The Place of the Lion (ch. xii), when Miss Wilmot is absorbed into the archetype principle she most adores--subtle malice--by physical transformation into a serpent. Williams intended the transformation to be taken literally; the description is detailed and seen through the eyes of a witness.

. . . a dreadful change was coming over her. Her body was writhing into curves and knots where she lay, as if cramps convulsed her. . . . the very colour of her skin was changing; it became blotched and blurred with black and yellow and green . . . The face rounded out till it was perfectly smooth, with no hollows or depressions . . . In and out of her neck and hands another skin was forming . . . For all that lower violence her body did not fall, nor indeed, but for a slight swaying, did it much move. . . the stuff of her dress was rending in places; and . . . he could see that other curiously-toned skin shining behind it. . . . the Domination she had invoked freed itself from the will and the mind and the body that had given it a place . . . No longer a woman but a serpent indeed surged before him . . . there came through the silence a sound as if some slight thing had dropped to the floor, and the Angelic energy was wholly free.

. . . It glided a little forward, and its head turned lowly [sic] from side to side. . . . The subtle eyes gazed at him, without hostility, without friendship, remote and alien.

Williams never indulged in vague descriptions of the marvellous or left the burden of imagination on the reader, a point in which many fantasy writers fail utterly. He had the ability to particularize the marvellous without reducing its impact, so that it became both more real and more wonderful--an ability which he shared with MacDonald.

Williams was adept at blending the magical with the meta-physical to further his allegory. The impact of this technique lies in its maintaining a perfect balance between abstract and tangible as interacting elements. The plausibility of Miss Wilmot's transformation is carefully prepared for, since one of the main assumptions built up and "documented" in The Place of the Lion is that the abstract or ideal can break into the physical world, especially when it is encouraged to do so; the vivid realness of physical detail when the moment of transformation takes place completes the effect. It is in such episodes as these that spiritual and physical events dovetail and carry the action forward, i.e., they blend to show what is occurring inwardly within the soul and externally in the actual world.

In other instances, however, the supernatural and the normal or real are blended in such a way as to create some doubt whether the experience/event described is subjective or actual, whether, that is, we are inside or outside a character's mind. An example is the episode in The Place of the Lion (ch. xi) in which Damaris sees a giant bird of carrion, the Pterodactyl. For her it is a physical reality; she sees, hears, and smells it. But it is called into being by her thoughts; a particularly strong yearning to obtain her doctoral degree passes over her as she labors on a dissertation in which the scholarship has utterly distorted the subject matter. The bird is therefore real and symbolical simultaneously, and both of these aspects are fully developed. Williams gives a vivid description of the creature's physical appearance that leaves no doubt of its existence for Damaris.

There was a terrific beak protruding through the open window into the room, there was the most appalling body she had ever conceived possible; there were two huge flapping wings; there were two horrible red eyes. And there was the smell. . . . It seemed to be perched there, on the window-sill or the pear-tree or something . . . its beak . . . jerked at her, as if the thing were stabbing; then it opened. She had a vision of great teeth . . . Over the skylight above her head she saw something dragged, and knew it for an edge of those wings. There was a noise of scratching . . . And again she saw the beak, thrusting down through the open skylight, stabbing, questing.¹²

The sight of the bird induces in Damaris a vision which results in her conversion. In the vision, the bird's wings close over her, its claws press into her neck, and she is saved only by the arrival of her lover. The vision passes, and the bird is gone, but the effect of the lesson remains. The thoughts which summoned the Pterodactyl into being are dispelled for good, and with them, its physical reality. Williams here uses the marvellous both literally and figuratively, the one constantly flowing into the other. The vividness of physical description, which pins down the marvellous object as an astonishing reality, can be taken as either objective observation of something external to the character or a projection of intense and sudden psychological insight, connected with her spiritual journey, or both. This ambivalence, which is Williams' type of ambiguity, is extraordinarily effective, in that it makes it possible for the reader to accept both interpretations simul-

¹²Williams' frequent use of seemingly insignificant details on the physical plane as an introduction to the imminent breakthrough of important events on the cosmic level is also part of his skill as a fantasy writer. Note, for example, that Damaris has her first whiff of the Pterodactyl's odor early in the book, as she gives one of her self-important academic talks, long before the monster actually becomes visible to her.

taneously. The net effect is to convey the impression of visible and invisible worlds superimposed, interpenetrating, and fully tangible.

The subjective-objective supernatural happening often occurs in a vision in Williams' novels, a fact which tends to reinforce the subjective thesis. In The Greater Trumps (ch. xii), for instance, when Henry finds himself caught up and immobilized in a living cloud composed of hands--an image Williams used to suggest the principle of co-inherence--he experiences a vision of himself as a tower being constantly built and rebuilt in an attempt to reach the stars and repeatedly cast down for the act of spiritual presumption, until he comes to understand, accept, and repent. Again the physical description is detailed and the reader given a choice of interpretation: the supernatural may be showing itself visibly, or the character's imagination may be unusually sensitive to the supernatural forces, which are part of the *dramatis personae*.

Williams' particular method of blending the supernatural and the normal is therefore the keystone of his fantasy technique. A second characteristic of his technique, which flows directly from this use of ambivalence, is his ability to make action out of thought,¹³ and to do so without losing tautness of plot movement. The two spiritual conversion scenes already referred to are examples of spiritual and psychological processes raised to the level of action unfolding visibly. But there are many instances when the force of thought is translated into action in ways which only the supernatural, in the form of the

¹³The phrase is Hadfield's (An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 83).

marvellous, could make possible within the framework of the novel. Williams' general thesis that spiritual laws govern and impinge on the physical, "normal" world and that "natural" and supernatural or supranatural are complementary halves of a natural whole forms the subtext of such episodes; this, too, becomes a conviction, within the novel, of the "awakening" characters. But in order to clarify the idea, it is necessary to externalize it in some way; hence Williams' use of the marvellous-supernatural. In Many Dimensions (ch. xiv), the full extent of Chloe's action as she lies in bed, with the Stone of Solomon hidden under her pillow, and listening to its intended kidnapper stealthily approaching, is to make a choice: either to use the Stone to transport them both out of danger, or to entrust herself to the protection of the Stone (or the power which it represents). The process by which she arrives at her decision is described entirely in terms of what goes on in her mind. The final decision is equivalent to action, however, for at the moment when she silently submits her will to that of the Stone and the thief's hand grasps it, he is blasted as if by lightning.

The intended effect of Williams' art, as of MacDonald's, is to awake the reader to an awareness of a reality beyond the sensate world; their approach is sacramentalist, or mythopoeic, in that they attempt to mirror the invisible world in little. Like MacDonald, Williams' stories include the allegorical, but are not themselves allegories.

Williams' mythopoeic approach is definable in terms of the way in which he handles the relationship between the supra-natural and the natural. He shows that the one flows constantly into the other and that the lower realities (the microcosm of the world) are shadows of a heavenly

or universal macrocosm. For the most part, however, he does not, unlike MacDonald, reinforce his mythopoeic approach with the generous use of archetypal characters;¹⁴ he restricts himself mainly to archetypal themes: salvation and self-damnation, and their components--free will and voluntary obedience to the spiritual hierarchy on the one hand, and defiance and the lust for power on the other.

Like MacDonald, however, he drew on a wide range of traditional preternaturals, which are the tools of the Christian metaphysician turned storyteller; like MacDonald, he took advantage of their traditional associations to heighten the excitement of the story and also shaped them to the purposes of Christian doctrine within the story. Enough has been said to show that, in describing the interpenetration of natural and supernatural, Williams, like MacDonald, used preternaturals as symbols, and for a particular purpose. In Wright's words, Williams' symbols

are not simply imaginary entities, meant to stand outside objective reality. Nor are they purely material, intended only to remind the reader of spiritual aspects in his life. Instead, their value for the fiction lies in their existence within both realms at once: they are no less natural than supernatural, for they represent the unity of matter and spirit within the created world.¹⁵

Fantasy in the novels, that is, "is primarily meant not to distract

¹⁴Among the humans, that is. His interest in the concept of archetype images is reflected in his use of the Platonic ideals in animal form in The Place of the Lion, and the golden figures in The Greater Trumps, which are magical microcosmical representations of the (Christian) archetypal principles, imagined as interweaving elements in an unending cosmic dance, e.g., the Lovers (sexual and spiritual love) and the Hermit (spiritual growth in solitude?) (as interpreted by Gresham, preface to The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams, p. vii).

¹⁵Wright, op. cit., p. 28.

from reality, but to clarify and deepen it."¹⁶

Some of Williams' fantasy motifs are ultimately from folktale sources, but usually ^{these} are also closely associated with the occult. There are very few supernatural beings--only two, as already mentioned: Prester John (War in Heaven) is, more properly, part of the Arthurian and Grail traditions, and Lily Sammile or Lilith (Descent into Hell) is from the rabbinical literature. There are no fairies, goblins, or giants. In Sybil (The Greater Trumps), Williams came close to creating a wise woman figure; she is a mortal, however, although she is so far advanced in the spiritual ways as to appear preternaturally endowed to her fellow beings. Of magic locales there are very few, although Battle Hill (in Descent into Hell), which retains the atmosphere of the suffering and death which gave it its name, might be so considered. Ordinary locales, however, respond to the invisible forces around them, as when, in The Place of the Lion (ch. v), a road undulates as the invisible Serpent passes over it. The false Eden into which Lily Sammile leads Wentworth (Descent into Hell, ch. v), and which is actually her dwelling by the cemetery, is a supernatural locale (and also, possibly, an expression of Wentworth's psychological state); it is the abode of illusion.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷Cf. the grotto of the Alder-Maiden in Phantastes (ch. vi), where Anodos spends the night, to discover in the morning that the beautiful creature to whom he has succumbed is actually decaying, hideous, and coffin-shaped behind. Cf. also Anodos' self-imprisonment in the tower with the unlocked door (Phantastes, ch. xxii) with the barrier Wentworth sets up to keep others out of his Eden: "The door wouldn't open for anyone; it was his door, and though he hadn't fastened it, it wouldn't open, because it knew his wish" (Descent into Hell, ch. v). Anodos is not aware at first that the door will open if he wishes; Wentworth is. The underlying thought in both cases, that man is his own spiritual jailer, is clear.

Of magical objects there are several important examples, although they do not belong to folklore in the usual sense, since they are not generic, but specific, famous magic objects. Three of the novels--War in Heaven, Many Dimensions, and The Greater Trumps--pivot on the struggle between those who wish to seize these objects for the potential material and spiritual power they represent, and those who oppose such perversion. The Graal in War in Heaven belongs to Arthurian tradition.¹⁸ The other objects are Williams' inventions. The Stone containing the Tetragrammaton in Many Dimensions, which is imagined as having belonged to Solomon, belongs by implication to scriptural tradition. The "magic" of the Stone and the Graal therefore "derives" from their association with divine or sacred persons in the Christian pantheon. The third object or sets of objects, the primal deck of Tarot cards and its matching set of moving golden figures (in The Greater Trumps) seem to be largely Williams' invention, although, as already mentioned, there may have been some influence through his acquaintanceship with the Order of the Golden Dawn and the writings of A. E. Waite.

¹⁸ Although it ultimately goes back to pre-Christian tradition (Celtic); see, for example, Roger Sherman Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (London, 1963), pp. 102-103 and 106-107. Williams, however, discounted this aspect of its history, maintaining that, in the scriptural and ecclesiastical sense, the early Celtic vessels of plenty and magic cauldrons could not be the origin of the Grail myth (Charles Williams, "The Figure of Arthur," in Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis, Arthurian Torso, pp. 13 and 23, in the chapter on "The Grail"). Williams may have been influenced in his view by that of A. E. Waite, as expressed in such writings as The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal (see Nathan Comfort Starr, King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature 1901-1953 [Gainesville, Florida, 1954], pp. 150-154).

The Stone, however, has a variety of magical properties traditionally associated with folklore, e.g., it can grant wishes, transport its owner through space, and allow him to see what is happening elsewhere, a property which Williams extended to include seeing inside and influencing another's mind. Its mystical characteristics, i.e., those which reflect the nature of its creator, such as its ability to remain whole even when divided into parts, and its felt but non-registrable weight, exist side by side with more traditional supernatural characteristics, such as the power to grant wishes. The latter group is absorbed by attraction into the Christian constellation and transformed into aspects of what is possible to God--e.g., answering prayers and seeing through space and time and into the minds of men.

The category of admonitions, supernatural warnings, and prophecies by mysterious beings is absent from Williams, although the various warning signs of the imminent coming of the Archetypes in The Place of the Lion (e.g., the Pterodactyl's odor and the undulation of the road, betraying the presence of the invisible Serpent) and, in the same novel, the pain which warns Anthony into silence (ch. x), as well as Wentworth's dreams in Descent into Hell, might be so classified. As in MacDonald, they serve as spiritual signposts.

There is little of the Gothic supernatural in Williams; the ghost of the suicide and the doppelgänger in Descent into Hell and the spirits of the two dead girls in All Hallows' Eve are echoes of that tradition, but the relation is largely a surface one; they are employed not for their eeriness, although they have this quality, but to embody new variations on the theme of the spiritual journey. Williams does,

however, make effective use of the motif of the doppelgänger, and in a mode somewhat akin to the way MacDonald uses it, i.e., not simply as the supernatural double or apparition of a living being, but as the embodiment of some spiritual aspect (either good or bad) of that person's character. Thus, Anodos' shadow mirrors the worse part of his nature, and Pauline's doppelgänger, in Descent into Hell, mirrors the sympathetic fear she has unwittingly felt with her ancestor who was burnt at the stake. There is another type of the doppelgänger in Descent into Hell, in the form of a succubus, a duplicate which Wentworth creates for himself of the woman who has rejected him. She does actually exist, although she is an illusory shape, for her original catches a glimpse of her and faints at the sight of what she herself could become (ch. xi):

. . . there appeared, stretched forward in the light, her own face, infinitely perfected in sensual grace and infinitely emptied of all meaning, even of evil meaning. Blank and dead in a spiritual death it stared vacantly at her, but undoubtedly it was she.

There is more, but not much more, science fiction in Williams than in MacDonald. The interpenetration of worlds is, however, exclusively that of the spiritual with the visible. In the later novels, of which more will be said later, Williams began to experiment with a more complex conception, i.e., that between the present physical world and the invisible one is the shadow of another time. In Descent into Hell, for example, the space occupied by Wentworth's bedroom is the same space which once contained the ladder up which a suicide had climbed to his death, and where, in a sense, it still stands, since in this novel all times are regarded as coexistent. The final novel,

All Hallows' Eve, is wholly based upon the concept of the coexistence of a real and a shadowy world occupying the same space; two dead girls wander in a shadowy, purgatorial London which both interpenetrates the actual city and contains in itself all its own past appearances.

Travel in time also occurs in Williams: in Many Dimensions, the consequences of literal time travel are worked out with the precision of a mathematical problem.¹⁹ In the last two novels, however, the concept of "literal" travel out of one time into another, in the usual science fiction sense, no longer has any validity, for reasons already explained.²⁰ Pauline, in Descent into Hell, reaches, but does not travel, through time in order to offer courage to her about-to-be-martyred ancestor, but the underlying concept of coexistent time in the novel annuls the possibility of movement out of one time into another.

One of Williams' recurrent fantasy motifs was the vision, usually a waking one. As has been seen, he employed it as an ambiguous physical-psychical quantity mirroring either the mind and soul of the person having the vision, or revealing a situation in the spiritual world of which that person is only partly aware (cf. Anthony's vision of the Archetypes, in The Place of the Lion, ch. x).²¹ An astounding

¹⁹C. S. Lewis has remarked on the strenuous and "very fine working out of the logical consequences of time-travel" in this novel ("On Science Fiction," p. 69). See Many Dimensions, chs. vi and ix. Hadfield also remarks on Williams' ability to handle movement in time ("The Relationship of Charles Williams' Working Life to His Fiction," in Shadows of Imagination, ed. Mark R. Hillegas, p. 133).

²⁰Although Simon the magician sends his daughter's soul into future (All Hallows' Eve, ch. iv), he does not send her body.

²¹"He [Williams] . . . could put into words, states of consciousness of a mystical kind, and the sort of elusive experience which many people have once or twice in a lifetime" (Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xvii).

sensate impression triggers a flash of insight and sets the character's thoughts going with lightning speed, so that he is inwardly changed by the intensity of the process and shown what his proper course of action should be. There is nothing quite like this in MacDonald, although the visions of the past which Anodos reenters and reexperiences (Phantastes, ch. xix) have much the same purpose. They are, however, only a reliving of known past events, whereas, in Williams, the visions are of unconscious things brought to the conscious level.

Dreams in the conventional sense also occur in Williams. Wentworth's recurrent and ever-worsening dream of his steady descent down a knotted rope is the best instance of this (Descent into Hell). As in the case of other fantasy motifs, Williams used it on more than one level. The initial effect is one of spookiness: the dream is a supernatural signpost to the reader (as well as to the character) as to what is happening. It has a psychological connotation also, showing that Wentworth is aware, although perhaps not consciously, of what he is doing to himself. Each succeeding self-destructive action which he commits in the waking state, and by which he slowly cuts himself off from the outside world,²² later confronts him in his dream. In this manner Williams maintains a satisfying ambivalence, losing none of the force of his supernatural effect--because of the sinister vividness of his description of the dream--while complementing it with a psychological

²²Cf. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (London, 1970), chapter on "On 'God' and 'Good,'" p. 59: "The chief enemy of excellence in morality . . . is personal fantasy: the tissue of self-aggrandizing and consoling wishes and dreams which prevents one from seeing what is outside one." See also the discussion of Wentworth below in chapter X.

explanation.

It may be noted that dreams in the conventional sense do not occur in Phantastes or Lilith. Some attention has already been given to the fact that MacDonald's stories, while not actually dreams, hover on the edge of dream, an effect achieved partly by the preternatural nature of the countries through which the heroes are made to wander, and partly by MacDonald's insistence on the Novalian view that life may become a dream. As with Williams, there is deliberate ambiguity at times as to which world we are in--sensate and waking, spiritual and waking, or spiritual and dreaming. The dreams within Vane's death-sleep (Lilith, chs. ~~xlii~~ and xliv) carry the ambiguity almost beyond the limits of analysis.

In using the concept of the Platonic ideals as a mode of the supernatural (in The Place of the Lion),²³ Williams came close to creating a new fantasy motif, although it might be classified as an extremely unusual subtype of the magic animal category in folklore. These Archetypes, however, are not animals in the normal sense of the word, but physicalized forms of abstract principles which the human mind personifies in animal form (e.g., Strength=Lion, Cunning=Serpent, Beauty=Butterfly, and Gentleness=Lamb). The concept of materialization of the universal ideals is another aspect of Williams' preoccupation with the idea of the coexistence and interaction of the material and the invisible, and the eventual absorption of the lesser into the

²³See chapter IX, section on The Place of the Lion, for a discussion of how Williams develops this motif.

greater or archetypal.²⁴ It should be noted that, with this motif as with others, Williams added something of his own: the Ideals (Principles, Celestials, Angelicals) are imagined as reabsorbing their copies and lesser images back into themselves.

Motifs from Christian tradition and from the category of witchcraft and the occult occur in both MacDonald and Williams. The number of references to witchcraft and black magic in MacDonald are very few, however, and, with the exception of the treatment of certain aspects of Lilith, already discussed, are of a very general nature: spells and incantations are mentioned, for example, but not described (Phantastes, chs. v and xiii). In Williams, the Graal is virtually the only preternatural derived from Christian tradition (strictly speaking, it is derived from a Christianized portion of the Arthurian matière); although the waters of baptism, which have saved the magician's daughter from being completely subjected to him (All Hallows' Eve), are shown as a counteracting magic to his black spell. Whereas motifs from what may be called the folklore of Christian legend--such as the Graal, which is largely a literary phenomenon--can be used as a base for fantasy (it is, after all, thought of as a solid object), symbols from Christian theology, such as baptism and the crucifixion, which are sacramental acts

²⁴Although there may appear to be some correspondence here with the Jungian process of individuation--"the quest of wholeness . . . the forging of a link between the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the psyche . . . the finding of the God within or the full experience of the archetype of the self" (Fordham, op. cit., p. 77 [chapter on "Religion and the Individuation Process"])--it should be pointed out that Jung used the word to describe a spiritual journey towards fulfillment which does not end in the return to any church or the Christian ethos; it would therefore be inapplicable to the spiritual-psychological journeys described in the novels of Williams and MacDonald.

and mysteries in their own right, are far less amenable to such treatment.²⁵

Motifs from the occult (witchcraft, black magic, diabolism) are the largest category of preternaturals in Williams' novels.²⁶ The main point to note in this connection is that Williams' fantastic imagination appears to have found this to be the most suggestive source of material for an exciting story into which his general ideas could be fitted. The excitement and effectiveness of the idea of witchcraft lies after all in the fact that, of all types of the supernatural, it is the most closely connected with Christian theology; it is, in fact, a "perverted reflection of Christian sacramentalism,"²⁷ having sprung from it in order to defy it. They are, in other words, ready-made opponents. Williams' interest in witchcraft and the occult and his knowledge of the paraphernalia of ritual no doubt stimulated his imagination to explore the infinite number of ways in which they could be shown as interacting with what may be called the forces of good, or, in Williams' view, the principles of Christianity, in his personal terms of co-inherence, exchange, and

²⁵Although Williams overcomes this difficulty; cf. the episode of Lester's submission to Simon's spell (All Hallows' Eve), where the act symbolizes a spiritual crucifixion, and Lester has the physical sensation of being stretched on an invisible cross. The theme is handled credibly and with taste. In the concluding chapters of All Hallows' Eve, the magician's house is ultimately riven, deluged, and destroyed by a rain that has a roseate glow. On one level, it is a physical magical rain; but even within the story itself, it is the physicalization of Christ's justice destroying His enemies and washing the world clean of illusion, i.e., it has both tangible and allegorical reality simultaneously within the story itself, for the characters perceive it in both its aspects.

²⁶The extraordinary range of variety in these motifs and the imaginative uses to which they are put are discussed below in the summaries of the novels.

²⁷Winship, "The Novels of Charles Williams," p. 115.

the City.

If one reads the novels in chronological order, it becomes apparent that after the first five, which show a steadily growing ability to combine the real and the supernatural in the ways described above, there is a subtle change of mood, an expansion of theme, and an accompanying shift of emphasis in the fantasy treatment away from the purely marvellous towards the psychological and the metaphysical.

All seven novels are "about" choice, salvation, the struggle between good and evil in the world and in the individual, and between obedience to and defiance of spiritual law, and the struggle to repair the rift that exists between flesh and spirit. In the first five, and in the last, these themes are treated in terms of a struggle to achieve power. The symbol of power in four of the first five novels is something patently marvellous--a holy cup, a holy stone, the angelical elementals, and a pack of Tarot cards together with a set of moving figures. However absorbing the treatment of these fantasy motifs, they remain, in the last analysis, external, fictitious, recognizable impossibles, wonder tale creations. Hadfield has stated that the earlier novels convey the feeling that they were written for the fun of the thing.²⁸ This may be because the author took obvious pleasure in imagining what would be the logical consequences in the real world if these impossibles did exist. The fantasy modes here do not disturb the reader, because they are, as such, patently impossible.

The Greater Trumps, the last of this group, maintains a steady level of euphoria; it is the one novel in which none of the characters

²⁸An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 78.

chooses hell. However, with the next novel, Descent into Hell, the mood turns somber. Although the themes remain the same as in the other novels, they are treated not in terms of a struggle for power, but in the form of complementary spiritual studies, one of self-damnation through illusion, and the other of its opposite, growing into harmony with the City. In this and the final novel, All Hallows' Eve, the theme of illusion, and the ways in which it complicates the theme of choice, is brought in. The struggle for power in the form of magic objects is replaced by a struggle between the City and its opposite for the human soul. The fantasy, as a result, focusses inward rather than outward and hinges more on psychological and spiritual analysis than on the element of the purely magical or occult. The two last novels are a balanced pair; each presents two contrasting spiritual exempla; and, interestingly enough, the main strength of Williams' skill as a psychological-spiritual portraitist was expended in Descent into Hell on documenting the downward journey, while, in All Hallows' Eve, the dominant portrait is that of a journey (in death) upward from purgatory,²⁹ a conception which, it may be noted, recalls MacDonald's idea, in Lilith, of a state midway between physical life and the life that one must "die into."

A logical adjunct of this shift away from the occult towards the psychological and the metaphysical is the emergence of the City as a positive presence; it may even be regarded as a character, in the sense

²⁹Cf. C. S. Lewis' note that Williams depicts the purgatory experience, i.e., "'a process by which the work of redemption continues, and first begins to be noticeable after death'" (Letters, pp. 246-247); it is also a subordinate theme in Descent into Hell, in the story of the suicide's wanderings in a shadowy limbo (see chapter X, section on Descent into Hell).

that its actions and reactions are part of the moving force of the plot. Just as George MacDonald repeatedly returned to certain symbols which had a peculiar appeal and significance for him--doors, staircases, the moon--so Williams constantly returned to the image of the City, working out its aspects in ever greater detail, until it approached the archetypal, containing in itself figurations of the harmonious relationships of which human beings are capable, within and among themselves and with God. It is a supernatural motif in the higher, i.e., metaphysical, sense.³⁰

In Descent into Hell, the full implications of the City as a sentient presence are worked out in relation to only one character, the spirit of a man who committed suicide. Wandering in a world that is a shadowy replica of the surroundings he knew in life, he finds himself pursued by a light that slowly drives the shadows back and causes him to flee towards the world from which he had withdrawn by killing himself. This is done so that he may meet the person in the living world who can help him make his peace with it and direct him towards the true City (redemption).

In All Hallows' Eve, the theme of the City fills the entire framework of the novel as an unseen, omnipresent awareness whose intention is unmistakably good. Williams achieves this effect by making the City the central reference point for everything that exists or happens in the novel. He imagines not only that it contains the

³⁰ A related symbol, of less importance in the novels, except for The Greater Trumps, but of considerable importance in Williams' poetry, is that of hands and their joining. See chapter IX, section on The Greater Trumps.

entire physical and spiritual world--everyday London and (as with the countryside in Descent into Hell) its shadowy replica, in which the dead girls wander-- but also that there is no action, thought, or impulse occurring within the City of which it is not aware and to which it does not respond. One effect of this approach is that the counterpart of the real world becomes the dominating felt reality in the later novels, whereas in the earlier ones, the ordinary world, for the most part, "seems solid enough that one can temporarily forget the existence of its counterpart."³¹ Every character in the novel is treated primarily in terms of his relationship with the City, which requires above all that its inhabitants interact with love. The idea of love in Williams, as has been seen, goes beyond the concept of romantic love and other emotional attachments to include all forms of mutual respect among persons who may not "love" one another in the narrower sense, but who are willing to take up the burden of another's suffering, to extend or receive forgiveness for ills committed, and to put themselves out even for those fellow beings who irritate them,³² as Lester does, for example, in not shrinking from Evelyn's touch, or abandoning her in the frightening shadowy world in which they both wander, although she is repelled by her complaints and shrill chatter

³¹Quotation only from Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Charles Williams: A Novelist's Pilgrimage," Religion in Life, XXIX, 2 (Spring 1960), 279.

³²Cf. Murdoch, op. cit. (chapter on "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts"), pp. 102-103: "Good is the magnetic centre towards which love naturally moves. . . . And when we try perfectly to love what is imperfect our love goes to its object via the Good to be thus purified and made unselfish and just. The mother loving the retarded child or loving the tiresome elderly relation."

(All Hallows' Eve, ch. i). This act of kindness is a small step in the beginning of Lester's redemption.

In Williams, as in MacDonald, there is the underlying assumption that no one is exempt from the necessity of undertaking the spiritual journey. A continuous spiritual dialogue obtains between the City and all its inhabitants, by which it offers them choices and additional chances to help themselves; never, however, forcing them into anything.³³ Their decisions often involve a test of one individual's love for another, in the senses outlined above, and constitute the main device whereby the spiritual action of the plot progresses towards or away from "getting home," Williams' main concern. The imagined world of the novel is a configuration of an organic body, symbolized by the City, which both sustains and is the vital composite of its individual parts: it is the central source of moral life, into and out of which all lives flow, as well as flowing into and out of each other, and it is the sum total of all the interacting relationships between the higher, and unseen, moral good and its created members, living and dead, and among these latter themselves. The idea of the City's reality as a functioning entity within the plot is further reinforced by its being named directly countless times and used in all its various meanings

³³Cf. Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. lvi: "in Williams's universe there is a clear logic, a sense of terrible justice which is not our justice and yet is not divorced from love." As Auden has pointed out, no one in Williams' novels is sent to hell; he/she insists on going ("Charles Williams," p. 553). Williams carried this treatment of the theme of choice over into his Milton criticism, specifying, for example, that Milton "imagined in Satan a person who refused to repent, and thought him the sillier for it" (review of Chariot of Wrath, by G. Wilson Knight, in Time and Tide, 20 June 1942, p. 508).

to create a sense of the layering of physical within spiritual: the real London, the ghostly London, the Londons of the past, and the body of humanity in co-inherence with the celestial City. Williams achieves an effect by which the City stretches from infinite magnitude--containing the universe--downward to the microcosmic--reenacted within an individual soul; it therefore both contains and mirrors itself. The sum total of the novel's events are meant to illustrate this, of course; but Williams also states and physicalizes the concept by juxtaposing a description of a painting of the visible city (part of London after an air raid), over which the sun seems to be rising, with a description of the city it images.

There, in the middle of this room, lay the City, ruined and renewed, submerged and gloriously re-emerging. . . . He had but to take one step to be walking in that open space, with houses and streets around him. The very rubble in the foreground was organic and rising . . . The whole subject--that is, the whole unity; shape and hue; rubble, houses, cathedral, sky and hidden sun, all and the light that was all and held all--advanced on him. . . . There was distance in it and yet it was all one. . . .

. . . He walked to the window and stood looking out. . . . The sun in the painting had not risen, but it had been on the point of rising, and the expectation that unrisen sun had aroused in him was so great that the actual sun, or some other and greater sun, seemed to be about to burst through the cloud that filled the natural sky. The world he could see from the window gaily mocked him with a promise of being an image of the painting, or of being the original of which the painting was but a painting.

(All Hallows' Eve, ch. vii)

The conception of the City in All Hallows' Eve as all-containing and, ultimately, all-absorbing, lends an air of organic relationship of part to whole even to the black magic which Williams uses as a device to mirror the spiritual actions of his evil or weak-willed characters. It has been noted that Williams (like MacDonald) excelled in the depiction of good characters. This consists mainly in his being able to set out in detailed sequence, and imagined in specific physical terms, the working in them of what he considered to be the basic principle of good: co-inherence in all its aspects. The extraordinary changes which take place in these characters, almost magical in one sense, are, in another, perfectly natural. It should be noted that they almost never practice artificial magic.³⁴ Most of Williams' villains, on the other hand, are depicted as practitioners of black magic, not simply because, by so doing, Williams could take advantage of a traditional association to enhance the entertainment value of his story, but because this provides the spiritual contrast of persons who refuse to allow the growth of the City, the inward natural magic, to take place within themselves; they strive instead after an external substitute.

In the earlier novels, the image of the City is latent; consequently, the fact that this lower or black magic is conceived of as permitted by an overall authority is less clearly defined. By the time Williams wrote his final novel, however, he had worked out his complete world-picture in terms of fantasy; he imagines the components of his doctrine as functioning perceptibly within and above the physical world,

³⁴Nancy, in The Greater Trumps, is first made to do so unwittingly (ch. iii), but later knowingly manipulates the Tarots in an attempt to counteract the elemental forces released by her lover's unwise use of the cards (ch. xii).

absorbing all actions into themselves, including those directed against their co-inherence. The supposed existence of forces which are perverted images of these doctrines, i.e., black magic, witchcraft, and the occult, therefore seems both more natural and explicable than in the earlier novels. The naturalness and plausibility with which these elements are introduced in the later novels heightens, rather than diminishes, their effectiveness, since, in fantasy, few things are more effective than the presentation of a world that is both entirely credible (on the literary level) and impossible. The fact that the fantasy unfolds within the physical framework of an actual locale, which, together with countless familiar details of everyday life, is faithfully described, renders it more effective through contrast.

In the last two novels, there is a much stronger emphasis on the inner drama within the characters' minds. As the image of the City begins to fill the world-picture and the element of lower magic to seem more natural, concern with the psychological-religious development of the characters grows. In these two novels, more than in any of the others, the action is advanced by what goes on in the characters' minds, as they weigh their choices in the balance, and take one step after the other on the path they have chosen. Williams has made the game more interesting by introducing the theme of illusion as an added stumbling block on the road to salvation, much as MacDonald did.

Descent into Hell is a study in the destructiveness of illusion and self-delusion. The psychological and spiritual deterioration of Wentworth, who is probably the most carefully delineated character in Williams' novels, is described entirely in terms of his gradual sub-

stitution of an unreal world for the real one.³⁵ The process begins when Wentworth's resentment over a young woman's (Adela's) preference for another man and over the honors conferred on a rival scholar grows out of proportion. Instead of trying to be generous, he allows himself to yield to hatred. From that moment, he begins to reject what is unpleasant in the real world, shutting it out of his mind, and tries to fashion an image of it in a more agreeable mold. The strength of his wish calls into being a woman who is the image of Adela in every way except that she lives to please only him. It is interesting to note that the pseudo-Adela is not the product of deliberate sorcery, but a creature produced by the power of thought-energy, although, in Wentworth's case, not voluntarily or consciously.³⁶ The fact that she is conceived of as having sprung from Wentworth's

³⁵See chapter X, section on Descent into Hell, for a summary of the stages of this disintegration. Spacks ("Charles Williams: A Novelist's Pilgrimage," 280-281) points out that the descent of Wentworth's soul follows the progression outlined in Williams' analysis of The Inferno in The Figure of Beatrice (not published, however, until 1943, six years after the appearance of Descent into Hell): "from lust to 'indulgence of its own private appetites, no longer touched by a mutuality of love, and then to the inevitable hatred of other indulgences'; thence to anger, withdrawal, despair, and a terrifying awareness of the nothingness into which he gazes.

³⁶A subtler development of a device used in all the other novels, where there is conscious intent, e.g., Considine's power over other minds (Shadows of Ecstasy), and Simon the magician's power over other minds, even at a distance (All Hallows' Eve); the supernatural battle of wills between those seeking to disintegrate the Graal and those concentrating their energy against the spell (War in Heaven, ch. x); the use of the Stone by force of will to travel through space, time, and into another's mind (Many Dimensions); the absorption of Miss Wilmot and Foster into beast-Principles by intense and perverted concentration on one aspect of personality (The Place of the Lion); and the power which thought concentrated on the archetype Tarot deck has to create matter (The Greater Trumps).

mind tends at first to make her seem an imaginary creature, visible only to him and intended to mirror the spiritual deterioration he fashions for himself. Williams, however, makes it clear that she does not exist solely in Wentworth's mind; Adela sees her and faints. The Adela-succubus is another of the many examples of ambivalence in Williams in which two worlds are bridged in a single event or character--in this case, the psychologically real and the supernaturally "real."

Williams, like MacDonald, used a mythical creature to embody the idea of illusion. In Lilith, this was Lilith herself, wife of Satan, or Samael.³⁷ In Descent into Hell, she is Mrs. Lily Sammile, MacDonald's Lilith was beautiful, though corrupt within; her prototype, the Alder Maiden in Phantastes, had both a beautiful and a hideous aspect. Similarly, Lily Sammile, in her aspect as the false Adela, is beautiful, at least while Wentworth looks at her, although she is haggard and old when he does not; and in her everyday guise as Mrs. Sammile, she seems like "a living death" (ch. iv). She is not, as in MacDonald, a vampire, but her purpose is the same--to capture and imprison souls. In order to do this, she offers to give people what they want most and what is least good for them, as she does for Wentworth. That illusion is the portress at the gate of (spiritual) death and hell is made clear by the fact that Mrs. Sammile's house is a shed by the cemetery. The shed is long, narrow, and dark, and

³⁷ Cf. the reference in The Place of the Lion, ch. xi, to "the first-born of Lilith, who is illusion, and Samael the Accursed," and in Witchcraft, p. 62, to the tradition that Lilith was "the first wife of Adam and (as some said later) the daughter of Samael the accursed" and "a queen of devils." See also chapter III, footnotes 76 and 77.

crowded with the souls of her victims. Like MacDonald's Lilith, who is thousands of years old, she is an "ancient witch" and "a very old woman indeed by a very great gate, where many go in who choose themselves" (ch. xi).³⁸

A particularly interesting resemblance between the handling of the character in both authors is that, in each case, she is both the personification of illusion and a real person, i.e., both allegorical and real within the framework of the story; and, in each case, she is herself the victim of illusion. In MacDonald, Lilith fights acceptance of the fact of her inward decay almost to the end. In Williams, Mrs. Sammile believes to the last in the desirability of the worldly gifts she can offer and in the dictum that "everyone wants something":

she sat there, cut off from the earth
she had in her genius so long universally
inhabited, gazing, waiting, longing for
some of the living to enter, to ask her
for oblivion and the shapes with which
she enchanted oblivion. No one came;
oblivion had failed.

(Descent into Hell, ch. xi)

The shed crumbles, and Mrs. Sammile/Lilith vanishes at the sound of Pauline's laughing refusal of her "help."

³⁸ Note that Wentworth has to carry her (in her pseudo-Adela form) over his threshold: possibly an allusion to the tradition that certain supernatural creatures--especially vampires--cannot enter a house unless its owner willingly permits it; and an illustration of the idea that illusion weighs down its victim. Williams (Witchcraft, p. 62) points out that Lilith and the lamia are both facets of "the idea of the woman of the darkness who loves and kills," a phrase reminiscent of the character of Lilith as MacDonald drew her.

It is to be noted, however, that Williams did not, as MacDonald did, conceive of Lilith in a third aspect, that of a soul which was itself on a spiritual journey. Nevertheless, some of the problems incident upon presenting the character in a dual aspect--real and abstract--are apparent in both. In MacDonald, for instance, Lilith is revived by the warm waters of the very stream which struck her down when she crossed it, i.e., in her aspect as a witch, the stream would be inimical to her, and in her aspect as the personification of illusion, the stream, as a symbol of baptism and grace, would also strike her down; while in her aspect as a real person, sick, unconscious, and cold, it is logical that she would be revived by a warm stream, and, as a living soul, she would be revived by grace. Although each of these relationships is consistent within itself, they produce a confusing effect when considered in a group. Williams, by limiting the aspects of his character to two, manages to handle the ambivalence more simply, using the pseudo-Adela aspect to bear the weight of the character's abstract component and concentrating its "real" component in Mrs. Sammile. The two must eventually be resolved, however. Williams accomplishes this by imagining them as both disappearing when Pauline's laughter causes Mrs. Sammile's shed to fall to dust (illusion crumbling under its own weight and inward decay). That the succubus should vanish into thin air is entirely logical, since she was conjured up from the immaterial; but that Mrs. Sammile should also vanish is less acceptable, because of the suddenness with which a physical entity is shown to have been an abstract principle

all along.³⁹

Williams pursued the theme of illusion in All Hallows' Eve, expanding it to the level of mass illusion used as an instrument to achieve world power.⁴⁰ The manipulator of illusion in this case is not a supernatural being, but a human, although one with extraordinary necromantic powers (Simon). The voracious desire of illusion to feed itself on others' substance, which we have seen in MacDonald's *Alder Maiden* and *Lilith*, is also characteristic of Lily Sammile and, especially, of Simon the magician. In Descent into Hell, illusion is personified by a repulsive old woman whose method of capturing souls is to sympathize with people's complaints and to give them what they think will make them happy--usually relief from facing up to their duty, or the means of blotting out what is unpleasant. Williams speaks of Mrs. Sammile as having many souls in her house, but he deals in detail with only one or two of her victims. In All Hallows' Eve, he turns his attention more sharply on the crowd as well.

Like Mrs. Sammile, Simon uses illusion as a conscious instrument of deception and is himself, in the last analysis, a victim of illusion, i.e., of the misconception that one man has the power to deceive and

³⁹Unacceptable, that is, when one stops to analyze what occurs. In the reading, however, the climax is carefully prepared for by a description of physical and spiritual activity taking place simultaneously, and is achieved so swiftly that the fusion of physical and spiritual which Mrs. Sammile's disappearance represents does not jar, or, rather, the effect is made before the sense of logic begins to operate.

⁴⁰A theme which no doubt reflects some of Williams' thinking regarding the mass hypnotism which Hitler had exercised over Germany. The book was written during the second World War and was published in 1945. The London of the novel has already undergone the blitz.

conquer the entire physical and spiritual world.⁴¹ Unlike her, however, he is only a human being, not a real-allegorical creature, and therefore he does not possess an involuted double nature, a fact which makes him easier to understand, but, perhaps, not quite as interesting as Williams' earlier creation, despite the entertainment value of his black magic operations.

Simon is pictured as a charismatic preacher, able to enchant mass audiences into blind devotion. In the painting which Jonathan does of him preaching to a crowd of followers, the artist has unconsciously painted the backs of the listeners to resemble those of an army of shiny beetles, all alike and seemingly ready to follow him into a deep cleft leading into a cave behind him--an image reminiscent of Mrs. Sammille's long, narrow, dark shed by the cemetery. In the painting, Simon's face resembles that of an imbecile.

beyond them the narrow corridor hinted
some extreme distance towards which the
whole congregation and their master were
on the point of unchecked flight. And yet
the face was not a true face at all; it was
not a mockery, but the hither side of some-
thing which was hidden and looking away . . .

(All Hallows' Eve, ch. ii)

Simon not only entrances the mob, but, like Lily Sammille, plays on the weaknesses of individuals through flattery, telling them they are different, particular, not under the usual law. Since Simon's aim is to

⁴¹Cf. All Hallows' Eve, ch. x: "Illusion, to the magician as to the saint, is a great danger. But the master in Goetia has always at the center of his heart a single tiny everlasting illusion; it may be long before that point infects him wholly, but sooner or later it is bound to do so." Cf. the inner decay of the Alder Maiden and the spot on Lilith's side, in MacDonald's novels.

create his own City, of which he himself would be ruler, he must attempt to dissolve the ties between the true City and its inhabitants by striking at the conception of the laws which bind them together. The most effective way to achieve this is the indirect one of encouraging his intended victims to think of themselves as special and not subject to the rules which govern the common herd. The immediate plot of the book hinges, as it does in all of Williams' novels, on the contest between those who deny the City and those who affirm it (Descent into Hell is, as already mentioned, an exception); and All Hallows' Eve, like all the other novels except Descent into Hell, deals with the theme of the lust for power. Unlike the earlier books, however, in which the symbol and instrument of desired power is conceived of, arbitrarily, as a magic object of some kind, which can be used for good or evil purposes, the coveted instrument in All Hallows' Eve is the human mind itself. The struggle to achieve control of it consists in the manipulation of a psychological principle (the telling is reinforced, as usual, with the paraphernalia of necromancy, for added effect); and the spiritual journeys of the characters are related in terms of the resistance which they offer, or do not offer, to the subtle attack launched on them from within.

In the novels centering on magic objects, the final climax occurs in a scene where the object is put beyond the reach of attack by being neutralized or returned for good to its mysterious source: the Graal disappears at the Mass offered by Prester John; the Stone of Solomon reabsorbs its many Types and disappears; and the separated principles of thought and energy represented by the Greater and Lesser

Trumps of the Tarot deck are reunited and reconciled. In All Hallows' Eve, the coveted "object" is put out of harm's way, at least temporarily, when illusion is killed. The fierceness of faith with which Lester and her friends force Simon's created illusion (the dwarf-woman) back upon him has the same effect as Pauline's laughter has on Mrs. Sammile: the rejection of illusion destroys illusion. The inward decay which characterizes the servants of illusion in Williams' novels (as in MacDonald's) is triggered into lightning-like growth. In All Hallows' Eve, the action of the final climax comes very close--the closest, in fact, that Williams came in any of the novels--to being theological allegory. A mysterious rain breaks through into Simon's house; the servants, on whom he has worked "miraculous" cures, awake again to the reality of their diseases; the rain melts the dwarf-woman, and, having taken on a rosy hue, drives back into Simon the eidola of himself which he had sent into other parts of the world to increase the number of his followers; it finally engulfs both them and him. The rain is specifically named as heavenly grace.⁴² Its final inrush, when it breaks through the roof, occurs immediately after Betty, one of Lester's companions, deliberately ventures into Simon's magic circle; the act of faith apparently calls forth a flow of grace from the City in return. It is noteworthy that the magical paraphernalia of the scene--the melting of the dwarf-woman, the breaking of the magic circle, and the coming of

⁴²"The heavenly rain . . . the grace drove against them from behind, as if it were driving them back to him" (ch. x). Cf. Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 190: "In the climax of the last chapter neither Christ nor a Church is named, but there is the Ascension, the blood, grace, and the Hallows."

the eidola, which are actual events in the story--prevent the story from diverging abruptly from the "real" world to the plane of theological allegory and lyrical "mysticism."

All Hallows' Eve is the most panoramic of Williams' fantasies. Its doctrinal and thematic base includes all of Williams' main ideas: co-inherence and love; substitution and exchange (e.g., Lester's sacrifice for Betty); forgiveness (e.g., Betty's of Lester); salvation and damnation through the exercise of free choice with respect to obeying or defying spiritual law; and concern with the role which illusion plays in thrusting obstacles on the path to salvation and making proper choice more difficult. Its imagined world opens out to include not only the actual London of Williams' own time, and the entire earth, but the world of the newly dead, and, ultimately, all eras, all places, and all people, which, taken together, form the City and which, individually, are microcosms of the City. The novel presents balanced portraits of the upward and downward journeys (Lester and Evelyn in particular), and also succeeds in widening the sense of what is natural, ie., normal and possible, to include the "good" spiritual supernatural and the lower or "bad" supernatural, in the form of black magic. It is made clear early in the novel that the normal visible world is only the visible portion of the spectrum of possible things.⁴³ Williams

⁴³Cf. Williams' statement in his review of Good and Evil Spirits: A Study of the Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development, by Edward Langton (Theology, XLV /October 1942/, 233-234): "The whole conception of immortality and the praeter-natural world has been widened and intensified. Man, in his natural life, is to be aware of it, for in that life after death which is his arch-natural life he will discover that that is one with--of the same nature with--the praeter-natural. This is the truth hidden in the phrase 'the restoration of all things.'"

achieves credibility of effect here partly through his skilful balance of the novel's episodes, some of which take place in the real world, others in the shadowy world, and still others, such as the opening scene on Westminster Bridge, in both worlds simultaneously. Those which take place in the "real" world carry overtones of the sense of presence of the invisible world, e.g., the scene in which Lester's husband begins to discern something not quite seen, but about to burst in upon the vision, in Jonathan's painting of the city of London. As in his earlier novels, Williams establishes the credibility of the marvellous by the extensive use of detailed and vivid physical descriptions of what he imagines to be occurring when spiritual activity is taking place; for example, Lester's endurance of Simon's spell is told in terms of her apprehension of its physical nature and of its effects on her--her painful and slow envelopment in a blue-green death mist (the physical manifestation of the backward-intoned Tetragrammaton) which crawls slowly upward from her feet.

The novel, therefore, in doctrine, theme, imagery, and technique, is the most comprehensive fusion of Williams' accumulated ideas and fantasy method. It might have marked the climax of his career as a fantasy novelist even had he lived. As already mentioned, Williams intended to write a non-fantastic novel next, but it was never written.

Having considered the main components of Williams' fantasy technique, and, to some degree, the successive stages in the development of mood and imagery in his fantasies, we come to the question of the more distinctive elements of Williams' style as they affect the fantasy.

The narratives, for the most part, are written in smooth-flowing, uninvoluted sentences,⁴⁴ so that, once caught up, the reader's attention is carried steadily forward on the plane of third-person observation. The unintrusiveness of the narration allows the attention to concentrate on the story's forward thrust. The dialogue, as Fuller points out, is sometimes mannered, but crisply focussed and functional.⁴⁵

When the author makes his presence known, however, this rhythm is slowed momentarily. Williams, like MacDonald, was strongly didactic, and, like MacDonald, he occasionally incorporated short explanatory, sermon-like passages or paradoxical moral aphorisms in his narratives, e.g., "This argument, though sound within its limits, suffered from the same trouble that invalidates all human argument and makes all human conclusion erroneous, namely, that no reasoning can ever start from the possession of all the facts" (Many Dimensions, ch. xiv); or, "Not being a reader of religious history Chloe was ignorant what things have been done in [sic] the strength of that plea, or with what passionate anxiety men have struggled to protect the subordination of Omnipotence" (Many Dimensions, ch. xiv); or, finally, "Lord Arglay, at once in contact and detached, at once faithless and believing, beheld all these things in the light of that fastidious and ironical goodwill which, outside mystical experience, is the finest and noblest capacity man has developed in and against the universe" (Many Dimensions, ch. xiii). Little moral sayings are occasionally voiced by the characters, and one is

⁴⁴It will be remembered that Williams occupied an editorial post at the Oxford University Press for most of his working life.

⁴⁵Fuller, op. cit., p. 202.

immediately aware of the author as preacher, e.g., "'All material danger is limited, whereas interior danger is unlimited. It's more dangerous for you to hate than to kill, isn't it?'" (The Place of the Lion, ch. i). It seems that the author was unable to refrain from clarifying, emphasizing, or providing a gloss. Sermon may come into the foreground and briefly eclipse fantasy, but never long enough to damage the suspension of disbelief; and, as Williams continued to write, he learned how to reconcile his natural bent for religious didacticism with the demands of fantasy narrative. This is illustrated in a passage from All Hallows' Eve (ch. viii) commenting on Simon's failure to understand that there is no limit to the number of spiritual beings who could use the body of the dwarf-woman he has created as an instrument of perception without being one with it organically.

The singleness of true incarnation must always be a mystery to the masters of magic; of that it may be said that the more advanced the magic, the deeper the mystery, for the very nature of magic is opposed to it. Powerful as the lie may be, it is still a lie. Birth and death are alike unknown to it; there is only conjunction and division. But the lie has its own laws. Once even Lester had assented to that manner of knowledge [entering the dwarf-woman's form], she must enter the City so. It remained to discover what she could do there.

The commentary here is not jarring, largely because of its code-like terminology, which harmonizes with the intended mysteriousness of the episode (the magical creation of the dwarf-woman), and therefore blends easily into the flow of the narrative. The number of explanatory passages does not diminish with the progress from the earlier to the later novels, but the early broadness of presentation gradually

gives way to a subtler, more indirect presentation, which, while getting its points across, does not disturb the narrative flow.

Williams' writing is also distinguished by certain characteristics which may have sprung from his strong affinity for ritual. Of this, C. S. Lewis wrote:

he was a man fitted by temperament to live in an age of more elaborate courtesy than our own. He was nothing if not a ritualist. Had modern society permitted it he would equally have enjoyed kneeling and being knelt to, kissing hands and extending his hand to be kissed. . . . But . . . even while enjoying such high pomps, he would have been aware of them as a game . . .⁴⁶
glorious game, well worth the playing.

Williams' enjoyment of ceremonial courtesies may have been related to his respect for the Miltonian concept of the hierarchy of chosen subordination, in which subordination implies no discourtesy or humiliation. He speaks, for instance, of courtesy being "in itself . . . good and to be enjoyed" (The Greater Trumps, ch. xi) and of royalty as "the making visible of hierarchic freedom, a presented moment of obedience and rule" (Shadows of Ecstasy, ch. vi). The solemn ritual of the Mass, on which Williams wrote extensively in his theological works, is the framework for the final climactic scene in War in Heaven. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in Williams certain devices of a ceremonial or invocational nature which seem intended to reflect the high seriousness of the novels' spiritual matter and to strengthen the sense of the unusual. There are, for instance, talismanic expressions

⁴⁶Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, pp. ix-x.

of a sacramental nature, which, through repetition, have the same force as magic formulas of protection. Thus, the characters in Many Dimensions bless one another frequently with such expressions as "Under the Protection" (chs. ix, xvii, and xviii) and "on whom be the Peace" (chs. i, iii, iv, viii, and xv). "Go with God" occurs in The Place of the Lion (ch. xv) and Descent into Hell (chs. vi, ix, and xii); and, in the latter, "Go in peace" (chs. vi, ix, and xii) and "the Mercy" (chs. vii, x, and xii; also in The Place of the Lion, chs. xv and xvi).⁴⁷

These expressions call attention to themselves, and, although Williams may have used them naturally, they unfortunately do not serve his probable intention, but rather seem to strive after effect. The same is true of certain archaisms of language, e.g., "'do you consider the doctrine that is within the Stone'" (the Chief Justice's command to Chloe, in Many Dimensions, ending of ch. xv); "Remained only the performance of the play" (Descent into Hell, ending of ch. viii); "'Remains to leave out the things and get into the light'" (All Hallows' Eve, ch. ii); and "And other acquaintances she had none" (All Hallows' Eve, ch. iii).

Another characteristic of Williams' style, which was probably the result of his interest in working out the implications of the imagery in which he couched Christian doctrine, rather than of any

⁴⁷The phrase "Under the Mercy" is inscribed on Williams' tombstone in St. Cross churchyard, in Oxford. Phrases such as the above also occur in Williams' poetry and, occasionally, in his review articles; see, for example, "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--III" (review of William Hayley's autobiography), G. K.'s Weekly, April 30, 1936, p. 115, in which the expressions "'Under the Mercy'" and "'By the Permission'" are used in narrating a little story. This article also contains some interesting references to Lilith as the mother of illusion.

conscious intention to heighten the fantasy through the use of code language, is his use of personal terminology without direct explanation. The meanings which he wishes to transmit through the use of the terms City, co-inherence, exchange, substitution, and largesse become clear as one continues to read through the novels. His theological writings are helpful glosses, of course, but it is not essential to have read them in order to grasp the meaning of these terms within the novels, where the story provides clear illustrations of what is meant by each.⁴⁸

This brief consideration of Williams' style completes the general review of the cardinal points of his fantasy technique which this chapter set out to present. With these as general background, succeeding chapters take a closer look at each of the novels in turn and, lastly, review some of the critical attempts to classify the novels and place them within a tradition, before embarking on a summary comparison of Williams and MacDonald as fantasists.

⁴⁸The use of this same terminology, however, is one of the chief difficulties encountered by persons who begin their study of Williams through his Arthurian poems. The novels are, in fact, the best introduction for anyone wishing either to acquire a general knowledge of Williams' ideas or to study his works more extensively.

Chapter IX. Williams as a Fantasist: II. The Early Novels
(An Interpretative Summary)

The laws of the spirit of man must hold,
alike in this world and in any world he
may invent.¹

A. Shadows of Ecstasy (written 1925; published 1933)²

The novel is concerned with the idea of man denying his own nature and defying God by trying to achieve godhead through physical immortality. The main mode of fantasy is the suspension of the normal laws of the physical body by the exertion of the will, buttressed with the power of primitive African magic.

In this novel appears the first of Williams' unusual villains, persons determined to obtain spiritual power on the grand scale. Nigel Considine differs from the others somewhat, however, in that his spiritual transgression springs not from a love of evil, but from misusing what can be good. His goal is to prove that if men can turn inward all the energies which they expend on other people and external pursuits, they can conquer the law of their own mortality, achieve a supreme ecstasy, and become immortal. According to this philosophy, all external activities and emotional expenditures are distractions: deceiving oneself "with getting children and with religion and with art . . . [is] not ecstasy, but the shadow of ecstasy" (ch. ix). Its cardinal doctrine

¹George MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," p. 316.

²The novels are discussed in order of publication, except for Shadows of Ecstasy, which is known to have been written first (see Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay, p. 14), although it was the fifth of the seven novels to be published.

is that of "transmutation of energy, of the conscious turning of joy and anguish alike into strength and will, and of that passionate strength and will into the exploration of all the capacities of man. . . . [For men] themselves are gods, if they will, and the ecstasy of that knowledge is their victory'" (ch. xi). Considine's goal is to descend into death and find "'an incredible ecstasy of descent and return'" (ch. vii), i.e., to divorce himself from the hierarchy and be Christ.

Considine, that is, attempts to use the Way of Rejection of images as a path to his own godhead; he not only rejects, he devours. The transmutation of energy which should be given outward in love or pain is drawn into the self, which becomes all-devouring, even of the idea of death, and feeds on itself. This is a new form of the sin of pride, a self-glorification reminiscent of Milton's Satan. He is not, like Williams' other villains, a villain by intent, but an aspiring anti-Christ of a special sort, who believes that what he seeks is good, in a sense that lies outside the "good" and "evil" of Christianity.

Considine has partly achieved his goal through a knowledge of primitive African magic. This is the first mention of a type of occult knowledge in Charles Williams' novels, and the only one of a primitive nature. The knowledge is only mentioned; its practice is not described.

Considine, by the gospel which he is trying to bring out of pagan Africa (traditionally a place of emotion and mystery) to Europe (traditionally the place where intellectual development reached full flower), has achieved unusual longevity--more than two centuries--needs very little food or drink, and has unusual powers over the minds of others. By controlling another's consciousness, he can even suspend

thought and will, to the extent that the other person will speak with his voice, as Inkamasi the black prince does (ch. vi). This may be taken to mean that Considine's strength not only feeds on itself, but also absorbs the wills and souls of those around him, by the magnetism of his personality, the plausibility of his talk, or both. This domination is illustrated in other ways; for instance, Considine is the head of a chosen company known as the Devotees, "who having achieved much choose to render their lives wholly into the will of the Deathless One that he may use them as he pleases" (ch. vii). This is an instance of co-inherence parodied: members living in one central entity, giving all they have, but receiving nothing in return.

Although Considine professes not to aspire to be more than a guide to a glorious way open to all, he is indifferent to the sacrifice of his followers' lives. His influence over Inkamasi is that of a teacher whose dogma the pupil struggles to uproot from his soul (Inkamasi is a Christian). The insidiousness of Considine's power is also shown in its effect on Roger, a professor of English literature who chafes at his inability to penetrate into the reality behind the poetry on which he lectures so well, or to experience that which inspired the word. Considine temporarily wins Roger over by showing, or seeming to show, him that he can help him attain this. The temptation is tailored to the subject in each case. Unlike the usual conception of Satan, however, Considine entirely believes what he is saying; his knowledge as to what kind of temptation to offer is instinctive. "He robs you of everything, of your souls most of all," Caithness the priest says (ch. xii). Considine's resemblance to Simon the magician in Williams' last novel is striking in this respect.

A struggle takes place over the possession of Inkamasi's will, consciousness, and soul (ch. vi, "The Mass at Lambeth"). By concentration of will and intention, Caithness is able to silence Considine's voice speaking through Inkamasi; and the Mass itself, used as a means of exorcism, is required to release him from his spiritual hypnosis.

As already noted, the direct power and effect of concentrated will (for good or evil) is a device Williams frequently used. It is used as a "supernatural" instrument within the story, but it invariably conveys the message that the willing of good or evil can, either immediately or in the long run, have a definite result in the tangible world. The power of the Mass is a reflection of Williams' strong belief in the spiritual power of redemption which every Mass reenacts.

Considine's system of living himself into something much greater (in his own eyes) succeeds in part, as is evidenced by his longevity, minimal physical needs, and great accumulation of special knowledge. There is even a hint that one of his followers, who tries the ultimate experiment of attempting to come back from the dead, nearly proves Considine's assertion that this can be done. Life returns, but only for a short while; even this failure Considine charges his followers to "change . . . into victory within you. Death here shall be life in you; feel it, imagine it, draw it into yourselves; as with all experience, so with this. Live by it; feed on it and live!" (ch. xi).

Considine is finally killed by a follower whose greed for some jewels supersedes his devotion. Williams, however, leaves open the question of whether Considine is really dead. There is a hint that he might overcome death and return (within the framework of fantasy in this novel), just as that part of the human soul which seeks to glorify

self and claims an existence independent of--or, at all events, greater than--any creator, repeatedly flourishes, disappears, and reappears in the world.

As pointed out earlier, the events in all of Williams' novels exalt and transform some characters and chastise or destroy others; most are changed in some way, in varying degrees, according to the spiritual path each chooses. Usually there is at least one character who undergoes an especially profound spiritual (but not necessarily religious) change. In Shadows of Ecstasy, the character most affected is Roger, on whom Considine's influence, like a spiritual infection, continues to work after his (assumed) death.

He took up his work again, but as he made notes for a special address on The Anti-thetical Couplet from Dryden to Johnson he was humbly aware that this work was part of a greater work. It would be his fault if he so touched the least detail of the divine art as to leave himself or others less sensitive to its central passion . . . He would never cease any more to acknowledge it, to search in it and for it, to believe in it, to wait for it.

(ch. xiv)

The direction Roger will take in seeking out the heart of poetry, his dearest concern, is as uncertain as the reality of Considine's disappearance. He may find a good way, or he may lose himself on the wrong one. This ambiguity, although perhaps true to "real life," leaves the reader with a sense of incompleteness. Williams' novels usually end on a tonic note of resolution and catharsis; the ambiguity in Shadows of Ecstasy is due perhaps to its being a first novel.

B. War in Heaven (1930)

War in Heaven presents the idea of a fight against those who wish to achieve power through destruction. The modes of fantasy are the actuality of the Graal Chalice and of its keeper, i.e., a blend of Christian tradition and Arthurian romance material, as well as witchcraft and black magic. Over and above these is, again, the power of the Mass. The Graal, which is the focus of the story's narrative and symbolism, may be acted upon by human will and choice, both by those who would use it for destructive purposes and those who would reunite it with its original mystery. The reunion is achieved with the Mass offered by Prester John, a priest-king.

Williams' description of the Chalice is specific and therefore real: it is of silver, about six inches deep, and, with its pedestal and stem, perhaps sixteen inches high; it has little decoration and is dented with use, a very plain object. To Sir Giles Tumulty, the antiquarian, it is only an object of "antiquity and savage folklore" (ch. viii); to the Duke of the North Ridings, a Catholic, it is an object of adoration; and to the Archdeacon who accidentally discovered it, it is less important in itself than as a symbol--but only a symbol--of the centre of all mysteries: "of all material things still discoverable in the world the Graal had been nearest to the Divine and Universal Heart. Sky and sea and land were moving, not towards that vessel, but towards all it symbolized" (ch. x). To Kenneth, a lover of poetry, it is connected with "exalted poetry and the high romantic tradition in literature" (ch. viii); while to Gregory Persimmons, a diabolist, it is a means for achieving unholy enjoyment, and to Manasseh, his companion, a means of destruction. Since the Graal images what is closest to the heart,

it is perceived physically in ways that respond to these desires. Thus, the Archdeacon fancies he hears cosmic music, while to Gregory the Graal seems pungent with the smell of ammonia. It is characteristic of Williams' blending of the supernatural and the real to leave some doubt as to whether these sensations are subjective or actual perceptions.³

When an attempt to steal the Graal fails, a spiritual attempt is made to destroy it through black magic in a Black Mass. At this time it is in the joint possession of the Archdeacon, the Duke, and Kenneth Mornington--in Kenneth's words, "'an Order . . . a new Table'" (ch. x), or, also in Kenneth's words, a new Galahad (the Archdeacon), a new Percivale (the Duke), and a new Bors (Kenneth himself), an "ordinary workaday fellow like me" (ch. ix). Kenneth sees the situation, at least in the beginning, through the glass of Arthurian romance; the Duke, of religion.

When subjected to the spiritual pressure of the Black Mass, the Graal, like any ordinary physical object (in terms of the fantasy) is vulnerable. A mist arises from it; it seems to shine and expand, and at times its substance seems softer or harder, its outline blurred. A battle of wills takes place, as the black spell of Gregory and Manasseh flows toward and retreats from the force of the prayers of the new keepers

³Williams several times uses the device of detailing his characters' perceptions, desires, and spiritual state by describing the way each sees or is affected by the same object or situation, as, for example, the visions conjured up by mysterious music in Considine's house in Shadows of Ecstasy (ch. v), the Graal's effects on different people in War in Heaven, the attitudes inspired by the elementals in The Place of the Lion, the appearances of the Fool in The Greater Trumps, and the vision of the rosy rain in All Hallows' Eve (ch. x).

of the Graal. The war in heaven of the title, that biblical and Miltonic echo,⁴ is of course the war between good and evil, one side fighting to preserve order, the other trying to destroy the hierarchy and restore chaos.

Kenneth . . . saw . . . the radiations that encompassed the Graal and the fine arrows of energy that were expended against it. Unimportant as the vessel in itself might be, it was yet an accidental storehouse of power that could be used, and to dissipate this material centre was the purpose of the war.

(ch.x)

This is another instance of Williams' use of the preternatural power of concentrated will and thought, but here it is a battle of wills. The prayers of the Archdeacon and his companions prevail: a good example of Williams' method of combining the Christian theological and the "supernatural," as a means of illustrating the doctrine that prayer is a potent affective and effective energy.

When the Graal falls into the hands of its enemies, they endeavor to use it against itself, by attempting to perform a human soul sacrifice, forcing the soul of a man Gregory Persimmons has murdered into the Archdeacon's body. The thought-forces of Gregory (motivated by a desire to please the devilish power that can give him enjoyment), Manasseh (a destroyer), and a mysterious Greek (given over

⁴"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels" (Revelation.xii.7). And in Paradise Lost, I, 40-44: "He trusted to have equall'd the most High,/ If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim/Against the Throne and Monarchy of God/Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battle proud/With vain attempt."

to utter rejection of all things) are concentrated on to the Archdeacon through the Graal. The dead man's spirit appears through a greenish light emanating from the Cup. But the Cup's essence is touched; a great light breaks from it;⁵ trumpets are heard; and the energies concentrated upon the Graal are turned back against those emitting them. The scene is skilfully built up with the paraphernalia of witchcraft, carefully imagined and described.

Prester John, one of the traditional keepers of the Graal, appears, as it were, from the heart of the Cup, where, spiritually, he dwells, rescues the Archdeacon, and releases the soul of the murdered man. To the three who sought to destroy the Graal he gives exactly what they seek: "'I am rejection to him that hath sought rejection [the Greek]; I am destruction to him that hath wrought destruction [Manasseh]; I am sacrifice to him that hath offered sacrifice [Gregory].'" He warns that "'this war is ended and another follows quickly'" (ch. xvii), a reminder that what has taken place is only one in a long chain of skirmishes between hell and heaven.

Prester John, a legendary supernatural figure,⁶ is recognizable to the other characters as someone met in the past, but not quite identifiable; for some it is a pleasant memory, in others he arouses

⁵Cf. Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur, XIII, vii: "In the midst of this blast [of thunder] entered a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other, by their seeming, fairer than ever they saw afore. . . . Then there entered into the hall the Holy Graal covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it."

⁶As mentioned, one of two such in Williams' novels, the other being Lillith (Descent into Hell), discussed below.

immediate hatred; and he can appear or remain invisible to whom he pleases. He reflects the image or idea of Christ which each has retained from encounters with Him, although unrecognized as such at the time, and he evokes degrees of loving acceptance or savage rejection according to whether the memory is of friend or foe. He is a priest-king, the Lord of the Graal, and not unlike a stern angel; he predicts Kenneth's death.

The novel is filled with vivid descriptions of "that perverted way of the soul which we call magic, or (on a lower level) witchcraft."⁷ For instance, there is (at least in the mind) a pact between Gregory and evil powers. Various kinds of sorcery are practiced; for example, the child Adrian, whom Gregory proposes to offer as a votary to the devil, is made restless in his sleep as Gregory promises to sacrifice him (a kind of sympathetic magic); Adrian is made to see magic pictures in the Graal and in a black disc, as the beginning of votarization; Gregory uses the magic circle and the Graal, in which he has dropped a few of Adrian's hairs (a kind of woodoo), to summon Adrian's image and celebrate a type of Black Mass; when Kenneth rushes past the lines of a magic diagram which the Greek has drawn on the floor, he dies--his spirit becomes visible, and his body falls to dust; the Greek causes his shop to appear and disappear at will, and by force of will makes the Duke write what he does not wish to. These distorted powers are the inevitable degradation of the souls who exercise them.

⁷Williams, Witchcraft, p. 9.

A particularly interesting mode of fantasy is the spiritual witches' sabbath which Gregory attends by virtue of a magic ointment smeared on his body, and by an incantation and a reversed pentagon. Falling into a trance, he has the sensation of floating, of being with a crowd of beings like himself, hungry for all experience, but especially union with Satan. Theirs, however, is a spiritual sabbath; that it takes place within Gregory's mind is as horrendous a notion, and as damning an index of his chosen spiritual state, as if it were actually taking place on the physical plane. This is another, and a particularly good, example of Williams' ability to combine the ritual of witchcraft with the vivid depiction of spiritual deterioration.

When Gregory treacherously applies the ointment to a wound on the arm of Adrian's mother, a woman who has probably "drifted through the world like most people, 'neither for God nor for his enemies'" (ch. xi), it sends her spirit into the nightmare of the sabbath dance, which she doesn't understand, and causes her body to act wildly, while she screams for help. It seems to her that Prester John rescues her from the edge of a pit in a dream; he is "the safety and peace which had succoured her in the house of the infernal things" (ch. xvi), i.e., a manifestation of Christ's mercy available to those who, uncommitted and unprotected, have come near to viewing the open face of evil, and call upon that mercy.

In the final movement of the story, Prester John celebrates Mass with the Graal. The word-picture which Williams creates is simultaneously that of the Graal making real to the minds of the listening congregation the stupendous truth which is veiled in the ritual of the Mass, and of the Graal's being withdrawn finally into the divinity with

which it was once physically associated. During the Mass (not a Catholic one), the Duke sees the faces of persons long dead participating in the ritual which includes them all; emanations from the past, they too are manifestations of the City, companions in the co-inherence of all men in God.

At a great distance Lionel and Barbara and
the Duke saw beyond Him, as he lifted up
the Graal, the moving universe of stars,
and then one flying planet, and then fields
and rooms and a thousand remembered places,
and all in light and darkness and peace.

(ch. xviii)

The Archdeacon approaches the sanctuary, gently crosses from this world to the other, and "without violence, without parting, the Graal and its Lord were gone" (ibid.).

Prester John's Mass is a final scene of transcendence and catharsis, marking the end of a great spiritual episode, and a new point of departure for the characters, nearly all of whom have undergone a spiritual change. In War in Heaven, as in Many Dimensions, the next novel, a "magic" object is the focal point of a final celebration of adoration; it represents the way to God, the heavenly City, to which the submission of the individual will is the key.

From the outset the Archdeacon is closest to an understanding of the Graal's nature; he is already partly sanctified. Events serve only to make more real to him the spiritual truth that can manifest itself in, but does not need, material reality. His death at Prester John's Mass is the final stage in this progression before he leaves the world of material reality. In a sense, he fulfills Kenneth's description of him as Galahad, for like Galahad, he, the most spiritual of the Graal company, is assumed into heaven. His way has been basically that of the Rejection of Images.

Kenneth Mornington's conversion is perhaps a more interesting example of spiritual development. Like Roger in Shadows of Ecstasy, he loves

poetry; but he is allowed to experience the dazzling reality behind the words, the unmasked reality behind what has come down the ages in the veiled form of myth. Thus, when he and his companions are resisting the spiritual attack on the substance of the Graal, he has a "fantastic vision" (ch. x). Visions in Williams' novels--as discussed above--are a device by which the supernatural is blended with reality and thought is made into action. On one level, the vision is truly taking place; on another, the mind of the character is simply becoming consciously aware of truths which will immediately affect his spiritual outlook.

This, then, was the thing from which the awful romances sprang, and the symbolism of a thousand tales. . . . this had rested in dreadful and holy hands . . . Half in dream, half in vision, he saw a grave young God communicating to a rapt companion-ship the mysterious symbol of unity. . . . Liturgical and romantic names melted into one cycle--Lancelot, Peter, Joseph, Percivale, Judas, Mordred, Arthur, John Bar-Zebedee, Galahad--and into these were caught up the names of their makers . . .

He heard Malory's words . . . The single tidings came to him across romantic hills; he answered with the devotion of a romantic and abandoned heart.

(ch. x)

For Kenneth the realization that there is a spiritual reality behind the stories he loves seals a contract between him and that reality; he becomes in fact a member of the Grail company. It carries him into martyrdom, when he rushes past the barriers of a magic diagram in an attempt to rescue the Graal. Kenneth is a sacrificial victim and a follower of the Way of Affirmation of images. Unlike Roger in Shadows of Ecstasy, he crosses the gap between the poetic word and the experience that is behind the word. His spirit is finally released entirely when Prester John reclaims the Graal. Kenneth prophesies incorrectly, however, in likening himself to Bors, for Bors was the only member of the Grail company who returned from Sarras to tell the Grail story in Camelot.

C. Many Dimensions (1931)

Prester John predicted that another war would follow quickly; Many Dimensions recounts another such war, a struggle between good and evil, also concentrated on and through a "magical" object. Again, it is a war between those who would use the talisman for selfish ends and those who would serve it, i.e., between the selfish and the selfless, the greedy and the self-giving, those who defy and those who submit to the divinity which the object represents; or, in the final analysis, those who choose damnation and those who seek salvation. The main mode of fantasy is another magic/divine object, the Stone of Solomon (an invention of Williams).

Besides sharing the same basic theme, War in Heaven and Many Dimensions are linked by the rather absurdly wicked character of Sir Giles Tumulty, the antiquary-scientist who in both cases unearths the magic object that is a spiritual touchstone for those who come into contact with it. Giles is interested only in objective observation of the Stone's properties. His language is full of tortuous insults, so strained as to appear ridiculous. Williams shared with George MacDonald the rare gift of being able to make his good characters, or those who are becoming good, interesting (a point discussed at more length in chapter XII). He is equally skilful at elaborating a portrait of a subtle but steady deterioration of the soul, as in the case of Miss Wilmot and Foster in The Place of the Lion and, especially, Wentworth in Descent into Hell. Most of his villains, also, are interesting at least for their magical pyrotechnics if not for their character development or spiritual evolution. However, Williams was unsuccessful in his portrait of Tumulty, intended to be

that of an arch-villain; Giles' blackness of heart is so complete at the outset as to defy credibility and certainly to allow of no further development as a character; therefore as a character he fails.

The object he brings into the story is a stone from a circlet, all that is left of Suleiman's (Solomon's) crown. The modes of the marvellous within the novel all radiate from the central concept of the magic-divine stone. As with the Graal, Williams is careful to describe it in specific terms so that the reader is given a definite mental picture of a real object: within it are the letters of the Tetragrammaton (a word of power, used also as part of the fantasy in All Hallows' Eve). Its physical characteristics defy normal physical laws: it never becomes smaller, even when bits are broken off; when it is struck, an exact replica or Type is produced, which has all the characteristics and properties of the original; it seems to have weight when held in the hand, but does not register when placed on a scale; and at times it changes color and seems to expand. It is, in brief, an entity which is in the world yet not of it (a figuring forth of Christ).

The Stone can be used in unusual ways--to travel in space, in time, and into the minds of others: these are some of its many dimensions. Travel in space proves to be painless, except for causing a slight headache. Giles' nephew Reginald regards the ability of the Stone to teleport as a source only of considerable potential financial profit; he never wonders at its mystery.

Travel in time is a more complicated act. Giles goes forward in time and loses half an hour; since he is unable to remember it, he

does not know whether his mind is in the future or the past, or whether his mind-time and body-time are synchronized. A more complicated instance of time travel is his cruel experiment of sending a man back into the past by persuading him to wish himself there while holding a Type of the Stone. As a result, each time the man returns to the moment at which he wished himself into the past, he returns there--and so on, in a hideous repeating cycle. He is eventually released by Lord Arglay and Chloe, the defenders of the Stone, who use it when the unhappy Pondon returns once again to the moment of his wish, to will that he may be aware of them trying to free him from the past, and so not repeat his wish to enter it. By an act of submission to the Stone, Chloe and Arglay are able to achieve this. Williams works out the intricacies of travel through past, present, and future in great detail, as a continuum in which every point is contiguous with every other; time is both sequential and superimposed on itself.

The Stone can effect cures. It also sustains life, but sometimes in a fearfully literal manner: Giles gives a Type of the Stone to a man condemned to hang; he lives on, with a broken neck, doomed to lie in a hospital bed, between death and life.

The Stone can be used to wish oneself into someone else's mind and experience his thoughts and feelings--an unusual type of crystal-ball gazing, and a specialized kind of voyeurism. When the onlooker allows his own feelings to interfere, the vision blurs, as when Giles tries to enter Arglay's mind. Occasionally the holder of the Stone can influence the thoughts and actions of the person into whose mind he is peering--exercising what might be described as

extrasensory influence, as when Giles, like a new Satan or Screwtape, whispers into Chloe's mind and causes her to think, speak, and act in ways which would normally be repugnant to her. Giles acts in her, making her think the Stone's goodness is nonsense, and causing her to call people names (as Giles does) and behave indecorously.

The growth of Giles in Chloe is done subtly with the use of incremental detail, beginning with her experiencing a simple feeling of restlessness, and proceeding logically to her experiencing distaste for everything she loves and respects.⁸ It is an unusual kind of possession; Lord Arglay exorcises the "demon" by asking Chloe what it is that she serves (the Stone), thereby calling her back to herself (i.e., the devil is put to rout by invoking the name of Christ, as in any medieval legend); afterwards, she cannot quite remember what happened. Like Eve, she has heard the tempter's voice in her ear and not known it as such, for what it said was plausible and pleasant and inspired her with a desire for possession and power: "'never--no, in all my life,'" she says, "'I never wanted so utterly to grab without giving anything at all, never before'" (ch. xiii). Giles's attempt at ruling Chloe nearly backfires seriously when Arglay calls to her "with the authority to which she was accustomed and which she loved." Giles's will is swept aside, and a darkness falls upon him--a foreshadowing of what will eventually befall him through misuse of the Stone: "he became aware of the Stone in his hands, it seemed to move in them and itself to thrust him back. He dropped it suddenly as if

⁸Cf. the way in which the Shadow passes into the Little Ones in MacDonald's Lilith, ch. xxxvii.

just in time to avoid its growth against him . . ." (ch. xiv).

The novel is particularly concerned with Chloe's spiritual journey. She is the first to learn to venerate the Stone's power and to be offended at the insults offered it by those who use it in unsuitable ways. She and Arglay, but especially she, become aware of the Stone's sacred nature.

Chloe is consecrated. Unmistakable hints of this are given when we are told that Hajji, by whose family the Stone had long been guarded, dreamed that he saw the name of Allah [= God, the Tetragrammaton] on her forehead, as it is written on the Stone, and when Chloe dreams that she is in the court of Suleiman ben Daood. In that dream, Solomon lifts his hand and opens it.

But what was in or on it Chloe did not see, for there leapt upon her from it a blinding light, and at once her whole being felt a sudden devastating pain and then a sense of satisfaction entire and exquisite, as if desires beyond her knowledge had been evoked and contented at once, a perfect apprehension, a longing and a fulfilment.

(ch.xi)

This dream occurs after she refuses to allow a friend to inveigle her into letting him borrow the Stone to help him pass an important examination. She fails to convince him that he has rationalized a desire to attain by cheating that which he fears he cannot do on his own, and that the Stone must not be used for such purposes. He is aggrieved and, step by freely-chosen step, he eventually sinks as far as to steal the Stone from Chloe's handbag.

A turning-point in the story and another milestone in Chloe's spiritual development is reached when Ali, one of those in whose keeping the Stone had originally been, attempts to steal it from

under her pillow. Knowing he is there, Chloe realizes that she can wish herself elsewhere by the power of the Stone. Instead, she chooses the harder way: she silently gives herself up to the will of the Stone.

The light grew suddenly around her . . . a vibration went through her, as if a note of music had been struck along her whole frame . . .

(ch. xiv)

and the intruder is blasted and burned, as if by lightning.

The Stone is explained as being the First Matter of Creation, from which all things spiritual and material are made. But it is also imagined that Solomon had a ring as well, within which was a light that was the spirit of creation. It had fallen on the Stone and was therefore in it and its Types. Hence, when Chloe seeks union with the Stone by willing that its will and not hers be done, the power of that light enters into her; whoever touches such a person with evil intent draws the lightning down upon himself, and so Ali is destroyed. Had Chloe been in this state of grace, reached by an act of submission of the will--and that is surely what this portion of the fantasy is a metaphor for--when Giles attacked her mind, it may be supposed that he would have been blasted, instead of feeling that he was simply being thrust back.

Thus far in the story, it has been made clear that the Stone has no power over its Types, unless someone should will himself and it to be with the "Transcendence" (ch. iv). Once Chloe has offered herself, the Stone has new and greater powers, to act on its own and not to be simply a passive instrument. Therefore, when Giles holds his Type in his hand and wishes angrily that he could "get at" Chloe,

his wish is fulfilled with terrible literalness.⁹ The Stone seems to open in his hand, and he sees in it descending coils of alternating light and darkness. He drops the Stone, but it hangs in the air, dilating until it encompasses the entire room, while Giles seeks futilely to escape. The coils of light and darkness engulf him, and down the spiral passages, at the heart of the Stone, he sees Chloë; he has "got at" her because, spiritually, she is now contained within the Stone (Christ). Giles is imprisoned, and the light that blasted Ali strikes out at him repeatedly with spears of fire (i.e., the stings of remembrance) as he sees and remembers all the Giles Tumultys

of childhood and boyhood and youth and age,
all that he had ever been . . . He was
doing, it seemed, innumerable things at
once . . . and yet the whole time he was
not doing, he was slipping, slipping down,
and under and over him the Glory shone,
and sometimes it withdrew a little and
then pierced him again with new agony. . . .
From the spirals of time and place he felt
himself falling, and still he fell and fell.

(ch. xvi)

He is found dead, pierced and burnt as if by many pinpoints of fire.¹⁰

⁹As is that of the villains in War in Heaven. Their punishment is to receive exactly what was most wished for, but in its purest and most terrifying form. Cf. the literalness of the City's reaction even to casual exclamations that are faintly, if thoughtlessly, blasphemous, in All Hallows' Eve. Cf. also Charles Williams, "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--VI," G. K.'s Weekly, July 23, 1936, p. 307: "And in those states, Peter, you had better be very careful indeed what you ask of the universe for, by the glory which is about us! the universe will probably give you what you ask. And I may just hint, 'in the most delicate manner in the world,' that you probably won't like it. One of the most terrifying phrases in the New Testament is 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' And then--what?"

¹⁰Cf. the slow descent of Wentworth into the abyss in Descent into Hell.

The Stone, like the Graal in War in Heaven, houses or is a focal point and a channel for the Divine Essence. (As all space, all time, and all thought are contained in God, so these many dimensions are in and are ruled by the Stone.) Movement through space and time is therefore an illusion, for time, space, and all-created things are in the Stone, not the Stone in space and time. The manner of Giles's death is a metaphor for divine judgment passed on his sins and his steady moral deterioration. The mode of fantasy is to have his punishment happen in the physical as well as the spiritual world, his body dead, his soul defeated like another Satan, struck down by spears of light (divine wrath).

It remains, within the story, to reunite all the Types of the Stone, which the Stone cannot do of itself, and to enable its Mystery to pass out of it back to Its source. Chloe offers herself as a channel. The scene of this magical reunion is one both of final emotional climax and catharsis within the framework of the story's modes of fantasy, and a representation of Chloe's final dedication of herself to God. It is the all but final step in her spiritual development and constitutes a scene of celestial transfiguration which counterbalances Giles's descent into whatever inferno awaits him.

Chloe consents willingly to be a path for the Stone and its Types to reunite and return to their place of origin. She offers up as well "all those who for any purpose of good or evil had laid their hands or fixed their desires upon the Stone" (ch. xvii). Her offer is accepted; all the Types converge upon her and pass through her form into the Stone; then all that flowed in flows out again from the Stone into and through her body, and the letters of the Tetragrammaton

are seen black upon her forehead. This is another of the many instances in which Williams employs the supernatural to convey a theological meaning; in this case, the mode of fantasy is a metaphor for proven salvation--the seal of acceptance by heaven placed on a soul which has given itself, and the burden it bears of others' sins, freely to God.

She stood . . . as the Stone sank slowly through her whole presented nature to its place in the order of the universe, and that mysterious visibility of the First Matter of creation returned to the invisibility from which it had been summoned to dwell in the crown of Suleiman . . . now from the hands stretched to grasp it and the minds plotting to use it . . . it withdrew through a secluded heart.

(ch. xvii)

So the Stone, like the Graal, returns to the spiritual places.

Chloe is the sacrificial victim in this story, as Kenneth was in War in Heaven. She dies of her obedience, but her submission is a free choice; she achieves, as it is called within the story, the End of Desire. Without stretching an analogy too far, it seems admissible to liken Chloe's sacrifice to a version of the crucifixion, for, although she herself is not the Godhead, it is through her flesh and freely-offered sacrifice that divinity reunites with itself. It is, in a sense, to take the Way of Rejection of images. In Williams, final self-sacrifice, apotheosis, or resolution of a grand struggle through an unselfish act symbolizes the salvation which is open to all who willingly choose obedience to the Good. In those novels centering on magic/divine objects, the object is part of the ceremony of sacrifice.

Choice plays an extremely important role in Williams' novels, and, of those discussed so far, most especially in Many Dimensions. Chloe's spiritual progress is marked first by her attraction to the Stone, and then by her veneration for it, shown through her choice not to lend it for selfish purposes or use it for escape, but to let it rule her, and ultimately to will union with it. There are other examples: each character develops according to the choices generated from his soul. Arglay, for instance, chooses not to use the Stone to defeat Tumulty in the fight for Chloe's mind; he succeeds in a more honorable way. These personages are givers, in contrast to the devourers. Williams' villains are, invariably, devourers, e.g., Considine, who strives to devour joy, sorrow, and even death, to become immortal; Gregory Persimmons, who feeds on others' hurt and destruction as a sacrifice to his god; Giles Tumulty, who indulges in sadistic scientific research to feed his curiosity; and, in All Hallows' Eve, Simon, who strives to take to himself power over both the temporal and the spiritual world.

D. The Place of the Lion (1931)

For a time Williams abandoned the device of using a folklore motif--a magic object--as the pivotal point of his fantasy stories. In The Place of the Lion, published in the same year as Many Dimensions, the scope of the fantasy is much grander and unfolds with beautifully structured suspense.¹¹

¹¹The Place of the Lion is the novel which first captured C. S. Lewis' interest: "Twenty-four hours [after reading it]. . . I found myself, for the first time in my life, writing to an author I had never met to congratulate him on his book" (preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. viii).

In this novel Williams used Platonic tradition, with the concept of archetypal beasts roaming the English countryside, as his chief mode of fantasy; into this are fitted many subordinate ones, including some from folklore (transformation of people into beasts, supernatural warnings) and science fiction (huge monsters). There are also waking visions, invisibility, the exercise of extraordinary will power as a means of combat, and the reenactment of a biblical event. The archetypes are understood, within the novel itself, to be the undiluted essences of the separate qualities in men's souls, and the energy components of powerful Angels divorced from their accompanying intelligences.

The key to the extraordinary events taking place is given approximately halfway through the book, when the young writer Anthony Durrant is informed by his friend Richardson of the contents of an old book, De Angelis, supposedly written by a Marcellus Victorinus of Bologna in 1514, and based on a much earlier work by a Greek author. Williams gives just enough of the text of this "olde boke" to cast some light on the odd events which have been occurring (see below).

The book relates that the angels and the universals are identical, and that the representation of angels as sweet and kindly beings is misleading. There are nine orders, represented in paintings by circles, of which the first is that of the lion, and the second that of the serpent. At this point, eight pages are "missing" from "Marcellus' book"; but the text resumes with a description of the final circle, which is that of the seraphim. The circles, the book continues, are sometimes arranged in two pairs of four, with between them "the Glory of the Eagle . . . he who knows both himself and the

others, and is their own knowledge'" (ch. viii). The energies of the orders "can exist in separation from the intelligence which is in them in heaven'" (ibid.). When separated, these "spectres," if invoked, have power over those who invoke them and can transform them into their own likeness. The energies, if uncontrolled by the intelligences with which they are normally coupled and by which they are guided, will also absorb and destroy anyone who inadvisedly crosses their path. This fantasy motif seems to mean that those who worship a given quality blindly, without tempering devotion with reason, are eventually warped or destroyed spiritually by their obsession.

Williams has carried through a very subtle plot treatment: he depicts the physical world, with a wealth of plausible and logical detail, reacting as it would if the philosophical and metaphysical planes were actually disturbed in the fashion described. For example, as the archetypal Lion (the principle of brute strength) roams the countryside, strength drains out of material objects--steel, wood, iron--and houses crumble into dust. Williams has, moreover, created a double allegory, one actually occurring within the novel itself, and the other the message from the novel to the reader. His imagined world is one in which personifications (the archetypal energies) actually roam abroad and the human personages are aware of this. They experience a living allegory physicalized, which has to act itself out; while at the same time Williams points a moral to his reader. Some characters come through safely, others do not, according to their natures and to the help given them by others.

In the first chapter, the division between the energies and the intelligences is accomplished, although the reader does not yet

know that this is the case. As the result of research by a group of people led by a man named Berringer, who, it later transpires, has read De Angelis, the separation occurs when a stray circus lioness leaps into Berringer's garden and collides with him. By some strange coinciding of forces, a metaphysical split occurs when the lioness crosses his path during his meditations. Anthony and his friend Quentin, who are watching, cannot distinguish clearly what happens, but see the lioness disappear; in her place is a huge lion, roaring violently. This archetypal male lion is later identified as archetypal Strength, which has been let loose on the world and absorbed the lioness, one of its earthly images or eidola, since it was in the Lion's path.¹²

The eidola have an affinity for the perfect figuring of themselves that exists in the ideal (spiritual) world--the affinity which exists between that which is in the state of becoming, and its pure essence or ideal. Williams has here adapted Platonic ideas to his own purposes. All ideals absorb their lesser reflections; therefore, for example, fierceness yearns towards pure Strength, and earthly loveliness towards ideal Beauty.¹³

¹²The gathering of eidola into an archetype or source is a theme which reappears in Williams' novels in various forms. In Many Dimensions, for example, the Types of the Stone are eidola (shadows, reproductions) which eventually are gathered back into the original. In All Hallows' Eve, Simon the magician creates false images of himself; and in Descent into Hell, as discussed below, there are two versions of the doppelgänger.

¹³Perhaps this sacramentalist approach (in C. S. Lewis' sense) and the brilliance with which it is executed was at least partly responsible for Lewis' admiration for The Place of the Lion (see footnote 11).

Damaris Tighe, Anthony's fiancée, is a scholar, but one of a snobbish sort, who has tended to forget that behind the subject for a paper there is the reality of the subject. As she is giving a lecture to Berringer's group (Berringer himself having been unconscious since the moment of the Lion's appearance), a disgusting smell permeates the room; and Miss Wilmot, one of the audience, screams that she sees a huge crowned serpent; it is, however, not visible to anyone else. In terms of what the reader learns from "Marcellus' book" later, it is clear that two archetypes are drawing near those who are making themselves into images of these archetypes. The smell is the first indication of the presence in the physical world of the carrion Pterodactyl, the archetype which must consume Damaris if she remains in her present spiritual condition, eagerly poking among the rotten bones of knowledge, without any true regard for the living minds which evolved the philosophical ideas that she organizes neatly into periods, influences, and charts.

Miss Wilmot sees a Snake because it is the archetype of subtlety and malice, to which, as the story goes on, it becomes evident that she is addicted. The fact that the snake is visible only to her is Williams' way of indicating that she alone has insight into this ugly facet of her own character and that she is being warned.

The foul odor reoccurs in Damaris' house while Anthony is there; he is appalled. He takes exception to her approach to her work, but is unable to bring her to recognize its emptiness. The presence of the smell is an indication that the hideous archetype is seeking Damaris out.

While out on a stroll, Anthony and Damaris' father, an amateur butterfly collector, come upon a Butterfly, colossal and more beautiful than any Mr. Tighe has ever seen.

It was a terrific, colossal butterfly, it looked as if it were two feet or more across from wing-tip to wing-tip. It was tinted and coloured with every conceivable brightness; green and orange predominating.

(ch. iii)

Hosts of butterflies converge from every direction and disappear into it. It is the archetype of Beauty, absorbing its earthly images into itself. The danger of the archetypes, or angelicals, begins to make itself apparent. The entire world will sooner or later be broken down and absorbed into them. Mr. Tighe, whose love of beauty is his dominant quality, is himself ultimately drawn into the Butterfly, "the perfect symbol of his daily concern" (ch. iii). Seeing the ideal embodiment of what he most worships has so affected him that henceforth he is unable to focus his attention on anything else, including his own daughter, outside his recollection of that moment of beauty. His path becomes one of mental withdrawal and, finally, death.

Mr. Foster, another of Berringer's adepts, explains how the group had been attempting to see into the world of principles. According to their way of thinking, all humans are created by the entrance of certain principles into matter; the principles, which bear names such as wisdom, courage, and beauty, are actually great powers, possibly even the angels of the Christian religion. In humans they are mingled in varying proportions, in animals less so; they are in fact the archetypes of the beasts. They exist in a real world, and the objective of

the group has been to see into that world. Since the powers show their natures almost unalloyed in animals, a particular sympathy exists between them.

"if one of those animals should be brought within the terrific influence of one particular idea . . . very specially felt through a man's intense concentration on it . . . the matter of the beast might be changed into the image of the idea, and this world, following that one, might all be drawn into that other world."

(ch. iv)

Some men will welcome this, as Mr. Tighe has, and be "joined to that Power which each of them best serves" (ch. iv). Others will not believe in what is happening, but the powers will seek them out. Still others will flee and be hunted; nothing will escape. Foster has devoted himself to the Lion and is willing to be destroyed when the powers destroy the world. Anthony, however, chooses to stand against them: "'If they are part of me . . . then perhaps the authority which is in me over me shall be in me over them'" (ch. iv). That is, he chooses to try to govern these separate energies as he governs them compatibly in his own soul. With this decision, Anthony's spiritual progress has begun.

He and Quentin visit Berringer's house, the central point for the irruption of the world of ideas into the world of matter. Around it the flowers are withered, the grass brown, and the earth parched by an unnatural heat. Like the foul smell and the recurring thunder, which is mentioned throughout the early chapters (the natural phenomena produced by the Bird of Prey and the Lion abroad in the world), so the dead appearance of the earth around Berringer's house is mute physical evidence of the presence of the energy/archetype which takes the form

of Fire (i.e., the burning desire for knowledge), by which Berringer and his house are eventually consumed. The physical details in Williams' story are well conceived and well placed, serving as unmistakable but not obtrusive hints of unusual forces at work.

Anthony and Quentin catch sight of the Lion once more, and, at the same time, the road on which they are walking seems to undulate beneath their feet; the invisible Serpent is also passing. Quentin becomes hysterical, but Anthony, looking up, sees a winged shape whose passage seems to still the road's movement. This is his first glimpse of the Eagle, the entity which rules the other orders of the hierarchy of powers in the other world, as explained in "Marcellus." This appearance may be understood as a reflection of Anthony's decision to try to reconcile the wandering powers. The Eagle is later identified as "the idea of wisdom, the image of philosophy, the temporal extension of divine science" (ch. xiv).

Quentin tries to kill the Lion with a revolver (Force with force) and is deaf to Anthony's urging him to fight brute Strength by conquering it within himself. "'That's not the way to rule; that's not within you,'" he cries (ch. v). Anthony counteracts it by force of will, but Quentin, mad with fear, runs away into the countryside.

At this point, the story temporarily leaves off recounting outward events. Anthony quietly reviews what has taken place and considers what course of action he should pursue. During this meditation, he comes to realize the danger which threatens Damaris, although she is ignorant of it and would be scornful even of the idea of it:

she would go on thoughtfully playing with the dead pictures of ideas, with names and philosophies . . . not knowing that the living existences to which seers and saints had looked were already in movement to avenge themselves on her. . . . it was the fault of her time . . . the pseudo-knowledge that affected all the learned . . . in an age of pretence . . .

(ch. vi)

Anthony determines to try to exercise dominion over the powers, and save the world and Damaris.

His first test follows soon after, when he visits Miss Wilmot and Foster to find out what has happened to Berringer. Both seem to have changed; physically and mentally, each has been approaching union with the archetype which represents the dominant side of his nature-- in Foster's case, brute strength and fierceness (the wolf), and in Miss Wilmot's, subtlety and ill will (the serpent).

There was something about the man that was more determined--almost more brutal-- than had been before . . . The woman . . . was, in the queerest manner, gathered up in her chair--her eyes were half closed--her head every now and then swayed slightly.

(ch. vii)

Both are, of course, slowly turning into beasts, and acquiring more and more of the characteristics of each archetype. As throughout in this novel, the physical strangenesses derive from the metaphysical framework. Miss Wilmot's speech begins to hiss on the sibilants; Foster's voice becomes deeper and growling. His posture begins to resemble that of a crouching animal; Miss Wilmot moves in a sliding, slithering manner. When Anthony tells them that he intends to set himself against the universals, they attack him; they do so as nearly like the beasts they are becoming as is possible while they still retain human form. For a moment Anthony stands hypnotized by the snake-woman,

and Foster seizes him; they pull him down. Anthony wrestles with these manifestations of cruelty and malice (both in the real and the allegorical sense). For a second he lies defeated, but in a fierce resurgence of spirit, cries out No! striking out at them with the full force of his body and will. He escapes by choosing to fight; he has wrestled with temptation and come through.

It is following these events that Anthony learns of the contents of De Angelis from his friend Richardson, as already discussed. The reader by now is fully aware of the reasons for what has been happening. Williams continues to show the effects of the situation on the main characters.

Damaris, taking a walk in the country, continues to mull over her work, trying to decide on the best way of organizing within her paper the "business of the relation of the Divine Perfection with creation." Perhaps, she thinks, "the whole thing had better be in an appendix--On the Knowledge of the World . . . no, on God's Idea of the World from Plato to Aquinas. Something was wrong with that title, she thought vaguely, but she could alter it presently" (ch. ix). She comes upon Quentin hiding from the Lion in a ditch beside the road. Crazed with fear, he orders her to get away since there isn't room for two to hide, but then, on an impulse of generosity which momentarily overcomes his fear, offers to let her hide with him, since she is his friend's fiancée. She kicks him away.

Quentin is being hunted by a new and different Hound of Heaven, not realizing that he cannot hide; his fear will find him out. Damaris screams, and the remote thunder of the Lion's voice is heard. The road undulates. She returns to town, "where for the rest of the day she

concentrated, even more fiercely than usual, on her work" (ch. ix). Anthony, learning what has happened, tries to persuade her to come away for awhile, so that she will not come up against the universals when she is in a state of unbelief.

"Heart's dearest, listen--the things you study are true, and the philosophers you read knew it. The universals are abroad in the world, and what are you going to do about it? Besides write about them."

(ch. ix)

But Damaris is unconvinced, and thereby makes herself more vulnerable to her destined visitor.

Anthony visits the unconscious Berringer. He is becoming more intuitively sensitive as he progresses to deeper knowledge of the universals. Therefore, as he follows the doctor out of Berringer's room on to the landing, he walks into a waking vision that takes place in a split second, between two words the doctor is saying.

It seems to Anthony that he is not on the landing at all, but on a ledge, and that below the shadowy staircase there are cliffs which lead to a bottomless circular pit; far above is the sky. A strong wind begins to blow, and a temptation to fling himself onto it and be carried with it (yield to pure Strength) comes over him.

Yet on the edge he pressed himself back; not so, was his passage to be achieved-- it was for him to rise above that strength of wind; whether he went down or up it must be by great volition, and it was for such volition that he sought within himself.

(ch. x)

A series of convoluted questions on will, choice, and preference goes through his mind, and as he begins to lose himself in their subtleties, the walls of the pit seem to ripple and shimmer.

So swiftly the questions followed each other that he seemed to be standing in flashing coils of subtlety, an infinite ring of vivid intellect and more than intellect . . .

(ch. x)

With an effort of will, Anthony conquers the temptation to lose himself in intellectual subtlety. Looking up, he sees the winged form of a giant eagle descending, and in that moment he is made aware of all his own past actions, some foolish or evil, others beautiful. Through all, however, he has had "the passionate desire for intellectual and spiritual truth and honesty," which, although thwarted many times, always rose again in him:

The sight of his denials burned through him . . . and while he endured . . . because to refuse to know himself as he was would have been a final outrage, a last attempt at flight from the Power that challenged him and in consequence an entire destruction by it . . . he himself was mysteriously rushing over the abyss. . . . with an inrush of surpassing happiness he knew that he was himself offering himself to the state he had so long desired.

(ch. x)

He has overcome the guardians of the circles of the celestials--the Lion and the Serpent--and has grown into "his proper office." As he flies, he sees in the pit not only the Lion, the Serpent, and the Butterfly, but other forms as well. The rush of wings goes from him, and he finds himself standing on the staircase landing. He is now a servant of the Immortals: "the strength that had once overthrown him had now no power upon him; he was within it, and under the protection of another of the great Ideas, that Wisdom which knew the rest and itself also, the very tradition of the Ideas and the Angelicals being but a feather dropped from its everlasting and effectual wing" (ch. x).

This scene furnishes an excellent example of Williams' technique of making action out of thought. The mode of fantasy is a waking vision, its elements a series of metaphysical/allegorical images reflecting the stages in a spiritual temptation. On another level, it is simply a description of the moment of truth which occurs when a man gains insight into his own nature and decides what is the right course to follow. Again, the deciding factor in the individual's spiritual progress is free choice.

As Anthony recounts his experience to Richardson, he hears Damaris screaming in terror far off. As a lover, he knows instinctively when she is in danger; his hearing her at a great distance is a lesser mode of fantasy, but like all the others, it fits logically into the spiritual framework of the story.

The succeeding chapter recounts what has caused Damaris to scream. She has been working very hard at her dissertation, specifically on a graph of human thought, to be used as an appendix:

three graphs actually, from 500 B.C. to A.D. 1200, showing respectively the relation of official thought, cultural thought, and popular thought to the ideas of personalized and depersonalized supernatural powers. . . . Personification was in itself evidence of a rather low cultural state. . . . It was a good graph, and she was proud of it. There would be six appendices in all, but this and the new one on the Creation would be the most important.

(ch. xi)

A strong wave of yearning for her degree sweeps over her: "Doctor of Philosophy--how hard she had worked for it!" At that moment, a smell of corruption fills the house; she has made herself an irresistible lure for the elemental power that now comes. A shadow falls over the

room; outside the window is a great bird with leathery wings, red eyes, a jabbing beak, and great teeth, a science-fiction monster whose sudden attack and horrendous appearance Williams makes extremely vivid through the use of detailed physical description.¹⁴ Damaris scatters her papers and runs to the landing; the bird's beak thrusts itself through the skylight. Her father, to whom she runs for help, looks at her with detachment, murmuring only that he had been afraid she might get hurt. As if in a nightmare, she realizes that she cannot expect help from him. The Pterodactyl, a foul travesty of the Eagle, and representing the pursuit of knowledge for hollow and superficial purposes, has found its eidolon.

Damaris is on the stairs. Like Anthony, she has a sudden waking vision that reveals her soul to herself, and, also as with Anthony, in her vision another world superimposes itself on the physical world; stairs lead to undreamed-of places.¹⁵ It seems to her that she is on a desolate marshy plain, and that a pterodactyl is circling above. A figure comes striding towards her over the plain--a medieval priest whom she knows to be Abelard, the particular object of her study. When the shadow of the pterodactyl falls over him, he becomes a walking corpse and begins to croak meaningless words: a symbolic representation of what effect Damaris' scholarship has had on her subject. The bird seizes her and begins to stifle her with its smell. She cries out for Anthony. He comes, and with him is the Eagle: "there went out from him, and from the

¹⁴See p. 162 above.

¹⁵Cf. MacDonald's preoccupation with the symbolism of stairs.

Augustitude upon his shoulder, a knowledge of safety would she but take it, and freely and humbly she let it enter her being. . . . As she made that motion of assent she felt the wildness of the desolate plain shut out" (ch. xi). That is to say, Damaris sees her mistake, and freely chooses to admit and abandon it (unlike Miss Wilmot or Foster). The vividness of physical description in Damaris' adventure attests to Williams' powers of imagination.¹⁶

The chapter ends on a note of suspension, of waiting for the final invasion. The humans remain, but birds, insects, and animals--all but the sheep--have vanished into their archetypes. The sheep live in serenity and innocence; the explanation becomes apparent later.

Anthony's friend Richardson meanwhile has a vision of his own, in a church, of the Unicorn, which represents salvation. Each person in the church sees it, including Foster, whose feelings and physical habits continue to deteriorate into brutishness. He springs after the Unicorn to hunt it down and destroy it. Foster and Miss Wilmot

desired the power of the Immortals . . . not for that virtue's sake, not even for the sake of fresh and greater experiences, but merely that their old experience might be more satisfactory to them. Foster wanted to be stronger than those with whom he came in contact; he had made himself a place for the lion and it seemed the lion was taking possession of its habitation . . .

(ch. xii)

¹⁶His skill at imaging forth wonders in specifically detailed and exciting descriptions is particularly well illustrated in The Place of the Lion. As pointed out earlier, Williams is one of the few fantasy writers who refuse to shift the burden of imagination on to the reader through the use of nebulous and essentially meaningless language, and whose detailing of the wonderful is not disappointing.

Richardson is beginning, in his fascination for the Unicorn, to draw away from the images of earth, and to embark on the way to God that lies through the rejection of all images, pleasant and unpleasant. In imagining the Unicorn galloping away through gardens and snows, to its lair among the trees of Eden, he catches himself up short: "Images, images, he caught his mind back, abolishing them; beyond images, beyond any created shape or invented fable lay the union of the end" (ch. xii).

He later voluntarily disappears into the Flame that consumes Berringer's house, the Image of that into which all else disappears. He finds what he seeks in this ultimate rejection; he too lives out an allegory.

He goes to visit Miss Wilmot, and discovers her writing poison pen letters. These are her last moments in human shape. The writing of the letters, like Damaris' exclamation (although inward) over the desired doctor of philosophy degree, is a signal for the final irruption of the destined archetype into the being that adores it. But Damaris calls for help and is saved; Miss Wilmot does not resist. A detailed description of her transformation into a serpent is given; each stage is described carefully as it yields irrevocably to the next, smoothly and rhythmically.¹⁷ This is another instance of a person living out an allegory in the real world within the novel.

The action gathers swiftly for the final test. Telephones, telegraph wires, railways, and tools of steel and wood lose their strength and cease to function. Unused dwellings crumble, as "the

¹⁷Quoted in part on p. 160 above.

Principle of Strength reassumed all of itself which had been used in human labours" (ch. xiii). Around Berringer's house the heat and smell of burning become stronger, and the housekeeper, by lighting a match, unwittingly creates a breach for the pouring in of the energy of Intellectual Flame that has been hovering over and around Berringer since he first provided an opening through which the Lion could enter the world. Berringer and his house are consumed by fire. Too much and the wrong kind of intellectual curiosity is his destruction; he too lives out an allegory in the real world.

The flame is the signal for the coming of the archetypes and the destruction of many people:

Men came out to help and caught sight of something and fled, except only those who saw the silver horn and heard the silver hooves of the Angel of their Return [the Unicorn=salvation]; they only, free from fear, toiled to rescue their fellows.

(ch. xiii)

It is now the turn of Damaris, having been saved, to try to save Quentin, who, in however misguided a way, had tried to help her. She finds him in a meadow, torn, bitten, and bleeding, and hotly pursued by the wolf-like Foster. In the meadow, under the shadow of the Eagle, there is also a lamb cropping the grass. Quentin runs to Damaris, and they both lie at the feet of the lamb, which is unafraid of Foster. Foster tries hard, but cannot spring. The lamb, like all sheep, is, by tradition, innocence and, by extension, Christ, who is love. Therefore, Williams seems to be saying, the sheep cannot be affected by the elementals; love, under the shadow of wisdom, cannot be divided into an energy and an intelligence which could war with one

another, nor could the energy of love be a devouring evil.

Foster, against his will, is carried away by a great wind which is the power of the Lion. He is flung into the air and crushed to the ground by its paw; all strength and life go from him, as he is devoured by the disproportion he worshipped. Foster, too, lives out an allegory in the real world.

The remaining chapters, on a quieter note, deal with Anthony's setting the situation to rights and restoring the balance which has been lost. In a second vision, lucid and subtly detailed, he sees further into the truth of things--that the principles of strength, subtlety, beauty, and speed--the Lion, the Serpent, the Butterfly, and the Unicorn--govern creation, and that all of these are contained in the Eagle and the Flaming Phoenix, "the life of truth," which constantly dies and is reborn.

When the holy imagination could behold them
in forms yet nearer their true selves, even
the present animal appearances would disappear;
the Angelicals would be known as Angelicals,
and in the idea of Man all ideas would be at
one: then man would know himself. For then
the Lion would not be without the Lamb.

(ch. xv)

He comes to realize that the balance which must be restored is that between strength and innocence, between the Lion and the Lamb:

By friendship, by love, these great virtues
became delicately known. Apart from such
love and friendship they were merely
destructive and helpless . . .

(ch. xv)

The lion must be made to lie down with the lamb. Adam had, long before, named the Celestials; and since the nature of Adam is in Anthony, he knows what he must do. Taking Damaris to witness his reenactment of

Adam's naming of the beasts, he leaves her to one side, as Adam might have done with Eve, superior and inferior in the celestial hierarchy. For one moment, the spirit of the old Damaris flows back in anger at the way she thinks she has been treated, but she overcomes the impulse, and with this triumph over self, comes a step nearer salvation.

The shapes of the archetypal beasts gather about Anthony. His hands rest on the heads of the lion and the lamb.

In and for that exalted moment all acts of peace that then had being through the world were deepened . . . Friendships grew closer . . . disordered beauty everywhere recognized again the sacred laws that governed it.

(ch. xvi)

He speaks to the beasts and dismisses each one. The lion breaks into one final roar, but "the Adam answered and quelled it with the sound of its own name" (ch. xvi). The breach between mankind and the angelicals has been closed again. Anthony has saved the world. Man is too weak to exist with these energies in their naked form, but a man has exerted dominion over them. The reenactment of Eden is equivalent to the reestablishment of harmony in man's soul.

Those who had not been able to conquer the evil in themselves have been destroyed. Anthony has exercised the wisdom which the Eagle represents. Richardson has followed the Unicorn into the Flame; his end is a representation of the mystic reaching the ultimate rejection of images, just as Anthony is a sacramentalist who affirms the images of earth. Damaris has been saved from the sin of intellectual pride. The characters have all reached their spiritual homes, or are well on the way.

E. The Greater Trumps (1932)

This novel, like The Place of the Lion, is concerned with the domination and reconciliation of the component elements in men's souls, which in turn depends upon their exercising dominion over mind, heart, and feeling. For the third and final time, the fantasy centers on a magic object, in this case the original deck of Tarot cards and a set of corresponding moving golden figures, and on what happens when humans make use of them. Related modes of fantasy are visions, magically produced physical phenomena such as snowstorms and earth, and the power of concentrated thought.

The novel is another fable concerning the reuniting, by a wise human, of things that should never have been separated. In The Place of the Lion, it is a young man, Anthony; in The Greater Trumps, it is an elderly woman, Sybil (a sybil indeed), who accomplishes this. The chief difference between the two characters is that Sybil at the beginning is already much further along in the spiritual journey than Anthony; she has already learned what he comes to learn.¹⁸

The Tarot card images and the moving Tarot figures, it is explained, reflect aspects of the cosmic dance, that which holds all things together, the Divine Intelligence. Each card vibrates to the movement of its counterpart in the set of figures, "as that in turn moved in correspondence to the movement of that full and separate center of the created dance which

¹⁸ Sybil Coningsby's name is a combination of the titles of two of Disraeli's novels. In Williams' words (Flecker of Dean Close, p. 13), "Sybil . . . had terribly revealed the world of the poor, and . . . Coningsby . . . the 'Venetian Oligarchy' of the English aristocracy." It is not certain whether the choice of name has any intended significance, although one might conjecture that it is meant to summarize the qualities of simplicity and nobility which characterize Sybil.

it microcosmically symbolized" (ch. xi). Williams imagines a legend whereby someone will one day understand the mystery of the cards and the images, and that the mystery has something to do with the figure of the Tarot Fool.

For Williams, the Greater Trumps, the picture cards of the Tarot deck, are "'principles of thought, actualities of corporate existence, Death and Love and certain Virtues . . .'" (ch. vii). The four suites (sceptres or staves, swords, cups, and coins) correspond to the four elements, which, it will be noted, somewhat resemble the angelicals or archetypes in The Place of the Lion, for they represent energy separated from guiding intelligence. Thus Henry, the young man who seeks to put the Tarots to his own use, is able to use them to magically create a little pile of earth in his fiancée Nancy's hands and to unleash a magical snowstorm with which he hopes to kill her father, the owner of the deck, so that he may have it for himself. Thus, it seems to Nancy's father, as he is blown about in the storm, that he sees figures beating him with clubs (staves). The various characters look upon the Tarot cards and figures in different ways. Henry sees them as the key to power and knowledge, and therefore he is willing to sacrifice Nancy's father. Sybil, however, does not wish to use the Tarots to force the universe's confidence; this attitude is in consonance with her serenity and contentment with being who she is, and her belief that the universe is love. Her lifeline, when her palm is read, "goes on forever" (ch. i); this is certainly Williams' comment on her spiritual lifeline.

"She's got some sort of a calm, some equanimity in her heart. She--the only eyes that can read the future exactly,

and she doesn't want to know the future.
Everything's complete for her in the
moment."

(ch. vi)

The cards hold the key to the dancing images and their movements. Their having been separated for so long prior to the beginning of the novel is likened to the Dolorous Blow in Malory, which devastated a kingdom and made it into a wasteland.¹⁹ The implication is that whoever brings them, or rather, the principles they represent, together again, will undo the effects of the Dolorous Blow. This can also be seen as a metaphor for putting one's own soul in order, and it is Sybil who carries out both tasks.

The little moving figures emit a light which constantly changes in color; and a faint music (as the Graal does, in War in Heaven). They are the physical manifestation of the cosmic dance, which includes all beings, constantly changing place and interacting. Change, however, is only the aspect of the dance which mortals see. The law which determines these changes and dictates the measure of the dance is unfathomable. It is the explanation of this mystery that Henry wants to wrench from the little figures.

Each Greater Trump (picture card) of the Tarot deck,²⁰ together with its corresponding golden figure, symbolizes one aspect of the cosmos

¹⁹ See Le Morte d'Arthur, II, xv-xvi.

²⁰ The Juggler, the Empress, the High Priestess, the Hierophant, the Emperor, the Chariot, the Lovers, the Hermit, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, the Wheel of Fortune, the Hanged Man, Death, the Devil, the Falling Tower, the Star, the Moon, the Sun, the Last Judgment, the Universe, and the Fool. For an interesting interpretation of the meaning Williams gave to each of these, see William Lindsay Gresham, preface to The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams, pp. v-viii.

which particularly concerns man, whether he adores, fears, or is simply puzzled by it. Williams has fitted these images into his own view of the scheme of things. Thus, for instance, the Hermit becomes a symbol of the Way of Rejection of images, and the Lovers a symbol of the Way of Affirmation.

The rushing chariot of the world came
from among them, and it again parted,
and on one side went the Hermit, the
soul in its delighted solitude of
contemplation, and on the other the
Lovers, the soul in its delighted
society of terrestrial love.

(ch. x)

Of all the Tarot pictures, the most interesting (to the characters and to the reader) is that of the Fool. His Tarot number is zero,

that which has no number and is called
the Fool, because mankind finds it folly
till it is known. It is sovereign or it
is nothing, and if it is nothing then
man was born dead.

(ch. xiv)

The golden figurine of the Fool, unlike all the others on the board, seems to remain stockstill, to everyone except Sybil. To her, it seems to be moving so quickly that she can hardly see it.

"Surely that's it, dancing with the rest;
it seems as if it were always arranging
itself in some place which was empty for
it."

(ch.v)

The Fool in Williams appears to signify Christ or divine omnipresent mercy and love.

Sybil saw . . . beyond them, running down
the stairs between herself and Nancy as if
he were their union, and poised behind Joanna
as if he supported and protected her, the
figure of the Fool. He had come from all

sides at once, yet he was but one. All-reconciling and perfect, he was there, running down the stairs as he had run down the storm. And as he passed, receiving and bestowing light, Nancy, on an impulse, turned and kissed Henry . . .

(ch. xvi)

Sybil, serene in her love of God and in her contentment with what He has made her and given her, stands within the end of desire (like Chloe in Many Dimensions); therefore she can see that the Fool is actually moving with such incredible speed as to seem to be standing still. (He is perhaps akin to the swift Unicorn in The Place of the Lion.)

Sybil knows that the golden light of the images comes "from the figure of the Fool . . . who seemed to be everywhere at once, whose irradiation shone therefore so universally upward that it maintained the circle of gold high over all" (ch. x). The golden light therefore also represents divine protection and mercy; there is, for instance, a golden light around Sybil's brother, Mr. Coningsby,²¹ when she finds him in the magical snowstorm. This small detail is another of the many examples of Williams' merging the doctrinal and supernatural aspects of his novel.

Sybil's niece Nancy also sees the Fool move, in a waking vision of the world through an eastward-facing window, a vision produced by Henry's manipulation of the Tarots. She sees a panorama of a hemisphere--first Europe, then the Far East--as if she were high above it and flying eastward; she discerns people, and, finally, the different figures of

²¹Lothair Coningsby's name is also a combination of the titles of two of Disraeli's novels. The central figure in Lothair is "a young man of wealth and title who is in quest of the true path" (A Literary History of England, p. 1366).

the Greater Trumps dancing over all: Death and the Devil, the Hierophant (the Pope), the Lovers, the Wheel of Fortune, the Juggler, and the Fool. She realizes that these are the symbols of the forces governing human life. The Fool suddenly moves, touches a tomb, and the skeleton within rises (surely representing the resurrection of the body). Then only the Juggler, tossing balls, and the Fool are left; all paths merge, and the Juggler and the Fool embrace (God and Christ in one Nature?) With this last perception, Nancy's vision ends. By the end of the story, she is well along the path her aunt has already walked, and is taking her lover Henry with her.

Just as, in The Place of the Lion, energies separated from intelligences by human meddling unleash destructive forces and are finally reunited through human agency, so the action of The Greater Trumps follows a pattern of the creation and healing of an unnatural rift between organic components.

When Henry conjures up the lethal snowstorm, Nancy knocks the cards out of his hands, but the storm rages on uncontrolled, seeking its victim: "natural and supernatural riot ruled everywhere" (ch. x). Sybil looks for her brother in the snowstorm. It does not overwhelm her as it does him, just as later, when it pursues him into the house, she alone is able to close the door against it. Spiritually she is nearly out of reach of the turmoil it represents, and this is reflected on the physical level as well.

That she should be walking so lightly through the storm didn't strike her as odd, because it wasn't really she who was walking; it was Love, and naturally Love would be safe in his own storm.

(ch. ix)

In this novel, as well as in The Place of the Lion, the characters live out an allegory physicalized in their real world.

Nancy attempts to undo the mischief that has been let loose, by using the Greater Trumps (the principles of thought) to put down the Lesser (the principles of blind energy). As the cards float from her hands toward the golden light of the moving figures, the Tarot card pictures seem to enter the golden cloud, taking on the appearance of living forms.

In this living cloud are also seen many hands, clasping, building, and unbuilding. Certainly this is one of Williams' more unusual representations of the principle of co-inherence and interdependence of man with man and man with God: the Greater Trumps are the principles of thought; and it is the principles of thought, cooperation, and courtesy on which harmonious coexistence depends. The episode of the living cloud is another illustration of Williams' technique of using a fantasy motif (a magically created mist) as a doctrinal symbol which yet has physical reality within the everyday world of the story.

Henry is caught in the cloud. Hands immobilize him by degrees, until he can do nothing but stand frozen and think. He sees a tower being built by hands clasping over other hands. When the levels of hands reach a certain height, a spark of sunlight falls on them, they unclasp, and begin building again. (This perpetual building-up and change is an imaging of the law of the Dance.) Then he begins to imagine himself as a tower (the Tower symbol—one of the Tarots), trying to reach the stars.

He was setting up a gigantic image of himself for heaven and earth to adore. He was strong and great enough to do what no man had done before, and to stand on the top of some high place which would be stable among the circling lights of the celestial world. And then . . . as he dreamed of the premonitory prick of the starry spikes upon his head, something within him began to fall.

(ch. xii)

Countless times he undergoes in himself this process of Babel-building (the wish to attain power beyond man's spiritual reach). Each time, the call of Nancy's love becomes clearer; when he tries to respond, the hands release him. Spiritually, that is, he renounces perverted ambition and appeals for help to the love which thus far he has only used.

This scene is still another example of Williams' technique of making thought into action. It is a representation of conversion: Henry, in a waking vision that reveals himself to himself, realizes the selfishness and presumption of his trying to divine the laws governing the Dance, and admits that he can only be within it, not direct it.

The cloud is a key to the degree of progress in spiritual understanding which the various characters have attained, as is shown by the way each perceives and is affected by it. Nancy's brother Ralph sees only a thick treacly cloud: "'Damned if I understand it,'" he says (ch. xiii). Henry's father, Aaron, flees in needless fear. Nancy's father can barely feel the hands in what he sees as a mist, i.e., he is only beginning to perceive that there is such a thing as a cosmic dance and that the hands of all are joined in

it.²² Nancy sees "golden figures unceasingly intertwining in the steps of the fatal dance" (ch. xv). For Sybil there is no impenetrability, but rather a golden loveliness. And, finally, it is she who reconciles the roaring elementals--the wind, water, air, and fire which are swirling magically in the house--with the golden figures, the Greater (stronger) and Lesser Trumps, the principles of thought and of feeling. She stretches out her hand and

the cloud of gold rushed down towards it, but it moved in shapes and figures, the hands of all the symbols stretched toward the hand that, being human, was so much more than symbol. . . . Then suddenly they were gone, and the cloud was gone, and everywhere, breaking from Sybil's erect figure, shone a golden light . . .

(ch. xvi)

²²Hands are an important image in this novel. In Williams' writings, they represent spiritual power, since they are the visible instruments of prayer and of earthly help among mankind. The human body as a whole is another embodiment of the City, its structure being "an index to the structure of a greater whole" (Charles Williams, "The Index of the Body," in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. 81). Without going into his ideas on this in too much detail, since they do not play as significant a part in his novels as in his Arthurian poetry, it may be mentioned that he worked out an equated pattern between the human body and the organic structure of a larger unit--the regions of the Empire in the poems. An illustration of a human body is superimposed upon the map of Europe in the endpapers to Taliessin through Logres: Logres (Arthurian England) is the head/mind; Gaul, where the universities are, is the breasts (the source of food for the mind); the right elbow and knee bear down on Cordoba and Mecca (Saracen strongholds); the hands clasp on Rome (the dwelling of the Pope), a symbol of the Christian religion and of prayer; the navel coincides with Byzantium (the centre of the Empire's vitals, where the Emperor dwells); and the buttocks are in an area which Williams calls Caucasia (sensuality). In The Greater Trumps, there is emphasis on the power of hands. They manipulate and command the Tarots; giant hands are seen in the snowstorm; in the living cloud are the hands of the Tarots, representing the interacting principles which are the unifying life of the world and its dance; the joining of the hands is symbolical of, and is, the dance. Hands are "spiritual instruments of intention" (ch. xiv). Sybil's hands are remarked on by Nancy as the loveliest she has ever seen (ch. i), and it is her hands, the most spiritual instruments of intention, which bring peace out of chaos.

The principles of thought and energy are reunited.²³ This is of course simply to say that Sybil is in harmony within herself and with God. Because of this, within the supernatural framework of the story, she is able to reconcile the swirling mysteries.

The portrait of Sybil is evidence of an ability, already mentioned, which Williams shared with George MacDonald, the ability to delineate good characters interestingly. She, of all the characters in the story, is most nearly "home" from the beginning. To the degree that she is able, through her faith, serenity, and sense of humor, to catalyze the spiritual development of the others, these, especially Nancy, grow in understanding.

Sybil is the first of the two elderly wise women in Williams' novels (the other being Margaret in Descent into Hell) who have found salvation in learning to adore love. Although she is not a supernatural being, she is not unlike the many wise old women in MacDonald's fantasy novels: loving, instructive, and with a mystery and assured serenity about her which arise from a clearer understanding of the spiritual life than her companions have yet been able to acquire.

It will be noted that The Greater Trumps, unlike the novels which preceded it or those which followed, has very little violence, no real villain, no martyr, and no character who undergoes serious spiritual deterioration, but it shares with them the characteristic that some of its characters undergo profound change for the better.

²³Cf. Chloe's apotheosis in Many Dimensions and the dismissal of the archetypes in The Place of the Lion.

Chapter X. Williams as a Fantasist: III. The Late Novels
(An Interpretative Summary)

A. Descent into Hell (1937)

The Greater Trumps is a euphoric novel. Descent into Hell, the next to be published, is in a different vein. With this and the last novel, All Hallows' Eve, the magic objects disappear. The supernatural element is still present, but it derives its effect less from the purely occult, and more from the fact that the imagined world is one in which no action or impulse goes unnoticed on the spiritual plane. There is a new seriousness in these novels, which is different from the generally lighter tone of the earlier ones, and more attention is given to the inner workings of the minds and souls of the characters. The action of the plot consists more of thought made into action than of simple external events.¹

Descent into Hell is a dark novel. As its title suggests, it is a story of the downward spiritual journey. Although this is the dominating concern of the novel, it is counterbalanced by two interlocking studies of the upward journey, one the spirit of a suicide, and the other a girl who learns that bearing another's burden of fear is the way to losing one's own.

One of the principal modes of fantasy is the idea of the lingering influence of the locale, Battle Hill, a place where many have

¹That Williams continued to develop as a novelist becomes evident when, for instance, one compares the somewhat nebulous framework in which the supernatural threat is set in Shadows of Ecstasy with the step-by-step development of the concept and description of the Angelicals in The Place of the Lion, and with the detailed psychological studies in the final two novels. C. S. Lewis (preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vii), for instance, remarks that "the distance between War in Heaven and the sobriety and strength of the Descent and the Eve is a remarkable witness to his continually growing, self-correcting art."

died violently. Heavy with the memories of past human suffering, the atmosphere causes dreams which shadow forth the dreamers' knowledge of their own or others' spiritual sickness. Thus, the scholarly historian, Wentworth, dreams of climbing down an endless rope into an abyss, and the aged Margaret dreams of being on the mountain of death, where, in a vision within a dream, she sees her granddaughter Pauline fleeing her doppelgänger, Wentworth lying in wait for the succubus created from his own will and desires, and the unhappy workman who had hanged himself years before, wandering still.

The doppelgänger and the Lilith-succubus are modes of fantasy in themselves; as is the concept of the suicide's spirit wandering in his own time and world and watching people in the world of the living; Pauline's ancestor being burnt at the stake anew; the visibility and audibility of both dead men; the concept of parallel space-time continua; and the enactment of Judgment Day and the destruction of Lilith's dwelling, towards the end of the novel.

In Williams' terms, hell is the equivalent of, variously, utter selfishness, complete withdrawal into self, voluntary self-surrender to illusion, the magnifying of self, a cutting of oneself off from the life and co-inherence of the City, and spiritual suicide. As in Marlowe and (in one sense) Milton, it is the hell within the mind. In Wentworth's dreams it is pictured as a black abyss. Every step down is a matter of free choice.

The slow and steady moral decline of Lawrence Wentworth is perhaps Williams' best and most detailed character study; the portrait of

Lester in All Hallows' Eve is its contrasting counterpart for the "upward" journey.

Wentworth, like Damaris in The Place of the Lion, is a good scholar, but an intellectual snob. A military historian, he engages in empty polemics with another scholar over a question about which he cares nothing; he has begun, moreover, to manipulate scholarly evidence to suit his own purposes:

he identified scholarship with himself, and asserted himself under the disguise of a defence of scholarship. He refused to admit that the exact detail of Edward's march was not, in fact, worth to him the cost of a single cigar. . . . He was beginning to twist the intention of the sentences in his authorities . . . In defence of his conclusion he was willing to cheat in the evidence . . .

(ch. iii)

Guilty of intellectual sin, he has begun to have a recurrent dream, of climbing down an endless taut rope, by the aid of knots which he can feel with his hands and feet, but which he never actually sees. The atmosphere of Battle Hill is causing his dreaming mind to symbolize what is happening to his soul. The knots mark the stages by which he descends; in waking life, he recognizes these stages for what they are, but once passed, they disappear from sight, i.e., his conscience.

He is also jealous of the attentions which a young woman admirer, Adela, has been giving to another man. This causes him to be rude and impatient with Pauline, another young woman, when she visits him, and to dismiss her so that he can get away to spy on the couple, on the pretense (to himself) that he is merely going for a walk. Discourtesy and mistrust are alien and repugnant to the nature of the

City; having taken one more step downward, therefore, he dreams more vividly of climbing down the rope.

His jealousy grows, and his hurt pride prevents him from concentrating on his work; but he does not wish to sleep because the dream is beginning to revolt him, a fact which in itself offers him a chance to reverse the course of descent. When, however, he happens to read a newspaper item on his rival in scholarship receiving a knighthood, he is again filled with jealousy and a murderous impulse.

Such honours meant nothing, but they were part of the absurd dance of the world, and to be enjoyed as such. . . . He could enjoy; at least he could refuse not to enjoy. He could refuse and reject damnation.

(ch. v)

He chooses anger, and in his hatred imagines his rival dead at the end of a rope. This moment of vindictive rejection is the beginning of his surrender to illusion. A woman who resembles Adela comes up to his house and beckons him outside. She is the woman the people of Battle Hill know as Mrs. Lily Sammille; she is also Lilith. Wentworth knows that she is not Adela.

That truth which is the vision of romantic love, in which the beloved becomes supremely her own adorable and eternal self . . . and her own existence no longer felt or thought as hers but of and from another, that was aped for him then.

(ch. v)

She becomes for him what he wants, an Adela that adores him. Feeling slighted by the world, and by Adela and her young man in particular, he wishes to shut them out and make a world that pleases him. The pseudo-Adela is a type of doppelgänger, but of a different kind from Pauline's; the former is a false double or eidolon symbolizing illusion,

while the latter is a symbol of the soul freed from fear. Wentworth creates his own devil's emissary.

What happens immediately after is a particularly good example of Williams' method of blending the supernatural and natural worlds by physicalizing a psychological/spiritual process; thought is made into action, furthering the story line. The false Adela leads Wentworth into a wood which seems to him to be an Eden over which he is lord; she thereby fulfills his wish to have a world to himself.

He could stand in a vacuum, and nothing
outside himself could breathe at all,
until he chose to breathe again . . .

She was saying, eagerly: "Yes, yes,
yes: better than Eve, dearer than Eve,
closer than Eve. It's good for man to
be alone. Come along, come along:
farther in, farther in: down under,
down under."

(ch. v)

Who is better than Eve? Lilith. All this is actually happening to Wentworth, and yet it is all inside his mind. In his night-wandering, he sees the ghost of the workman who had hanged himself on a scaffolding which stood where Wentworth's house now is. The spirit of the man whose body died by the rope, and who is searching for a way out of the shadowy limbo into which his own deed has thrust him, meets the living man who is a spiritual suicide, hanging himself by a different sort of rope. Wentworth gestures him away and thereby rejects another chance to act decently and with courtesy:

he would not have a City--no City, no
circulars, no beggars. No; no; no.
No people but his, no loves but his.

(ch. v)

The false Adela is not the product of deliberate sorcery or witchcraft. Within the story, she is a magical creature drawn from

the strength of Wentworth's desires, as well as the symbol of his deterioration: "the shape of Lawrence Wentworth's desire had emerged from the power of his body" (ch. viii). Nothing is required to create her but an intense wish.² She is also quite tangible; the real Adela later sees her. But in the symbolism of the novel, she is the ever-present principle of illusion, lurking about, ready to take shape when called upon. The character of Wentworth, it can be seen, also lives out an allegory; and, like Miss Wilmot and Foster in The Place of the Lion, his punishment is to be granted what he wishes for most, and to realize too late the true horror of its nature.

The character of Lilith is the second legendary supernatural figure in Williams' novels; she is at the other end of the scale from Prester John, her purpose being to destroy, his to save. Both are drawn as real people who have a curious effect on others. In the case of Mrs. Sammile, however, the symbolism obscures the delineation of her as a real human.

The character of Lilith is not thrust upon the reader all at once. She is, at first, a physical person known under the name of Lily Sammile to the people living near Battle Hill.³ The fact that she is, simultaneously, a physical being who can assume more than one shape, and the embodiment of the principle of illusion, both within the novel

²Cf. Simon's creation of a woman out of dust in All Hallows' Eve.

³It will be recalled that in The Place of the Lion, there is a mention of "the first-born of Lilith, who is illusion, and Samael the Accursed" (ch. xi). Lilith, by a tongue-in-cheek joke, can be described as Mrs. Samael, and so, in Descent into Hell, Mrs. Lily Sammile. Samael is another name for Satan. Note also All Hallows' Eve, ch. vii: "never in all the myths, of Satan or Samael or Iblis or Ahriman, has there been any serious tale of that lord becoming flesh by human derivation."

and in the novel's message, helps to keep the story going on two levels at once.

When Pauline sees Mrs. Sammile, she looks "more like death than her [Pauline's] grandmother, more like a living death" (ch. iv). Mrs. Sammile offers to show Pauline how to get rid of a bad dream without trouble to herself, but Pauline chooses to free herself by facing her doppelgänger at last. The woman reappears as Mrs. Sammile throughout the story, murmuring encouragement to people to "enjoy themselves," and offering to help them do so. She seeks out the weak spots in people's souls (these being, of course, the most vulnerable portals whereby illusion may enter). She nearly catches Pauline with her promises.

"I can give you certainty of joy for every moment of life. Secretly, secretly; no other soul--no other living soul. . . . You'll never have to do anything for others any more."

(ch. vi)

Pauline is startled by these last words and flings the gate shut against her, literally and figuratively. Pauline has already begun to know the joy of the life of the City, of co-inherence, and the exchange of love and burdens, and so is alive to the subtle threat, in Mrs. Sammile's words, of being cut off from all that. Isolation from joy is of course the only "gift" which deliberate self-deception can bring, as Wentworth finds out to his destruction.

As already mentioned, Mrs. Sammile is also the false Adela; she assumes the shape desired by one who embraces illusion:

She whose origin is with man's . . . to whom a name was given in a myth, Lilith for a name and Eden for a myth, and she a stirring more certain than name or

myth, who in one of her shapes went
hurrying about . . . that Hill of
skulls . . .

(ch. v)

Man and illusion, that is, are coeval.

The false Adela is neither dead nor living and has neither intellect nor imagination (ch.viii).⁴ It can neither criticize nor create, "for the life of its substance was only the magical apparition of its father's desires" (ch. viii).

Williams is careful to point out that this creation is not the work of the devil, by referring to the story that the devil's last attempt to father a demon on a human had resulted in the birth of Merlin, who had become a sacred figure in the Grail quest. The evocation of this bit of romance tradition helps to heighten the fantasy. Since Merlin's time, however--and here Williams adds his own contribution to the legend--the devil's incubi and succubi had been phantasms evoked from dust, sweat, or other matter. Wentworth's, however, is created from pure desire.

He couples with the creature, infertilely. He continues to widen the barrier between himself and reality, drowning his doubts in pleasure and isolating himself from the unpleasantness of an outside world which requires that he adapt himself to it. Living out the

⁴The theme of the feeling intellect, or mens sensitiva (the fitting of the stone into the shell, an image occurring in Wordsworth's The Prelude, XIV, 226)--the union of sensation or emotion with reason--occurs throughout Williams' poetry and criticism. See, for example, "The Calling of Taliessin," in The Region of the Summer Stars, and Williams' note to "The Son of Lancelot," in Taliessin through Logres.

allegory of spiritual self-destruction, he cannot see the true face
of Lillith; at night

the inhuman countenance . . . had grown
haggard and old; its fullness fell away;
its eyes were blurred. The meaning which
he had given it had departed; an imbecile
face stared blankly over him. . . .
Millions of years older than the dying
woman by whom Pauline watched . . .
(ch. viii)

His recurrent dream, ever reflecting the changes in his soul,
changes into a nightmare. Now it seems that a companion is waiting
for him at the bottom of the rope; he descends with pleasurable ex-
pectation, until he hears frightful groans of agony from the abyss;
he clings to the rope, shaking it, and wakes up in fright. But in
waking life, he takes no heed and attempts no upward step.

So nearly complete is his chosen separation from other souls
that he hardly wishes to be bothered with other people at all, and
has difficulty, in fact, in focussing on them either physically or
mentally. He wishes to be alone with his fantasies; no longer in
command of them, he is their, and his own, victim.

A small thing signals the beginning of the last lap of his
descent. When asked to check some costumes for a play which the local
people are staging, he notices that the shoulder-knots of some eighteenth-
century guards' uniforms are incorrectly done. It is a small error, which
could easily be put right and would require perhaps an hour of his time.
But not even the discipline of his scholarship can stir him to give of
himself for that short while. He approves the uniforms, and with that
decision sets his soul firmly on the downward path (the shoulder-knots
are, of course, an ironic evocation of the knots in the rope in Went-
worth's dream).

He cannot be bothered even to attend the play, but Lily Sammile does. It is one celebrating the glory of God and the unity of souls. At its triumphant finish, Lily Sammile faints: the forces of illusion have suffered a defeat.

No one knows where Mrs. Sammile's house is, until the real Adela encounters her near the cemetery; it is obviously the house of death. The character of Mrs. Sammile at this point seems to become somewhat senile, as if illusion were becoming its own victim; she reflects both the state Wentworth is coming to and the end of her time of power on Battle Hill. She offers Adela dust and tries to entice her into her house. Adela's frightened refusal is the signal for a strange undulation among the graves. The rejection of illusion, it would seem, is equivalent to the awakening of those who have been slain through illusion. In terror, Adela runs to Wentworth's house, but he no longer even recognizes her; the eidolon has completely preempted the reality in his mind. She looks through the window, sees the false image of herself, and faints.

Wentworth by now is almost completely dissociated from the external world. He does not care even to slide down the rope in his dream any further, "yet not to slide was to stop out where other things and other images were, and he was unwilling to be there also" (ch. xi). He has arrived at a point where, even when waking, it seems to him that he is descending the rope. In the end, all people seem as ghosts to him. He manages to take the train to London, where he is to attend an academic dinner. His memory is a jumble of fragments, disjointedly calling up what has been happening to him; it seems to him that he is coming to the floor of the abyss, as he moves from train to hotel, and

from a taxi to the dinner. When he sees his hated rival in scholarship, one last chance is given him to start the long climb upward.

The shock [of seeing the rival scholar] almost restored him. If he had ever hated Sir Aston because of a passion for austere truth . . . If he had been hopelessly wrong in his facts and yet believed them so . . . he might . . . still have been saved. . . . He looked at Sir Aston and thought, not "He was wrong in his facts", but "I've been cheated". It was his last consecutive thought.

(ch. xii)

It is as if (to mingle the images of one novel with another) the Pterodactyl that clawed at Damaris in The Place of the Lion had seized on Wentworth. At the last, he can perceive and grasp the significance of nothing at all, not even himself. His mind is gone, as is his soul, "drawn, steadily, everlastingly, inward and down through the bottomless circles of the void" (ch. xii). Damnation is endless nothingness, without being rest.

In counterpoint with the narration of Wentworth's downward journey is that of Pauline's coming into the light; her story is organically interwoven with that of the salvation of the hanged man and of one of her own ancestors, burnt at the stake as a heretic.

For years Pauline has had a great fear. From time to time she has seen herself at a distance, coming towards herself, and she lives in dread of one day actually meeting her doppelgänger face to face. This can be taken to mean that she has avoided knowledge of herself; but her double is also a "supernatural" fact within the story.

She talks of her fear to Peter Stanhope, the poet whose verse

play is being staged by the local people.⁵ He persuades her to let him carry her burden of fear for her; to let oneself be so helped is part of the universal law of exchange--"not to give up your parcel is as much to rebel as not to carry another's" (ch. vi). His so doing helps lessen her preoccupation with self (the trap, of course, into which Wentworth is steadily sinking). The burden is lighter for Stanhope than for her.

Much to Pauline's surprise, the doctrine of substituted love works. During her walk home, instead of counting the houses that remain between her and safety, she thinks of other things, and is home before she is aware of it. It is almost immediately after this episode that she is tempted by Lily Sammile, but is startled from the trance into which she has begun to fall by the words, "You'll never have to do anything for others any more." They give the lie to what she knows now to be truth: helping others is one's main help.

Meanwhile, the spirit of the suicide wanders in its twilight limbo, as he has done ever since the moment of death, but he has begun to flee from a growing light that pursues and drives him back towards the world from which he had withdrawn by committing violence on himself (i.e., he is being pushed towards finding a way of reconciliation with the world he renounced, so that he may be freed from purgatory and go on to the City). He has died in body only⁶ and been given the opportunity to come back to seek an offer of love, which will be his salvation.

⁵Williams was the author of several verse plays, one of which (Judgement at Chelmsford, 1939) was published under the pseudonym of Peter Stanhope.

⁶Cf. the characters of Lester and Evelyn in All Hallows' Eve.

He looks through the window of the room where Pauline's grandmother lies dying; she sees him and offers compassion: "'My dear, how tired you look!'" (ch. vii). Margaret does for the dead man what Stanhope has done for Pauline.

Pauline also sees the face at the window. Three travellers reach a junction: a dead man; a dying old woman, whose spiritual journey has given her an insight into others' fears which amounts to clairvoyance; and a young woman newly initiated into the infinite possibilities of exchanged love. (The City includes all times and all generations simultaneously.)

The power of substitution works across the centuries as well. Stanhope tells Pauline that, if she wishes, she can make the intention to carry the burden of fear which must have oppressed her ancestor at the prospect of being burnt alive, i.e., to help as she has been helped.

If centuries meant anything; perhaps they
 didn't--perhaps everything was all at once . . .
 perhaps even now he burned, and she and her
 friends danced, and her grandmother died and
 lived, and Peter Stanhope wrote his verse,
 and all the past of the Hill was one with
 its present. It lived; it intermingled;
 not among these living alone did the doctrine
 of substituted love bear rule. Her intention
 rose . . .

(ch. viii)

The spirit of the suicide returns to the place where he died--the space that is now Wentworth's room--the point from which he must begin to look for the City from which he cut himself off. Margaret, sensitive to this, although removed in time and space, invokes Pauline's courtesy with courtesy, asking her to go to Wentworth's: "'Would you be so very charming as to go out and see if anyone wants you?'" . . . 'She's wandering,' the nurse whispered" (ch. ix).

Pauline takes her courage in both hands and goes out into the night darkness. She comes upon the spirit, who has the appearance he had in life: a workingman in old clothes and broken boots, who doffs his cap courteously, wishes her good evening, and asks her to tell him the way to London. He obviously means to walk; she is appalled, and offers to give him the fare, or at least shelter for the night. But he only wants to get started: "'It's only a matter of starting right'" (ch. x). So Pauline points out the way, and the dead man's spirit starts on the journey to the City (redemption). By a simple offer of direction and help, Pauline completes the gesture of courtesy and compassion which is the dead man's pact of peace with the world he had renounced. An exchange of courtesies, however simple and everyday, is, in Williams, a ritual showing in little the mode of life in the City. Certainly this scene comes as near to the spirit of Pilgrim's Progress as anything in Williams, London being the Celestial City, the dead man another Christian, and Pauline, perhaps, Mr. Great-Heart.

As the figure of the man recedes, Pauline sends a benediction after him: "'Go in peace.'" He stops, flings up his arms and turns into a figure writhing in agony. On drawing near, she sees that it is a man dressed in clothing of another, far-removed time; he is calling on God. In answer to her offer to help, he replies, not directly (it seems) to her, that he cannot bear the fear of the fire.

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.

(ch. ix)

She bids him give her his fear, and he speaks the words recorded in Foxe's Book of Martyrs: "'I have seen the salvation of my God'" (ch. ix).

Pauline turns; she is face to face with her doppelgänger and sees that it is a splendid thing, filled with joy. Only her incapacity for joy has kept her from wanting to face it, i.e., has turned her from the vision of her true self. The joylessness had resulted from her bearing the burden of her ancestor's fear that he would not be able to meet death gladly. The circle is closed; as Pauline has helped the suicide and the martyr, so her own burden of fear is lifted forever (a skilfully dovetailed metaphor for taking one's first steps along the way of peace and content of mind through faith).

After her grandmother's death, and before her own departure for London, Pauline looks for Lily Sammle in the cenetery. Here is Lilith's home, the doorway through which illusion entices the human soul to damnation: "the grand gate of Gomorrah where aged Lilith incunabulates souls" (ch. xi). She is "a very old woman indeed by a very great gate, where many go in who choose themselves, the gate of Gomorrah in the plain, illusion and the end of illusion; the opposite of holy fact, and the contradiction of sacred love" (ch. xi).

Her house is dark, very long, narrow, and deep, its floor sloping downward out of sight, and filled with the souls of those from the opened graves; the victims of illusion have awakened to their deception. Lilith is no longer able to nourish them;⁷ she is an "ancient witch" (ch. xi), a kind of lamia that feeds on men's souls by

⁷There may be a faint recollection of Spenser in the image of the hag and her spawn; and of the figure of Sin and her spawn in Paradise Lost.

stealth.⁸ She is gibbering: "a meaningless gabble, such gabble as Dante, inspired, attributes to the guardian of all the circles of hell" (ch. xi). Obviously she is breaking down, since she cannot frame her nonsense any longer in actual words.

Still she offers to give Pauline her heart's desire; Lilith is herself the victim of illusion.⁹ But Pauline does not yearn after anything, and in her attempt to explain why, can only laugh. For the moment at least, she is completely free from illusion. As laughter strikes at the heart of illusion and destroys it, so the old rotten shed that is Mrs. Sammille's home collapses into dust. At this moment too, the succubus-shape that is also Lilith disappears from Wentworth's house, worn away, but having done full damage. No mention is made, however, of Lilith's being dead; presumably she is not. It is simply the end of another of the skirmishes Prester John predicted in War in Heaven.

B. All Hallows' Eve (1945)

The final novel, All Hallows' Eve, published eight years after Descent into Hell, is a companion piece. Its main concern is also the depiction of one soul pulling itself upward and of another letting itself go down; more attention, however, is given to the former. Both novels are studies in the nature of illusion, and in both the focus is

⁸See chapter VIII, footnote 38.

⁹Note that Mrs. Sammille has had bad dreams too (ch. iv). The fact that she is such a multiplicity of superimposed figures--an actual person, a supernatural person, an abstraction, and a victim of what she herself personifies--is extremely reminiscent of George MacDonald's treatment of the character of Lilith, as discussed above.

on psychological-spiritual analysis, to which the element of the purely occult, while still important, is subordinate.

In Descent into Hell, the redemption of a spirit wandering in a limbo that is a shadowy reflection of the places it knew in life is one of the subordinate themes. The idea, however, continued to interest Williams; in All Hallows' Eve, the focus is almost entirely on two other such spirits, women, wandering in a shadowy London. The tightness of the story's structure surpasses even that of Descent into Hell. But whereas, in the latter, the stories of Wentworth on the one hand, and of Pauline, the suicide, and Pauline's ancestor on the other, touch only peripherally, affording contrast, in All Hallows' Eve the stories of Lester and Evelyn form a complementary interacting pattern. Their actions with respect to each other and to other people determine the direction in which each goes. Thus the whole novel is pulled towards a common center, and the narrative segments are firmly interlocked.

To summarize a few of the modes of fantasy in this novel: there are the spirits of the dead--two girls--wandering in a ghostly London, finding out their respective spiritual paths; the ghosts are visible, and, to degrees varying according to their spiritual development, audible, to those with whom they are most closely concerned; London is, in time and space simultaneously, a real city and a shadowy city of the dead; and in both manifestations, but especially the latter, it is also a representation of the City that is the country of the soul (i.e., a metaphysical meaning is encased within the supernatural). Williams rings many changes upon his concept of the City in this novel; what was a subordinate motif in Descent into Hell becomes dominant as

an image of the place of peace and salvation.

There is, in addition, a necromancer of the grand order, and time travel: Betty, a young woman dedicated as a spiritual sacrifice, is sent into the future to gather knowledge for Simon, her sorcerer-father. Her having been surreptitiously baptized by her nurse saves her from the ultimate role he has assigned to her--permanent dismissal to that other world so that he may have power over it. There is one small new mode of fantasy: automatic speech, in which Betty recounts what she has learned on her weird journeys. There are incantations, magic spells (including the reversed Tetragrammaton), the control of spirits by compulsive magic, the creation of a human body with dust, spittle, and incantation, as well as a "voodoo" doll, and other allied occult and supernatural details.

The growth of the character of Lester Furnivall, one of the dead girls, is the novel's most interesting facet. The story's opening is told from her point of view, as she stands on Westminster Bridge, where she was to have met her husband, and where she was killed, overlooking a London that is dim and unpeopled.¹⁰ It is not until much later in the novel that the population of the City becomes visible to her. (The empty City is clearly the symbol of her own self-absorption; as this is dissolved and transformed into self-giving, her perception of the members of the City develops and grows sharper.)

¹⁰Cf. the following lines and their Dantean echo from Part I ("The Burial of the Dead") of Eliot's Waste Land (1922): "Unreal City,/ Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,/ A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many."

Now, however, unaware of her new state and consciously wishing to see someone, she is given a glimpse of the only other person who interested her in life: her living husband, whose surprise at seeing her and at her sudden fading away brings home to her the truth that she is dead. Soon after, she encounters her friend Evelyn, also newly dead. Out of pity she endures Evelyn's chatter, although it has always irritated her, and she stifles an impulse to shrink from her touch. She begins to speak to her out of pity and endures her whining repetitions that she has done nothing to deserve her fate. It is Lester who finally makes the decision that they must try to do something and go somewhere and who willingly leads Evelyn away. These are acts of pure courtesy.

Evelyn's cry that she (like those in the outer regions of the Inferno who have neither affirmed nor rejected) has done nothing is, in the air of the City, a self-accusation: had she tried in life to do something worth doing, she would not be as she is now. Lester, by controlling her impulse to abandon her, is already beginning to show an awareness of and a willingness to comply with what the City requires--co-inherence among its members, and the kindly offering of help.

Lester knew exactly what she had better
do and with an effort she did it.

(ch. i)

She continues to suffer Evelyn and to grow in compassion and understanding. That she is growing slowly away from selfishness is shown, for instance, in her conscious rejection of her earlier desire to have her husband share her fate. Evelyn, on the other hand, continues to complain, and to do nothing to help herself. Afraid of

losing Lester, and yet hating her for not wanting to listen to her complaints, she remains self-absorbed.

In their wanderings, the women meet the spirit of Betty, who has been sent into the shadowy city by her sorcerer-father. The meeting is a small test to which the City puts its two new inhabitants. Evelyn, who had delighted in making Betty miserable when they were at school, immediately follows her old impulse to cause her more pain: "the kind of rage that was in her was the eager stirring of the second death" (ch. iv). Lester, who neglected her chance of helping Betty in life, goes to her aid now, although Evelyn petulantly asks her to come away. Lester wants to accept the opportunity offered her to put right something which she had let be wrong in life and to ask forgiveness of Betty.

Behind her, Evelyn's voice said, "Oh, come away!" At the words Lester, for the first time in her life, saw a temptation precisely as it is when it has ceased to tempt--repugnant, implausible, mean.

(ch. iv)

It is at approximately this point in the story that the paths of Lester and Evelyn begin to interact with that of the magician Simon the Clerk, Betty's father.

Simon shares with the personage of Nigel Considine, in Williams' first novel, the characteristic of wishing to become as a god; he too has attained supranormal longevity through the knowledge of magic. He is specifically identified as being other than Simon Magus, but Williams has given him many of the characteristics of that Simon, who, like Satan, "wished to be thought an exalted power, which is above God the Creator,

and to be thought to be the Christ."¹¹

Simon is the priest of illusion, including self-delusion, as Lilith is in Descent into Hell. The measure of his ability to rule over Lester and Evelyn is an index to the degree of progress each is making in her own direction. Like Simon Magus, and like Considine, he has a band of followers who are completely devoted because they are, in a sense, hypnotized. In the painting which Betty's friend Jonathan has done of Simon preaching, the backs of the listening crowd resemble those of a horde of shining beetles, all stamped from a single mold, and ready to follow him mindlessly into the narrow slit opening of a cave behind him.

The painting, it will be noted, is strongly reminiscent of Lilith's enticing people into her long, dark, narrow house in Descent into Hell. And, indeed, illusion is the gift which Simon also offers to his followers in his bid to secure secular and spiritual power: he "cures" their incurable diseases; moreover, he not only charms the mob but flatters individuals by whispering to each secretly (in the old formula of Screwtape and of Lilith): "'You are different; you are not under the law; you are particular'" (ch. v).

In order to achieve his first goal of temporal power, Simon has set out to hypnotize the masses with his personality, and does this not only in his true person, but also by means of magic eidola of himself which he has created and sent to preach in other parts of the world--"derivations and automata, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, but without will and without soul" (ch. v).

¹¹ Williams, Witchcraft, p. 32.

To gain eventual power in the spiritual world, he intends to send his own daughter, whom he engendered without love and with this single purpose in mind, permanently into that world, and to draw out a magical being in exchange. Like the legendary Simon, he wishes to impose "necessity upon heavenly places."¹² It is not surprising that he exerts a strong attraction on the spirit of Evelyn, since he offers to give her what she selfishly wants, and does not require her to exert herself towards improvement.

In Lester's first encounter with him, as she enters his house in order to help Betty, she is visible to him. He attempts to dominate her will with a magic sign; it is partially effective, but the nature of her intention in entering enables her to pass by him. Simon in his pride thinks he has dissolved her.

He was right enough in what, after his own manner, he had seen--the supernatural shaking of Lester's center; but the processes of redemption were hidden from him. At the moment when she drew nearer to the true life of that City, he thought her to be dissolved.

(ch. vi)

Somewhat similarly, when he sees Evelyn coming to him, he prides himself over this "proof" that "at last his writ ran in the spiritual City" (ch. vi).

Lester is permitted to converse with Betty, to ask her to remember how she behaved to her at school, and to receive forgiveness. The act brings them both closer to salvation; and as Betty has helped Lester, so Lester is soon offered the chance to help Betty.

¹²Ibid., p. 34.

Evelyn, not daring to follow Lester into the house, begins to drift away, when she is attracted by the sound of Simon uttering the "debased Tetragrammaton" in his meeting-hall.

It sounded only through the void streets,
the apparent façades, the shadowy rooms
of the world of the newly dead. . . .
only she, at once the latest, the weakest,
the nearest, the worst, was wholly caught.
She did not recognize captivity; she
thought herself free.

(ch. vi)

The Tetragrammaton, the name of God, was, it will be remembered, the mark of salvation on Chloe's forehead in Many Dimensions; reversed, as here, and as used by Gregory in War in Heaven, it is (a) in the symbolism, a denial of God; and (b) in the fantasy, a summoning of the black powers, or goetic magic, as Williams terms it. Evelyn thereby becomes another of Simon's servants.

Simon is determined to send Betty out on her last journey into the other world, and to ensure that the strange rain which she encounters if kept there overlong will no longer cloud his vision of the future. The earlier Simon (Magus) had slain a child by magic and sent its soul into the other world to do his bidding; this Simon is resolved to sacrifice his own child. He begins again to utter the spell of the reversed Tetragrammaton, and to hammer supernaturally, as it were, against the wall holding Betty's flesh and spirit together. She does not want to go, but his power is strong. Lester, who is present, although Simon can no longer see her (i.e., she is growing stronger spiritually), sees a pale light beginning to ooze from Simon's hands and flowing over Betty. She tells her, "if you want me I'm here," meaning it with all her heart (ch. vii). She offers herself in Betty's place, and the City accepts the sacrifice. The power of Simon's spell,

the effluvium of illusion, is deflected from Betty and aimed towards her. The pale light is painful; it is the death-light of dissolution, and as it begins to flow around her ankles and up her body, it seems to Lester that she is no longer standing, but is stretched out on two crossed beams of wood. As Betty helped her by forgiving her, so she helps Betty by substituting for her and bearing for her in love the burden of Simon's deathly spell. The cross-frame on which she feels herself resting supports and sustains her: "she pressed herself against that sole support" (ch. vii). She endures a new crucifixion in order that Betty may be saved; Lester is, in turn, saved.

Lester had taken the shock of the curse--no less willingly or truly that she had not known what she was doing. She had suffered instead of Betty, as Betty had once suffered through her; but the endurance had been short and the restoration soon, so quickly had the Name which is the City sprung to the rescue of its own.

(ch. vii)

Betty had called Lester's name, and the word had changed into something more sacred, akin to the Name of God (the true Tetragrammaton, that is, which obviously counteracts Simon's spell (heavenly truth destroys illusion)). Its vibrations are felt throughout the world as a spiritual regeneration, and Lester feels the change.

Simon catches a glimpse of her during the magical operation, and knows he has failed. He uses Evelyn, the weaker spirit, to find out why. Evelyn's lungs hurt badly, because they can hardly bear the air of the City (i.e., she is still an alien to its atmosphere and is unwilling to make the moral effort that will help her become acclimated); the pain eases when she babbles her self-centred complaints.

She therefore tells Simon what he wants to know.

Simon thinks to trap Lester through the weaker spirit; he promises Evelyn what she wants--a body to live in again and someone to talk to--if she will bring Lester to him. He asks her whom she wants to talk to.

There was indeed, even for her, a chance, could she have taken it. It lay precisely in her consenting not to talk, whether she succeeded or no.

(ch. viii)

But she tells him the name--Betty, whom she loved to torment--and takes another chosen step downward. As Lester grows into goodness, Evelyn grows further away from it; the one accepts proffered chances even when they hurt; the other always chooses the easy and, for her, seemingly pleasanter way.

Lester accompanies her willingly, though with misgiving, with the specific hope to be of help to her. And as they go across London to where Simon waits, she begins to discern that in this London are the Londons of other times, and that they are all filled with inhabitants. The City is revealing itself to be other than the shadowy replica of the London she had known in life. As her spiritual eyes and ears grow sharper, she becomes more capable of seeing the coexistence of all men and all times in the City; they were, Williams is saying, all there all the time:

it was necessary that she should first have been compelled to linger among those façades, for till she had waited there and till she had known the first grace of a past redeemed into love, she could not bear even a passing glimpse of that civil vitality.

(ch. viii)

Simon makes a body magically from dust and spittle, shaping it from a small mass to a larger one, pulling and patting it into a travesty of human existence, with muttered spells and the movement of his hands. (Williams describes every step of this operation with careful detail.) The action of Simon's hands is another example of the symbolic and ritual importance which Williams ascribed to hands, which, it will be remembered, he described in The Greater Trumps as "spiritual instruments of intention"; the intention may be good, as in praying or giving aid, or evil, as when Simon fashions the homuncula. This scene, together with that of Lester's enduring the pain of the spell meant for Betty, is one of the most minutely and vividly drawn in this novel, or, indeed, in any of Williams' tales.

Evelyn enters the rather misshapen body, "a short rather heavy-looking middle-aged woman, slightly deformed, with one shoulder a little higher than the other and one foot dragging a little" (ch. viii).¹³

Simon makes his creation a prison for spirits by kissing it on the mouth. His kiss, like Judas', is one of betrayal, since his intention is to imprison Lester in the magic shape. It therefore may be interpreted as the mark of treachery which illusion (Simon) lays on its creations and its creatures. Lester goes into the dwarf-woman of her own free will, however, in order to be with and to aid Evelyn if she can.

The shape at first obeys Simon's commands, going (as witches traditionally do) widdershins from the sun, and shying away from the

¹³Cf. the tradition that replicas made through sorcery cannot be perfect; there must always be some flaw.

sight of a cathedral cross and the river (symbols, of course, of God and baptism). But Lester finds that she has the power to force it to go where Simon does not wish it to go.

The magical form which united them also separated; through it they co-hered to each other but could not co-inhere. Lester had joined herself to this form for the sake of Evelyn, and Evelyn . . . no longer wanted her . . . she cared only that there should be, somewhere in the universe, a voice which, at first repeating, might presently come to respond to, her own.

(ch. ix)¹⁴

Evelyn, like Wentworth in Descent into Hell, rapidly progresses towards nothing but a lone colloquy with herself; if she wishes to choose hell, the City will consent, since it does not force anything, even happiness, on anyone; it only offers chances to make the proper choice.

Lester makes the pseudo-woman stand on the Embankment near Westminster Bridge, where she waited for Richard at the beginning of the novel. As she looks at the Thames and the city, everything in that city seems to be becoming solider as she gains greater insight into the substance of spiritual truth.

To her now all states of being were beginning to be of their own proper kind, each in itself and in its relationships . . . So the Thames was still the Thames, but within it the infinite gradations of clarity deepened to something else. . . . and as Lester saw it she felt a great desire to discover its source . . .

(ch. ix)

¹⁴On Williams' use of "co-here" and "co-inhere," see also chapter VI, footnote 9.

As she continues to grow towards Christ and joy, she conceives a desire for union with them.¹⁵

She manages to make herself known to Betty, Betty's fiance Jonathan, and her own husband, Richard, and to enlist their help in returning Simon's creation to him. Evelyn, still sharing the magical shape, can only whine.

"No one . . . cares about me. I don't expect much. I don't ask for much. I only want you, Betty. Lester's so cruel to me. She won't cry. I want to see you cry."

(ch. ix)

It is a magical and spiritual day: All Hallows' (All Souls') Eve. Simon is planning ways to recover spiritual dominion over Betty, by first suspending her physical life. Against the promptings of his own wisdom he has recourse to crude ways of magic.

Illusion, to the magician as to the saint, is a great danger. But the master in Goetia [necromancy, black magic] has always at the center of his heart a single tiny everlasting illusion . . . It was infecting Simon now. It was hurrying him. . . . He knew well that for the greater initiate to fall back on the methods of the

¹⁵Cf. the lines written by Wordsworth, a favorite poet of Williams, on the city of London seen from Westminster Bridge ("Composed Upon Westminster Bridge"): "Earth has not anything to show more fair:/Dull would he be of soul who could pass by/A sight so touching in its majesty:/This City now doth, like a garment, wear/The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,/Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie/Open unto the fields, and to the sky;/All bright and glittering in the smokeless air./Never did sun more beautifully steep/In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;/Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!/The river glideth at his own sweet will:/Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;/And all that mighty heart is lying still!"

lesser initiate was unwise. In sorcery
as in sanctity there is no return.

(ch. x)¹⁶

He commands Betty's mother to bring him some of Betty's hair, and, in another part of London, she hears and obeys. He makes an image of Betty and presses the hairs into it (this is little more than primitive (voodoo) magic). But Simon is being driven more and more into the faceless imbecility that is the true nature of the gospel he preaches, and as his power declines, his methods become cruder and more desperate. He stabs at the doll but misses; Betty's mother begins to bleed, and as her blood goes into the doll, she, instead of her daughter, becomes, in a kind of dark substitution, Simon's victim.

Lester and her companions break into Simon's house, where his servants, suddenly stricken again with the diseases that he had only illusorily banished (i.e., as illusion's power wanes, the memory of painful reality returns), also seek him out. It is raining hard outside, and the house itself is beginning to let in water through the cracks. The rain follows the route that the companions and the newly-awakened servants follow. The event is premised as actually happening in the story, just as, in Descent into Hell, Lilith's house actually crumbles at Pauline's touch. And, as in that story, the event is a metaphor for the death, or at least the passing, of illusion. In Descent into Hell, it is Pauline's joy and satisfaction, her rejection of all small-minded, self-centered desires, that causes Lilith's house to collapse. In All Hallows' Eve, a rain comes. In the story it is

¹⁶ Cf. the inner corruption which is slowly consuming the Alder Maiden, in MacDonald's Phantastes, and the dark spot of corruption on Lilith's side, in Lilith.

real rain, as well as, undoubtedly, the rain which falls in Betty's dream-trips into the other world, and the water she remembers being immersed in as a baby, i.e., the waters of baptism were her protection during these dangerous trips--"saved from magic by a mystery, beyond magic" (ch. ix). Rain is a symbol of the washing-away of the sins and illusions of the world: thus the mysterious rain is falling where the companions go, seeking out and combatting the forces of Simon, or illusion.

Lester is freed from the dwarf-woman's body, but Evelyn is not. She goes toward Simon, her spiritual center. Betty insists on following her into the magic circle within which Simon sits, waiting to kill Betty.

"Let me go, darling. I can't leave her to die again. I was glad she was dead the first time, so I must be with her now."

(ch. x)

As she enters the circle, the rain breaks through the roof. The act of freely-offered self-sacrifice is, within the story, accompanied by a tremendous and most unusual act of nature which, within the story, is both itself and the symbol of divine mercy. The rain continues its task of washing away the images of illusion: it melts the doll-figure and the dwarf-woman (a glancing reference also to the tradition that water destroys witches) and drives the two eidola of Simon towards him--"the heavenly rain . . . the grace drove against them from behind . . ."
(ch. x). The rain has taken on a rosy hue (the waters of baptism and redemption mixed with the blood Christ shed in redeeming the world?), and to Simon it seems like a burning rose drawing him and his eidola down.

The roseal glow behind them in the waters was now very deep . . . not so much a glow as a fume of colour. An opaque cloud gathered. It had been so when that other . . . ascended . . . But [He] . . . had gone up into the law and according to the law. Now the law was filling the breach in the law. The blood of all victims and the fire of all avengers was in it--from Abel to those of London and Berlin--yet it was merely itself.

(ch. x)

The burning rose is here a symbol of cleansing,¹⁷ but for Simon the cleansing is the hell of having to contemplate--for how long?--only the imbecile mirror images of himself, the hell of self-absorption. For Lester, however, the rain brings a painful joy, the knowledge of the coming full separation from her husband when she is received into the City. The rain's appearance is to each a reflection of his spiritual state.

Evelyn runs away, her shelter having melted away from around her: "she broke through the window again and was gone into that other City, there to wait and wander and mutter till she found what companions she could" (ch. x).

Lester has a moment of grave pity for her: "'We might have found the waters together, she and I'" (ch. x). (Williams does not, even at this point, dismiss all possibility of Evelyn eventually finding her way upward.) Lester, becoming less and less visible to her living companions, has grown to the state where she is ready to go into the substantial celestial City.

¹⁷MacDonald also uses the symbolism of the burning rose which cleanses and cures, although not in either Phantastes or Lilith. See The Princess and Curdie, ch. xxxi.

She stood, quiet and very real, before them; almost she shone on them; then the brightness quivered in the air, a gleam of brighter light than day, and in a flash traversed all the hall; the approach of all the hallows possessed her, and she too, into the separations and unions which are indeed its approach, and into the end to which it is itself an approach, was wholly gone. The tremor of brightness received her.

(ch. x)

Christiana has reached the Celestial City.

In this novel about salvation, substitution, the free exchange of love, and the courtesy of love, the City itself, as discussed earlier, is a character, making itself felt by answering the actions of those who dwell within it, even if in its most shadowy form. This treatment is a fuller development of the image of the City of Descent into Hell. In All Hallows' Eve the City is multifaceted: it is the real London; the city of death; and the City of God. It is a living presence (as God is omnipresent), encompassing all the characters in the novel, and is invoked innumerable times by their actions. It is also a place where everything, including joy, is literal and its meaning unclouded. When Lester says, "'Oh my God!'" casually,

it meant nothing; when . . . [she and Richard] were seriously aggressive or aggrieved, they used language from bestiality or hell. She had never thought it meant anything. But in this air every word meant something, meant itself . . . and the oath had echoed into an invocation.

(ch. i)

Not only does Williams create the feeling of an all-encompassing presence; he also places it in little, as it were, within the story by imagining Jonathan having painted a picture of it from his own mind, filled with a light so beautiful that he hardly understands how he could have painted it. It is as if Williams were focussing the rays of (his conception of) the spiritual City through a pinhole onto a canvas. That Jonathan could give it form without knowing how or why may be interpreted as evidence within him of his receptiveness to the City, even though he may not be consciously aware of it; i.e., a soul may be intuitively sensitive to the presence of God. Richard, on seeing the painting, is reminded of Sir Joshua Reynolds' statement that the source of all art is ""common observation and a plain understanding"" (ch. ii); the City is there for all to observe and understand.

It lay there, as it always does--itself
offering no barriers, open to be trodden,
ghostly to this world and to heaven, and
in its upper reaches ghostly also to
those in its lower reaches where (if at
all) hell lies.

(ch. iv)

The sun in the painting seems on the point of rising (i.e., the offer and possibility of the dawn which is salvation is always there). Simon finds it too bright to look at, i.e., he who aspires to be a god does not have it in his nature to be able to contemplate the glory of God. Not unlike Considine in Shadows of Ecstasy, he regards Christ as "that other sorcerer of his race" (ch. viii) and as having gone into death "as the rest of mankind go, ignorant and in pain" (ch. vi). He is unable to perceive that happiness and true freedom lie in willing obedience to the laws of the City. The City

directs him, nevertheless, as it has directed Lester, Evelyn, and all the others, receiving their acts and paying them in the coin they earn.

In a sense, Williams' novels recount a series of skirmishes in the unending "war in heaven," fought in little over and over again in the human soul. All Hallows' Eve is the topmost and widest spiral in the gyre of the novels; in it all the doctrines which Williams constantly wove into nearly all his work are organically blended in a way that attests to his steady progress as a novelist and lay theologian. It is a superb example of his special art: showing that the super-natural or spiritual and the real or "natural" are twin parts, indissoluble, of a greater reality. He was supremely able to say this in terms of fantasy and its many modes, and to provide some splendid entertainment into the bargain.

Whether Williams' exhortations are acceptable or not is (as always) a matter of choice. He may, as he says of Milton, "have erred, as we all err, by formulating for everyday life laws only tolerable in rare paradisal states"; but (he goes on) "it was the passion of Paradise, and its comedy, which is the heart of his verse."¹⁸ So the passion of Williams' doctrine is the heart of all his work.

¹⁸"The New Milton," p. 25.

Chapter XI. Williams' Novels: Critical Opinion and the Problem of Classification

Macdonald is the greatest genius of this kind
whom I know. But I do not know how to classify
such genius.¹

He [Williams] will not fit into a pigeon-hole.²

Enough detail has been given to show that Williams fulfilled the criteria which MacDonald laid down for a good fairy tale, i.e., a tale of the imagination: the laws within his imagined world are consistent and harmonious and therefore help to induce belief; his stories contain allegory, but are not themselves allegories; and they evoke spiritual self-questioning.³

Critics are in the main agreed as to Williams' skill in synthesizing the materials of fantasy within the novel form. Antony Borrow, for instance, considers that Williams' magical apparatus, derived from already existing traditions, is a revivification of old images and that it is developed in ways which are a natural and organic outcome of these traditions "with no undue straining of symbols."

Williams' great achievement, then, seems
to lie in his recharging of myth; but he
breathes a new life not only into legend
and ritual, but also into civic institu-
tions, into language, and aesthetics . . .
Whether or not one grants intellectual

¹Lewis, preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 16.

²Lewis, preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vi.

³Cf. Winship, "The Novels of Charles Williams," p. 113: "we are forced by Williams to think about our thinking. These books are thrillers--if that term denotes competent management of suspense. But the thrill is a small thing compared to the washing away of the sandy foundations of our complacency."

assent to the stories of folklore and legend they are none the less there, embedded in the matter of our literary heritage, and whatever it was that struggled to be manifest through such stories, be they fact or allegory, has been in recent centuries suppressed by another mode of apprehension, apprehension by intellect. Williams, while deriving so many symbols from occult legend . . . revives them, so that, whether or not he allows the narratives full credence as possible events, yet the reader is made to endure something of the truths they represent.⁴

W. R. Irwin also is of the opinion that Williams "made mythical material his own by subjecting its original disparities to his own syncretizing, by adapting it to contemporary persons and circumstances, and by fusing narrative which is mythical in origin with narrative of his own invention"; and, further, that artistically, as well as doctrinally, Williams was a syncretist: "into the associative framework of well-known myths Williams regularly fits pieces of recondite lore as well as incidents and symbols of his own making. Such is his skill in assembling and extending that he gains a double advantage: the unfamiliar material retains the charm of novelty while it is rendered intelligible and persuasive by its coalescence with the familiar."⁵

John L. Stewart, discussing All Hallows' Eve, points out some of the sources upon which Williams drew: Dante and the mystical systems

⁴Borrow, op. cit., 351 and 352-353.

⁵Irwin, "Christian Doctrine and the Tactics of Romance," p. 148. Much the same point is made with respect to Williams, C. S. Lewis, and Tolkien in Irwin's article "There and Back Again: The Romances of Williams, Lewis, and Tolkien," The Sewanee Review, LXIX, 4 (Autumn 1961), 574-575.

of medieval Christianity (the symbols of the Celestial Rose, the baptismal rivers and rain, and the "purging and regenerative fire-light of Heaven"); the Kabbalists (the Tetragrammaton); the history of Simon Magus; the Talmudic legend of the Golem (Stewart here appears to be thinking of Simon's magical creation of a dwarf-woman); and witchcraft. In his opinion, however, Williams was too much engrossed with stating his ideas to devote the attention needed in order to completely synthesize his materials into fiction. It is at the level of ideas, therefore, that Stewart sees the organization of the symbols as breaking down.

In trying to stuff so many implications into his novels, Williams chose his symbols from too many and too various fields of analogy. . . . The symbols fit together easily in the narrative. It is only when the reader tries to go behind the narrative, as he is clearly supposed to do, that he runs into trouble.⁶

Stewart attributes this breakdown in the fiction not only to the too-rich variety of the marvellous, but also to the fact that the fantasy motifs are, in his view, of unequal importance.

Some of the details in which he delighted were the stuff of major fiction, while others--Doppelgangers [*sic*], animated jewels from the crown of Solomon . . . were trash. By their very nature materials of such different worth could hardly be brought together into indivisibly organic works.⁷

⁶John L. Stewart, "Five New Novels," The Sewanee Review, LVII, 2 (April-June 1949), 315 and 316.

⁷John L. Stewart, "Charles Williams's Fiction," The Sewanee Review, LVIII, 1 (January-March 1950), 160.

Although it is arguable whether the task Williams set himself was indeed impossible, Stewart plainly feels that it was.⁸ Nevertheless, Stewart admits to the strength of the fantasies' effect:

the narrative, by virtue of the unusual materials with which Williams worked and his skill at bringing them together on the level of his stories, is full of terror, strangeness, and beauty. It is full of truth in its own right . . .⁹

Patricia Meyer Spacks also admits, on the one hand, to being a compulsive reader of Williams' novels, and, on the other, to being uneasily aware of an imperfect fusion of their components.

The ultimate source of his appeal, it seems to me, is the extraordinary ambition of the attempt he makes: not merely to write good fiction, not just to dramatize theological issues, but to create a new twentieth-century form, an equivalent for the great medieval allegories. The attempt fails, but it suggests important issues in the fiction of our time.¹⁰

She posits that for the medieval technique of attempting to fuse different levels of meaning (anagogical, topological, allegorical, and literal), Williams substituted an effort to fuse different levels of experience: theological, supernatural, and psychological; and that in his novels, the supernatural is a bridge between the psychological

⁸See ibid., 160-163.

⁹Stewart, "Five New Novels," 317. And in "Charles Williams's Fiction," 164, Stewart, speculating on the direction Williams' novels might have taken had he lived, states that "the questions make more interesting his already fascinating fiction and suggest that, with all its faults, its worth is great indeed."

¹⁰Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Charles Williams: The Fusions of Fiction," in Shadows of Imagination, ed. Mark R. Hillegas, p. 150.

and the theological.¹¹ The doppelgänger in Descent into Hell, for instance, is, in its least complicated aspect, a mode of the supernatural. Its psychological meaning, according to Spacks, is "a sense of the menace of the universe and the dangers of self-knowledge," whereas its theological significance is "the joy of accepted responsibility for one's freedom"; therefore, since Pauline's doppelgänger is conceived of simultaneously as a psychological evil and a theological good, the moral weight of the theological meaning contradicts the psychological. Spacks also states that Williams' supernatural phenomena do not fall into a systematic cosmology.¹²

Spacks, like Stewart, is of the opinion that the attempted fusion is, finally, inconceivable,¹³ and points out, rightly, that the vast philosophic and technical problems of writing fiction in the twentieth century increase even further when the author's purposes are theological as well as imaginative; unlike either Lewis or Tolkien, Williams does not try to obviate his problem by creating a new world for his characters.¹⁴

Instead he tries to employ the conventions of the realistic novel, to convey the outlines of a social world inhabited by recognizable human beings and yet to serve more

¹¹Ibid., p. 151.

¹²Ibid., pp. 151 and 152.

¹³Cf. Eliot, introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xi: "What he [Williams] had to say was beyond his resources, and probably beyond the resources of language, to say once for all through any one medium of expression."

¹⁴Spacks, "Charles Williams: The Fusions of Fiction," pp. 157 and 158.

than realistic purposes. . . .

The most successful theological fiction of the twentieth century--in English, the work of such writers as Graham Greene, Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch comes to mind--has limited itself to realistic conventions. None of the events in these novelists' works remains inexplicable. . . .

Charles Williams, reaching for more than they, achieves less. The attempt to fuse different levels of experience which dominates his novels is fundamentally allegorical, but he cannot commit himself to the limitations of allegory. His introduction of supernatural phenomena and events indicates also his impatience with realistic convention: he wishes to tell us that we must expand our conceptions of what realism is. Since what he wishes to say seems more important to him than how he says it, he sacrifices the imaginative life of his novels to purposes which are didactic rather than philosophic. . . . Williams' ideas are compelling and so is his fictional purpose, his attempt to unite what in experience seems disparate. Finally, though, his aims exceed his literary ability. The fusion splits, one feels the novelist manipulating, hears the theologian exhorting, realizes how superior medieval methods are to this version of twentieth-century ones for conveying the subtleties of theology in imaginative form.¹⁵

These points are, as literary analysis, well taken. But they seem to imply that there was a conscious effort on Williams' part to fuse the various levels of meaning to which Spacks alludes,¹⁶ while there is

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 158-159. Concerning Graham Greene, however, it should be noted that in some of his novels, such as The End of the Affair, certain events are explicable only in terms of the Christian miraculous, or, at worst, of coincidence. And, at least in The Comforters, Muriel Spark also goes beyond realistic conventions and presents the inexplicable.

¹⁶Cf. Charles Moorman's remark concerning Descent into Hell, which is applicable to all of Williams' novels except, perhaps, The Place of the Lion: "Williams makes no attempt at sustained allegory . . . we are not dealing with a novel which can be systematically interpreted on a number of levels throughout" (Myth in the Novels of Charles Williams, Modern Fiction Studies, 3, 4 [Winter 1957-1958], 325).

nothing specific in Williams to substantiate this. It hardly seems within the realm of possibility that an author writing under pressure, as Williams had to, would deliberately undertake to write an entertainment within a framework as complex (or nearly) as, say, Spenserian allegory, which requires infinite patience and time in order to harmonize the layers of meaning and components of fantasy between and among themselves on a number of levels; even then, the task verges on the impossible. "It is easy to pick holes in the novels," Hadfield remarks. "They were written hastily, and they take enormous themes hastily for their own purpose with little knowledge and hardly any research, but the use made of them is never superficial."¹⁷

That the ultimate purpose of Williams' novels is didactic seems undeniable. But, aside from this, the desire to entertain, rather than to indulge an intellectual curiosity in working out a psychological-supernatural-theological literary problem, was probably the next strongest factor in his choice of fantasy motifs. As Winship points out, the causes of his literary work were, in the Aristotelian terminology, the efficient (in Williams' case, the desire to earn money); the formal, which involves the choice of the genre in which he wished to work; the material cause, i.e., the desire to explain an important theme, which in Williams "is always in some unorthodox way religious"; and the final cause, the author's irresistible need to express his deepest feelings, which in Williams is "the Christian

¹⁷Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 86. Note that Williams wrote six novels in a period of nine years, together with other works (1925-1934; see Appendix III). Even with respect to All Hallows' Eve, published eight years after Descent into Hell, he wrote "'It is not (technically) what it should be'" (Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 190).

faith, seen from a rather special and individual point of view."¹⁸ Williams, that is, was content to use selected aspects of the fantasy motifs which he chose as it suited his purpose, without concerning himself overmuch with trying to fit all the traditional associations of his varied fantasy motifs into a perfectly interlocking whole. That Williams used the doppelgänger, traditionally a motif with evil connotations, to embody a theological good is, no doubt, an anomaly. The point to remember, however, is that, as Winship points out, Williams simply does not use this motif in the traditional way, i.e., as an omen of death,¹⁹ and that the reader is not intended to examine the motif in vacuo. The real test of success is whether the fantasy narrative is strong enough to make the new connotation plausible. This Williams has done by causing the doppelgänger's true identity--joyfulness--to reveal itself and to obliterate its false appearance--frightfulness--in a scene where the main character experiences a great fear which gives way to greater joy (when Pauline takes on the burden of her ancestor's fear of the martyr's stake).

What has been said of Williams' use of symbol is also true of MacDonald. As already discussed, such incidents as Lilith's being felled and then revived by a stream over which she leaps presents a certain amount of seeming inconsistency. The point is that Williams and MacDonald used only those aspects of a fantasy motif as suited their combined narrative and doctrinal purposes at a given moment,

¹⁸Winship, "The Novels of Charles Williams," pp. 111-113 and 118-119.

¹⁹"This Rough Magic," 294.

even employing different or contradictory aspects of the same motif at different times. But--and the point is of paramount importance--this is done in ways which induce literary belief in each moment. It should be remembered that consistency in presentation of doctrine was their overriding consideration; other types of consistency were subordinate, though certainly an important concern.²⁰ It would therefore be somewhat academic to base a literary evaluation on a criterion which, as far as direct evidence goes, there is no reason to suppose the author consciously set for himself.

One might go even further and say that what Spacks regards as inconsistency actually constitutes an important part of the very nature of Williams' fantasy--and MacDonald's: its open-endedness and suggestiveness, what Chad Walsh has referred to as tender vagueness and shimmering ambiguity.²¹ Perhaps this was the accidental result of their not having been able to balance out every meaning consistently, and perhaps Spacks is right in saying that Williams tried to put too much into his fantasy and failed. On the other hand, and it is to this view that the present writer adheres, the fantasy techniques of these authors may be the result of a higher and better skill, which relies on the intuitive, rather than the allegorically-inclined, mind for appreciation. They were both, moreover, men of "an almost oriental richness of imagination."²² This is reflected in their variegated

²⁰Inconsistency of imagery was, it will be remembered, one of the faults critics found with MacDonald (see chapter III, footnote 97).

²¹See epigraph to chapter IV.

²²A phrase C. S. Lewis applied to Williams (Letters, p. 197).

motifs, their brilliance of description, and their playing with symbol from various angles.

The question reduces itself in the end to one of personal preference; but it is safe to say that, if one is looking for clear-cut, immutable allegorical correspondences in fantasy, it is not to MacDonald or Williams that one should turn.

Part of the difficulty in dealing with Williams, as well as with MacDonald, is that they are, as fantasists, unclassifiable. For want of a better term, their fantasies are referred to as novels, but they are more properly categorized as romances. The consensus of most commentators on Williams, including some who knew him personally and some who did not, is that he is unclassifiable. C. S. Lewis states that "he will not fit into a pigeon-hole."²³ Eliot points out, in reference to Williams' fantasies, that "there are no novels anywhere quite like them."²⁴ "His unlikeness to others, his concern with his own vision of timeless things working in human experience, sets him apart from his age, especially from the twentieth century," remarks one of his biographers;²⁵ and another: "he is eccentric to contemporary writing."²⁶

Chad Walsh speaks of Williams as a major writer who is utterly

²³Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. vi.

²⁴"The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 894.

²⁵Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 192.

²⁶Ridler, introduction to "Seed of Adam" and Other Plays, by Charles Williams, p. viii. She feels that it is difficult to judge Williams by any contemporary standards other than those of his own work.

unclassifiable,²⁷ although "one of the most important figures in the rise of religion to a position of intellectual and literary respectability" in the 1930's and 1940's.²⁸ Kingsley Amis calls Williams' novels fantasy novels, mentioning that they are exceptions to many rules.²⁹ Elizabeth Wright remarks that, as a novelist, Williams stands outside any definable tradition, and that his works must in the last analysis be judged on their ideas rather than their form.³⁰ Richard McLaughlin, pointing out that Williams' fantasies are unlike others, in that they do not exploit the supernatural for a temporary thrill, notes that, "as to the essential nature of his message, it is, admittedly, often as hard to define as his novels are difficult to classify."³¹ Edmund Fuller, who regards the fantasies of Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams as part of the novel canon, also feels that

the novels of Charles Williams cannot be thrust into any ready pigeonhole. Generally they begin in a frame of the most deceptively everyday realism, but suddenly

²⁷ Chad Walsh, "Charles Williams' Poetry" (review of The Region of the Summer Stars, by Charles Williams), Poetry, 79, 2 (November 1951), 103. Walsh, like Eliot ("The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 894) and Auden ("Charles Williams," p. 552), considers the novels to be the easiest introduction to Williams' work.

²⁸ Chad Walsh, "The Supernatural Was Also Natural" (review of The Place of the Lion, by Charles Williams), The New York Times Book Review, March 11, 1951, p. 1.

²⁹ Kingsley Amis, New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction (New York, 1960), p. 82. He does not expand on the statement.

³⁰ Wright, op. cit., 53. Cf. John Press's rather despairing remark regarding Williams' poetry (The Chequer'd Shade: Reflections on Obscurity in Poetry [London, 1958], p. 61): "as a poet he remains a very queer fish in a deep, dark pond."

³¹ Richard McLaughlin, "Drama of Belief and Unbelief" (review of Shadows of Ecstasy, by Charles Williams), Saturday Review, September 23, 1950, p. 8.

Williams begins to open doors and windows from what we commonly call the natural to the supernatural. He moves us into further dimensions of what many of us accept as reality, not literally but, again, by image and symbol. These strange dimensions do not alter the nature of the books as novels.

.
Hence, I call these men novelists. They are conspicuous among their contemporaries for using different ~~modes~~ from the major fashions of the period.³²

Attempts to link Williams with a tradition have not been definitive, some critics detecting, and others refuting, for instance, a kinship with the Gothic school and the nineteenth-century school of terror. Heath-Stubbs, for example, remarked that Williams' stories belong broadly to the same literary genre as those of Le Fanu, Machen, Blackwood, and M. R. James.³³ Winship, while noting that "Williams wrote by choice in one or another of the kinds stemming from The Castle of Otranto,"³⁴ was careful to point out the essential difference between Williams and the Gothic writers. The latter play upon the superstitious fear of the supernatural, whereas Williams transforms the supernatural into a quantity that need not be feared, because it is explicable as part of the Christian framework.³⁵

³² Fuller, op. cit., pp. 141-142. He is one of the few critics who have quoted (p. 232) James Agee's remark that Williams had "'a wonderful gift for conveying and dramatizing, the 'borderline' states of mind or Being.'"

³³ Charles Williams, p. 7.

³⁴ "The Novels of Charles Williams," p. 112.

³⁵ See chapter IV above, pp. 100-102. In the present writer's view, there is a great deal of exhilarating excitement in Williams' novels; of terror--in the sense of "inspiring unreasoning fear"--none.

. . . our conscious materialism is often but a defense against the terror of the supernatural.

So it is to the cracks in our armor that gothic writers from Horace Walpole to John Dickson Carr aim their shafts. . . . They give a hint that the material causes are not alone, a suggestion that unnatural things exist . . .

But Charles Williams is more fair with his readers and . . . demands only that while reading his books we accept the supernatural premise of the Christian faith. To do so does not mean to believe that any of the hocus-pocus in his novels is true. But it does set upright all that is topsy-turvy in superstition and Satanism; it makes clear where man and the Devil stand in the scheme of things. . . .

For this reason the paraphernalia of Satanism and the other magic in these novels command a belief impossible in fiction that makes the slightest genuflexion to materialism. . . . the materialist, when his guard is down, is deathly afraid of the supernatural. The Christian, on the other hand, bases upon it all of his hope.³⁶

A general kinship between Williams' novels and the work of G. K. Chesterton has also been referred to by many writers, but in general terms only. Auden states his belief that Chesterton influenced Williams;³⁷ Tindall feels that Williams took his pattern from George MacDonald and perhaps Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday (1908).³⁸ Ridler believes that Chesterton is the most obvious influence on

³⁶Winship, "This Rough Magic," 292-293.

³⁷"Charles Williams: A Review Article," p. 553.

³⁸Forces in Modern British Literature 1885-1956, p. 184.

Williams' stories. She points out, however, that Chesterton's effectiveness depends on "his ability to evoke the surface of the ordinary world and then to show that it is in fact extraordinary and disturbing," whereas Williams is more interested in psychological states, and the further he probes inward, the greater is his success.³⁹

Eliot found that the nearest comparison he could make with Williams' stories was The Man Who Was Thursday, but that Williams surpassed Chesterton in that, while he did not have Chesterton's gift for humor and paradox, he was interested not in pointing a moral, but in writing an exciting mystery story about "good and evil . . . the inevitable progress of every human being to heaven or hell . . . the most exciting things to write about that there are."⁴⁰ The Man Who Was Thursday, Eliot points out, is an allegory, with a meaning that

³⁹Introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, pp. liv-lv.

⁴⁰"The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 894. Eliot also pointed out (introduction to All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams, p. xiv) that Chesterton's influence seemed to be most perceptible in War in Heaven (the first of Williams' novels to be published, it will be remembered) and that it grew fainter in the later works. Lawrence R. Dawson, Jr. ("Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction," Ball State Teachers College Forum V, 1 [Winter 1964], 24) advances Eliot's thesis--that Chesterton was more interested in pointing a moral and Williams in making an exciting mystery--in support of his own view that Williams' novels are not like Chesterton's in any important sense, and that therefore the affinity should not be overstressed. The article deals with Williams' reviews of murder mysteries and detective fiction and with various comments Williams made thereon, which Dawson feels have some bearing on his novel writing, as well as on the essential difference between the nature of the thrill in the terror school of writing and in Williams. For an extensive listing of Williams' reviews written between 1918 and 1945, see Lawrence R. Dawson, Jr., "A Checklist of Reviews by Charles Williams," Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 55 (Second Quarter 1961), 100-117.

is meant to be discovered at the end;⁴¹ it suggests the idea, rather than the feeling, of another world. Eliot feels that Williams, on the other hand, has a different purpose, which, paradoxically, gives him a surface resemblance to the terror school, but a surface resemblance only.

His aim is to make you partake of a kind of experience that he has had, rather than to make you accept some dogmatic belief. This gives him an affinity with writers of an entirely different type of supernatural thriller from Chesterton's: with writers as different as Poe, Walter de la Mare, Montague James, Le Fanu and Arthur Machen. But the danger of this second type of story is that its thrills are apt to turn into pure sensationalism. . . . The nearest approximation to Williams's effects that I can think of, is given by Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; and even here, I feel that the literary craftsman is too obviously the manipulator of the scene.⁴²

But, Eliot continues, Williams' stories are not based on morbid psychology, like those of Poe, nor are they "an exploitation of the supernatural for the sake of the immediate shudder."⁴³ And, as far as an

⁴¹Introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xiv. Note, for instance, that the identity of the gigantic, mysterious, all-knowing, and not altogether pleasant pivotal character, Sunday, who has been pictured as some kind of arch-criminal throughout the novel, is suddenly opened out into the allegorical towards the end of the book (ch. xv): "'I am the Sabbath,' said the other without moving. 'I am the peace of God.'"

⁴²Introduction to All Hallows' Eve, pp. xiv-xv. The affinity which Eliot detected between Stevenson's story and Williams' novels would seem to consist in their both studying the good and evil sides of human nature not only from the psychological point of view, but also within a context which presupposes the existence of a supreme good (God) and a supreme evil (the Devil); the macrocosmic contrast is analyzed in its microcosmic counterpart, the human mind and soul.

⁴³Ibid., p. xv.

attempt at classification of Williams within a literary tradition is concerned, he lets the matter rest there.

It is possible, however, to exaggerate the difference in Chesterton's and Williams' immediate objectives. Although Williams' novels are not allegories, they are sprinkled, as are Chesterton's, with didactic passages, often couched in paradox.⁴⁴ They reiterate the message that it is better to love than to hate, and to freely choose submission and true freedom in God's hierarchy than to negate goodness and withdraw into the hell of self-isolation. In Chesterton's story the moral does not become apparent until the end, when the supernatural irrupts finally into the everyday world, while in Williams the moral is there throughout. But both authors strove to excite and entertain. However, The Man Who Was Thursday--a tale of the infiltration of "secret" agents into a group whose professed objective is to seize world power mainly through terrorism by bombing--depends on straight-adventure excitement. The mood is erratic; and there is a strong admixture of the jocular, and even the ludicrous, which is prone to dissolve suddenly into the sinister, as when one of the "secret" agents, anxious to finish a duel before the arrival of a train on which Sunday's followers are due to arrive, lets his opponent pull off his false nose.⁴⁵ The story then turns into a sinister account of the

⁴⁴Some examples from Williams have been given above in the discussion of his style (pp. 193-194); see also chapter XII, p. 343. Cf. this passage, from Chesterton's The Napoleon of Notting Hill (1904), ch. ii: "If you look at a thing nine hundred and ninety-nine times, you are perfectly safe; if you look at it the thousandth time, you are in frightful danger of seeing it for the first time." See also footnote 45.

⁴⁵Eliot, as has been seen, speaks of Chesterton's having the superior gift of wit and paradox. In The Man Who Was Thursday, however,

flight of the secret agents through the countryside before Sunday's army of followers. The mood eventually returns to the jocular, and, as mentioned, Sunday reveals himself to be the opposite of what the reader has been led to believe.

the humor often borders on buffoonery, a note which Williams never strikes. Cf., for example, the episode of the insane chase which Sunday leads his pursuers (The Man Who Was Thursday, ch. xiii), leaving a trail of unrelated meaningless notes, e.g., "'Fly at once. The truth about your trouser-stretchers is known.--A Friend.'" Williams, on the other hand, does not crack jokes; his wit is much quieter, expressing itself principally in gentle irony, e.g., "'When the English take anything very seriously they always become a trifle delirious'" (Many Dimensions, ch. vii); "in the usual reflux of the generations he tended to assume that his father's mind was insufficient" (Shadows of Ecstasy, ch. vi); "being a modern normally emotional girl she was, quite naturally, an idolater" (Many Dimensions, ch. v); "they couldn't all want Archetypes coming down on them, not if they were like most of the religious people he had met. They also probably liked their religion taken mild--a pious hope, a devout ejaculation, a general sympathetic sense of a kindly universe--but nothing upsetting or bewildering, no agony, no darkness" (The Place of the Lion, ch. vi); and "She had the common, vague idea of her age that if your sexual life was all right you were all right, and she had the common vague idea of all ages that if you (and your sexual life) were not all right, it was probably someone else's fault--perhaps undeliberate, but still their fault" (All Hallows' Eve, ch. i).

Also, in Williams' presentation of the paradoxical truths which the City's inhabitants learn regarding the laws on which the universe turns--e.g., that only by willing obedience does one become truly free, and only by turning one's attention outward from self towards others does one become a true individual ("only by discovery of the principle of exchanged life can we keep our self-control by losing it, and without losing it we cannot keep it" [Charles Williams, "'Staring at Miracle,'" review of A Vision, by W. B. Yeats, Time and Tide, 4 December 1937, p. 1676])--there is an element of quiet wit, but it lies more in the paradoxical nature of the doctrine itself, which Williams delighted in pointing out, rather than in any intention to amuse (to delight, undoubtedly, but not to amuse; the matter is of too high a seriousness for that). There is in both Chesterton and Williams a tendency, when their characters are discussing matters of high spiritual import, to write dialogue that aims at being lighthearted but which sometimes misses the mark, and seems, rather, like misplaced banter, artificial and, at times, even coy. John Heath-Stubbs (introduction to Collected Plays, by Charles Williams [Oxford, 1963], pp. xi-xii) points out: "The prose dialogue of his [Williams'] novels has often been rather sharply criticized for conveying a sentimental and even cosy quality--which is, one must add, in the sharpest possible contrast with the intense spiritual realism, as we may call it, of their themes."

There is none of this uncertain alternation of mood in Williams; the supernatural irrupts into the everyday world early in the novels, and the excitement is maintained by a steady balancing of the interaction between the two. All in all, with regard to the relationship between the two writers, it seems safest to assume only that Chesterton, in such stories as The Man Who Was Thursday, and Williams were loosely connected by the same tradition, Christian moral fantasy.⁴⁶

One critic at least has declared strongly for the influence of Evelyn Underhill, a Christian mystic, on Williams, stating that one of her novels, A Pillar of Dust (an error for The Column of Dust) was "in almost every respect, the model for Charles Williams' own writings of this kind."⁴⁷ Dawson, on the other hand, considers this statement to be extreme.

⁴⁶Chesterton, as already noted, was a great admirer of George MacDonald. It should also be noted in passing that Williams wrote some reviews for G. K. Chesterton's Weekly in the 1920's and 1930's (Dawson, "A Checklist of Reviews by Charles Williams," 101 and 106) and, according to Dawson ("Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction," 24), Williams' earliest journalistic pieces were published in The New Witness, with which Chesterton had an editorial connection. Williams included an essay on Chesterton's poetry in Poetry at Present (Oxford, 1930), pp. 97-112, which refers to, *inter alia*, The Napoleon of Notting Hill (p. 101). A fairly extensive knowledge of Chesterton (of his poetry especially) is implied by this essay and by scattered references to Chesterton in other of Williams' writings, e.g., his reviews of David Daiches' The Novel and the Modern World (Time and Tide, 9 March 1940, p. 254) and John O'Connor's Father Brown on Chesterton ("Memories of G. K. Chesterton," London Sunday Times, October 10, 1937, p. 8). And, indeed, Chesterton was one of the writers whom, in C. S. Lewis' words, Williams "seemed to have at his fingers' ends" (preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams, p. xi). In "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--V" (G. K.'s Weekly, June 18, 1936, p. 230), Williams speaks of the deep impression which The Napoleon of Notting Hill had made on him. He considered Chesterton as "one of the greatest of the moderns" with respect to poetry and mourned that "the last of my lords is dead" (*ibid.*).

⁴⁷Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams, p. 12.

That Williams was interested in her thought he confesses, and there are a number of reasons for seeing important obligations to her in other ways; but to A Pillar of Dust [sic] he owed little. Evelyn Underhill was even less interested than Chesterton in the art of the novel; Williams approached the novel as he approached every genre in which he wrote as an art.⁴⁸

In an introduction to the volume of Evelyn Underhill's letters which he edited, Williams wrote:

The Column of Dust has a superb theme [a spirit and a human, made unwilling companions by an experiment in incantation on the part of the human, undergo a mutual process of spiritual education]; it has possibilities of wit, terror, and sublimity. The wit is there, but hardly the terror or sublimity. The description of the working of a magical rite at the opening is good; and so, in a different way, is the other Rite of the Helpers of the Holy Souls towards the close. But though the moral of the rest of the book is not less than noble, its literary effect is less than exciting. She had not, on the whole, an imaginative style; the reason may be that her imagination moved too near to serious faith to allow itself, in her writings, much leisure.

Underhill's novel may not have come up to Williams' standards, but it does have a number of features which also appear, in a more skilfully handled manner, in Williams' novels.

The story of Underhill's novel, in brief, is that of Constance, a young woman of good education, who experiments out of curiosity with

⁴⁸Dawson, "Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction," 25.

⁴⁹The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, ed. Charles Williams (London, 1944), p. 10. The portion in square brackets in my interpolation.

spells and magical incantations from a Grimoire, a volume on magic. The unintentional result is the capture of a spirit which, also out of curiosity, has approached too near the earth. Visible to Constance only as a shimmering column of dust, it is forced to become her constant companion. Through her mind, the Watcher, as she calls it, asks questions and receives answers on the nature of the human condition, about which it is eager to learn. Constance herself, forced to look into these questions, to explain, and sometimes to defend, begins to undergo a spiritual education. Through a man who buys the Grimoire from her in the bookshop where she works, Constance is introduced to a fashionable portion of London society, where the Watcher has ample opportunity to learn more of the rules of human life, many of which he finds ludicrous and self-destructive. While Constance is on holiday in the country, she, along with the child Vera, whom she calls her niece, loses her way and comes upon a church in which there is an antique vessel, to which she involuntarily genuflects. The keeper of the chapel, Martin, tells her it is the Holy Graal; Constance tells him about the Watcher, and he advises her that she has been given something "less usual" (i.e., uncommon) to save. He urges her to learn to love. This Constance begins to do by comforting a woman, one of her society friends, who has suffered a complete loss of faith when confronted with the fact of her husband's sudden death. Martin comes to see Constance to inform her, with joy, that he is about to die and that she must become the guardian of the Graal after him. She decides to be honest with her friends and reveals that Vera is an illegitimate child which she had had deliberately because she had wished to participate in and to transmit life; her

honesty is not welcome, and she is politely dropped. Vera falls ill, and Constance must fight the Watcher's wish to let her die so that Constance may be free of one whom she has long regarded as an unwelcome burden (Vera, despite her desired birth, has turned out to be a most unpleasant child). Going to fetch medicine, Constance gets lost in the fog, and again finds her way to a chapel, where a continuous ritual for helping the dead is held. She realizes that, in order to save Vera, she must rid herself of the Watcher; to do that, she must die. Constance herself falls ill and dies. Her sacrifice is a commonplace one, but instructive to the Watcher, who "had now all knowledge, [and] saw himself outstripped by those who had a very little love" (ch. xxii).

Some features common to Williams' novels are immediately apparent. There is, first and uppermost, the theme of the spiritual journey of discovery, and the interest in following the progress of a perfectly ordinary human being who, to her surprise, finds herself on that road. The journey is a process whereby the traveller learns to be honest and to love, and there is, at the end, the lesson of exchange and substitution through self-sacrifice in death. There is even what appears to be a faint prefiguring of Williams' idea of the two Ways to God--Affirmation of Images (seeking Him out through created things and romantic love) and Negation or Rejection of Images (seeking Him out through asceticism and abstinence). Constance, at one point, expresses regret at never having known real love for a man.

"Oh, why did I miss it? That's the
way in--to give up one's will--to be
touched like that, with respect, by

someone who cares!"

He answered, "It is very agreeable;
but for some there is a better and a
harder way."

(ch. xvi)

As in Williams, the spiritual adventure begins when the supernatural breaks through into the everyday world of London, and this is brought about (although by accident) through the use of the occult--a circle drawn on the floor, candles, hazel wand, a pentagram, the Tetragrammaton and an invocation.⁵⁰ In Underhill, as in Williams, these are imaginative devices meant to embody the thesis that the unseen is also a part of the truly natural.

Hence there was born a moment in which
he [the wandering spirit] saw the many
worlds and planes of being, which, from
the standpoint of eternity, are perceived
under an aspect of great and serene simplicity,
interpenetrating one another;
and the world of matter, turbulent and
many-tinted, crossing them all.

(ch. i)

Once the interpenetration of worlds is made manifest, it remains so throughout, as in Williams, while the prosaic details of everyday life also continue to be described.

The description of the incantation scene, although detailed and quite good, does not reach the level of excitement which Williams achieves in his descriptions of the marvellous, possibly because it does not build steadily to its climax, nor is the climax--the brief appearance of the column of dust--sufficiently interesting. However,

⁵⁰ Note that the epigraph to the chapter in which the spell is described (ch. ii) is from Eliphas Levi and that that to chapter vii is from A. E. Waite. Both were exponents of the occult Order of the Golden Dawn, with which Williams, as already mentioned, had a brief association.

as in Williams, plot movement is advanced by mental events as well as by physical--by what goes on in the character's mind and what he is physically doing. Thus, the description of Constance's actions as she tries to cast the spell is interwoven with an explanation of what is going on inside her head and of why she is doing what she does. Moreover, a good deal of the novel consists of lengthy passages describing her gradual spiritual transformation in terms which convey the sense of an active process.

Like Williams, although less frequently, Underhill uses terminology that presupposes the reader's understanding of her code images for religious doctrine or metaphysical conceptions.

The figures of the dance might becom-
prehensible, but the steps defied
analysis.

(ch. i)

She possessed, after all, the essentials
of existence: a little place in the
dance, and a little opportunity of
service.

(ch. viii)

It will be remembered that the concept of a universal dance, involving all human beings and guided by a set of archetypal principles, is central to Williams' The Greater Trumps, where it is symbolized in the set of moving golden figures and their corresponding Tarots.⁵¹

It is also interesting to note that Underhill uses the idea of the Graal being abroad in twentieth-century England, first in a remote country church, then in London itself, and given into the

⁵¹Cf. The Greater Trumps, ch. ii: "I wonder if you can know the dance without being among the dancers"; and ch. vii: "Imagine . . . that everything which exists takes part in the movement of a great dance . . . and there is nothing anywhere that does not change. That change--that's what we know of the immortal dance . . ."

hands of a mortal guardian. Underhill heightens the effect of the marvellous by placing it in the very environment the reader would regard as most commonplace and least associated with anything supernatural--contemporary London. The contrast is voiced in the wonder of the chief character herself: "so remote and starry a thing might be actual in the City of Sarras; it was impossibly fantastic in the cheap lodgings near Notting Hill."⁵² As will be remembered, the motif of the Graal, discovered in a country church and fought over by opposing groups of men, forms the central plot component of Williams' War in Heaven. Both writers use the less common spelling of the vessel's name; both describe its physical appearance (unremarkable, though in different ways); and in both it is imagined as capable of changing its physical appearance and, of course, as being an object of great spiritual power--in Underhill's phrase, a "mighty and spiritual magnet whose powers transcended time and space" (ch. x)--although this quality is only hinted at in Underhill and is fully worked out in Williams. (Williams imagines it as capable of being used as a spiritual instrument, rather than as itself innately possessing holiness.) Indeed, Underhill, unlike Williams, does very little with the possibilities of the Grail theme.

In addition to these similarities in theme, fantasy setting, and technique, the two writers shared a predilection for the stylistic device of sprinkling the narrative with short didactic interpolations,

⁵²Ch. xvii. Sarras was the city in which, in Malory, Galahad, Percivale, and Bors finally achieved the Holy Grail (see Le Morte d'Arthur, Everyman edition, XVII, chs. xxi-xxii). The Grail and Sarras figure importantly in Williams' Arthurian poetry. See also Williams' poem to his father, quoted in part in chapter V, footnote 5 above.

either in the way of psychological explanation or of religious commentary; some of Underhill's have the same dry wit found in Williams.

Constance discovered herself to be disappointed [when the spell apparently does not work]. She believed nothing, and was therefore the more ready to believe anything; having all the transcendental curiosity of the true materialist.⁵³

The Column of Dust was published in 1909, close enough still to the nineteenth century to preserve certain traces of an older style of didacticism, which, juxtaposed with what may have passed for smart "modern" commentary at the time, seems faintly naive and sentimental today. Thus, for instance, the chapter titles occasionally lapse from the purely descriptive, e.g., "Furnished Lodgings," or "The Day's Work," into the instructive or allegorical, e.g., "How Those Who Lose Themselves Often Find Something More Valuable" and "How They Went Home" (the final chapter, in which Constance dies and she and the Watcher ascend to the "Heart of Being, which all creation eternally desires"). There is also emphasis on the idea of life being a dream, in a manner reminiscent of MacDonald. For instance, the Watcher says to Constance that she must see him as a shape,

something which has a limiting edge,
because otherwise you will not let me
enter your experience. You are dream-
ing so deeply that you cannot recognize
spirit unless it enters into the unreason-
able illusions of your dream. So I must

⁵³Ch. ii. Cf. the quotation from Many Dimensions, ch. v already cited: "being a modern normally emotional girl she was, quite naturally, an idolater."

attack your consciousness on its
ordinary earthly plane . . .
(ch. iii)

Again, the Watcher refers to the human race as "'stupid little creatures; swept so quickly through the dream, and feeling your chance encounters to be important, and making such a fuss!'" (ch. xv). Finally, there is an almost Carrollian ring to the phrase Martin uses when he urges Constance to assume guardianship of the Cup: "'You are on the very verge of waking, you know'" (ch. xvii: "Constance and the Real").

The novel seems to represent a stage in the transition of moral fantasy from conventions of Victorian religious didacticism to a newer and more subtle guise. It is tempting to surmise that when Williams came to write his novels, beginning in 1925, he might have been unconsciously influenced by memories of Underhill's occultism in designing a fantasy framework for some of his stories; or the similarities between their works may simply be the coincidental result of a mutual outlook and objective, as well as of a common realization that to use the occult was the best way available of presenting metaphysical realities in a manner that would engross the attention. There was, in Williams' case at least, the added factor of his genuine interest in the facts of occultism as part of human history. There is no way, however, of proving the point either of influence or of coincidence. Perhaps the demands of moral fantasy impose predetermined conditions on its practitioners, in any case, and it is these, rather than influences from one writer on the other, which ensure certain

similarities among their various outputs.⁵⁴

Williams, it has been noted, commented that The Column of Dust had possibilities of wit, terror, and sublimity, but that although the moral of the book was noble, it was not exciting on the literary level; and that the style was not imaginative, owing, perhaps, to the fact that Underhill's imagination in general was too much preoccupied with serious faith to allow it much leisure--by which one may understand, rein--in her writings. There is no lighthearted wit in A Column of Dust, although there is some satirical comment in the treatment of Constance's upper-class friends. The element of terror is aborted after the incantation episode. Underhill apparently did not have the skill to recreate the specifics of physical description or psychological activity which are necessary to keep this element vital. Consequently, her character development is pallid and fragmentary, and the plot movement spasmodic. Her attempts to describe spiritual events founder in bland abstractions and rhapsodic vaguenesses. The sublimity which Constance is imagined as achieving at the end of the novel is merely indicated, not described or brought home to the reader; no real attempt is made to convey the sublimity of the experience, and there is consequently no excitement in what should be the novel's climactic scene--Constance's death in the presence of the Graal.

⁵⁴Cf. Charles Williams, "Murder and Mystery" (reviews of five mystery stories), [London] News Chronicle, December 12, 1933, p. 4: "There are some few absurd books of my own which exist only because one evening, having finished one of Mr. Rohmer's, I said suddenly to myself: 'I also will write a novel.' It wasn't, when finished, much like any of his, but can one now see the mother in the kid's milk?"

When one turns to Williams, however, the picture, in terms of these same criteria, is very different. If wit is not a dominant element,⁵⁵ imaginativeness, excitement (rather than terror), and sublimity are. Enough has been said in this study to show that the difference between Underhill and Williams in the degree of skill with which they succeeded in evoking excitement and conveying sublimity is immense. Williams' was a fertile imagination, and his powers of description almost cinematographic in his ability both to focus vividly on small details and to describe the panoramic or cosmic excitingly, as when, in The Greater Trumps (ch. vii), a description of the precise way in which Henry arranges the Tarot cards opens out into Nancy's vision of the interaction of the Tarot Principles over the earth. Williams is able to bring about a suspension of disbelief and to evoke a frisson in the reader by detailing the marvellous onto the plane of physical reality,⁵⁶ but he does not leave the matter there. Once the mind has been shocked and persuaded into receptiveness, Williams begins to make clear his purpose of showing that, within his imagined universe, the marvellous and the terrifying are part of an ordered whole. The terror of circumstances which the characters themselves are made to

⁵⁵Although one critic posits, without expanding on his statement, that "the thing most marked about all of Williams's novels is his wit" (Richard McLaughlin, "Tarot Trouble," review of The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams, The Saturday Review of Literature, April 8, 1950, p. 19). Leo J. Trese also mentions Williams as having "a quiet humor and a gentle irony" (review of The Greater Trumps, in The Commonweal, May 5, 1950, p. 104). See also footnote 45 above.

⁵⁶Cf. Deborah Webster, "Books for Convertibles," The Catholic World, October 1950, p. 41: "As fantasy it / Many Dimensions / satisfies by its sheer realism, especially by what Professor John Livingstone Lowes used to call 'putting facts on their inferences.'"

undergo is used as a means of testing their moral and spiritual strength, i.e., whether they will make the experience meaningful and pass through it to joy, as Pauline does when she finally meets her doppelgänger, or whether they will fail to rise above it, as Wentworth fails to do (Descent into Hell), or Quentin, who tries to hide from the emerging Celestials in The Place of the Lion.

Williams' power of conveying the force of emotional and apiritual activity within the human mind--again through detailed description, this time of psychological change and development--is mainly responsible for the sublimity of effect he often achieves when a character reaches a high point, or the highest point, of his spiritual development; but it is also due to the fact that, even in the moments of highest emotional stress, the description of the physical circumstances, usually supernatural, is equally explicit, as, for example, in Chloe's transfiguration scene in Many Dimensions, when the many Types of the Stone are described as they rush back from all directions to return into their original, or when, in Descent into Hell, Wentworth completes his descent on his final nightmare-like journey to the academic dinner in London.

In reading the various critical attempts at categorizing the tradition in which Williams' novels are written, one is reminded of Williams' remark concerning one of H. C. Bailey's works: "I am never quite certain whether at bottom Mr. Bailey is a wit, a moralist, or an occultist."⁵⁷

⁵⁷Review of Mr. Fortune Wonders, by H. C. Bailey, [London] News Chronicle, December 29, 1933, p. 4.

Little has been written of the wit or wittiness in Williams' own novels, and, although there is wit in his work, he certainly is not mainly in the tradition of comic writing.⁵⁸ The majority of critics, who have sought to assign the proper weight to the moralist and occultist strains in Williams, feel that his affinity with the Gothic tradition is one of surface elements only, since occultism plays a very different role in his work than in, say, that of Montague James or Sheridan Le Fanu; and, as has been seen, they have indicated (in general terms only) that there is a kinship between Williams and two other twentieth-century writers of Christian supernatural fantasy, Chesterton and Underhill. But most concede that, in the final analysis, he is unclassifiable. Spacks comes closest to defining a tradition when she states that Williams' novels are "not allegories, but exempla, given twentieth-century cogency and artistic power."⁵⁹ The point is well taken; exempla were used in the medieval sermon to teach abstract doctrine by illustrating it simply, vividly, and entertainingly. Williams, like MacDonald, was in the stream of this tradition, as was posited at the beginning of this study. Between MacDonald and Williams there were

⁵⁸See footnotes 45 and 55.

⁵⁹"Charles Williams: A Novelist's Pilgrimage," 282. Cf. also Stephen P. Dunn's rather oversimplified description of Williams as "a system-building medieval mystic in modern dress" ("Mr. White, Mr. Williams, and the Matter of Britain," The Kenyon Review, 24, 2 [Spring 1962], 369). Vernon Young, stating that there is no contemporary touchstone for Williams, draws, in serio-comic vein, the imaginary parallel of Henry James, having read James Joyce, writing a morality in narrative form ("Hell on Earth: Six Versions," review of, inter alia, All Hallows' Eve and Descent into Hell, by Charles Williams, The Hudson Review, 2, 2 [Summer 1949], 314).

some other writers of Christian moral fantasy, such as Chesterton and Underhill, but none who reached the level of achievement of either MacDonald or Williams. Although Williams may have absorbed something from Chesterton and Underhill, he far outstripped them. MacDonald in the nineteenth century and Williams in the twentieth stand out as particularly brilliant practitioners of an extremely difficult literary mode, whose roots go back to the early Christian writings and beyond. They were both theologians (although Williams was a lay theologian) with unusual imaginations which made them novelists sui generis. They are unclassifiable, except perhaps in terms of one another.

Chapter XII. George MacDonald and Charles Williams:
A Summary of Similarities

. . . a religious theme, when it gets into literature, requires some sort of parable form.¹

. . . in a day which had given up the expectations but not the objectives and values of Victorian optimism, Williams asked the reader to confront the "terrible good" of life and learn to accept all facts, however cruel and irrational, as joyous.²

It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that in recent years critics have begun to remark on the relationship between George MacDonald and Charles Williams, without entering into the details of the relationship.³ The purpose of this study has been to fill this gap by investigating their similarities as writers of Christian supernatural fantasy. Each has been discussed at some length in his own right in order to clarify the main characteristics of his work and his approach to it. In the course of these individual examinations, a considerable number of affinities and resemblances have come to light. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to present a consolidated and ordered picture of these points of resemblance, which, together, form the substance of the bond linking the two fantasists. The examination falls naturally into two parts: resemblances with

¹MacNeice, op. cit., p. 119.

²Stewart, "Charles Williams's Fiction," 162. He adds, "Williams had the courage to begin his thesis with the flat statement that 'Unless everything's justifiable, nothing is,' and the daring to attempt to prove it in fiction" (ibid.).

³See Introduction, p. 4 and chapter IV, p. 103.

respect to substance and doctrinal content, and resemblances with respect to fantasy technique, with a very brief initial review of biographical similarities, in order to present as complete a picture as possible.

Poetry was the preferred mode of expression of both men, but relentless financial pressures caused both to turn to the writing of novels. Both came from deeply religious backgrounds and were throughout their lives totally committed to their religious beliefs, which reflect an independently personal outlook. Both were fantasists living in an age whose prevailing outlook was secular and "realistic." Their writings were, therefore, in large part against the current of the times.

The whole canon of their work is, in varying degrees of explicitness, religious in outlook and essentially didactic. Religious beliefs are, to use a phrase of MacNeice's, the formalizing elements of their work, and they cannot be fully appreciated apart from a study of their doctrine and world-views.⁴ Religious is understood in this context to mean

concerned solely with Christianity as against unbelief. "Denominational" questions do not enter in.⁵

⁴Cf. MacNeice, op. cit., p. 19: "We have all met people who maintain very blithely that it makes no difference to the appreciation of Dante whether one is a Christian--let alone a Catholic--or a non-Christian. I have never felt at all sure about this and I certainly do not think one can appreciate the 'poetry' of Dante unless one is at least interested in the beliefs expressed in that poetry. . . . the content, which includes of course any beliefs expressed in a poem, must ipso facto--at least if that poem is to be valid--have a part in the shaping of that poem. Which means that in this respect the beliefs are formalizing elements."

⁵The phrase is C. S. Lewis' (preface to The Pilgrim's Regress, p. 14). Cf. the epigraph to the introduction to the present study.

The word is used in a broad sense, that is, in somewhat the same manner as Williams defined it (by implication) in an early essay on de la Mare's poetry, which deals in part with the world of faerie and romance:

If all theological connotation, all dogma, all ordinary piety, could be emptied out of the word religion, then this poetry might be called religious poetry. If the word mystical were not used nowadays for every cheap sensation and every indolent thought, it might almost be called mystical poetry; and if magic could ever lead to mysticism one would be tempted to say it had done so here.⁶

The word religious, as applied to MacDonald's and Williams' fantasies, excludes the connotation of denominational,⁷ although it does not necessarily exclude mention of the name of God. Their concern is with the universal questions of love, death, and eternity. Their doctrine is that of the Christian ethos, the most important aspect of which is the organic relationship among men and between men and God, and its concomitant obligations of mutual lovingness, assistance, and forgiveness. In Williams' case, the accepted doctrines have been extrapolated upon and given new names: co-inherence, exchange and substitution, largesse, and affirmation and rejection of images. The basic premiss of the fantasy worlds of both authors is that spiritual law is unremittingly at work in the universe, and that it is the measure against which all actions are weighed. The result is that the unseen, spiritual,

⁶Charles Williams, "Walter de la Mare," in Poetry at Present, p. 91. On Williams' dislike for the misuse of the term mystical as a synonym for mysterious, see also chapter V, footnote 19.

⁷In this connection, see, for example, Hadfield, "The Relationship of Charles Williams' Working Life to His Fiction," pp. 134-135.

or supernatural world is posited as forming, together with the seen, or normal, world, the full spectrum of what is truly natural; the concept of "natural" is opened out far beyond its ordinary sense. Furthermore, the concept of supernatural itself is imagined, for the sake of the fantasy, to include not only the Christian idea of a world beyond the physical one, but also the more sensational aspects of what is ordinarily called the supernatural, such as magic, the occult, and the use of "dark powers," which, in both MacDonald and Williams, are carefully placed within and explained in terms of an overall set of interacting laws.

"a certain woman . . . had cast what you call a spell--which is merely the setting in motion of a force as natural as any other, but operating primarily in a region beyond the ken of the mortal who makes use of the force."

(Lilith, ch. xxv)

The universe of the fantasies is sentient, ordered, and moral; alive with meaning, it maintains a vital, loving, but exacting relationship with each of its inhabitants.

They who believe in the influences of the stars over the fates of men, are, in feeling at least, nearer the truth than they who regard the heavenly bodies as related to them merely by a common obedience to an external law. All that man sees has to do with man. Worlds cannot be without an intermundane relationship. The community of the centre of all creation suggests an interradiating connection and dependence of the parts. . . . The blank, which is only a forgotten life, lying behind the consciousness, and the misty splendour, which is an undeveloped life, lying before it, may be full of mysterious revelations of other connexions with the worlds around us, than those of science and poetry. No shining belt or gleaming moon . . . but

has a relation with the hidden things of a man's soul . . . They are portions of the living house wherein he abides.

(Phantastes, ch. xii)

In The Greater Trumps, as has been seen, Williams imagined the universe as interacting in the manner of a complicated dance, the figures of which are governed by the law of co-inherence and its related aspects:

her intelligence reminded her . . . that the apparent quiescence, the solidity . . . of the arched doorway was one aspect of . . . riotous conflict . . . If this antique beauty was all made of electrical nuclei, there might be--there must be--a dance going on somewhere in which even that running figure with the balls flying over it in curves [the Tarot Juggler] would be outpaced.

(The Greater Trumps, ch. viii)

In MacDonald also, the image of the dance is used as a symbolic representation of the supernatural interaction. Anodos, in the fairy palace, is unable at first to see the mysterious dancers of whose presence he is strongly aware:

when the singing mood was upon me, I seemed to hear something like the distant sound of multitudes of dancers, and felt as if it was the unheard music, moving their rhythmic motion, that within me blossomed in verse and song. I felt, too, that could I but see the dance, I should, from the harmony of complicated movements, not of the dancers in relation to each other merely, but of each dancer individually in the manifested plastic power that moved the consenting harmonious form, understand the whole of the music on the billows of which they floated and swung.

(Phantastes, ch. xiv)

MacDonald does not use the word co-inherence, but the concept is implicit in such passages as the above, and the following ones from Lilith:

So superbly constituted, so simply complicate [sic] is man . . . nowhere but in other lives can he breathe. . . . Only by the reflex of other lives can he ripen his specialty, develop the idea of himself, the individuality that distinguishes him from every other. . . . for the development of the differences which make a large and lofty unity possible . . . an endless and measureless influence and reaction are indispensable.

(Lilith, ch. xviii)

Nothing cast a shadow; all things interchanged a little light. Every growing thing showed me, by its shape and colour, its indwelling idea--the informing thought, that is, which was its being, and sent it out. . . . The world and my being, its life and mine, were one. The microcosm and macrocosm were at length atoned, at length in harmony! I lived in everything; everything entered and lived in me. . . . Life was a cosmic holiday.

(Lilith, ch. xlv)

The concept of co-inherence, in both MacDonald and Williams, entails not only the ~~maintenance~~ of loving relationships, but also the repair of such relationships when they are broken, through the offer of forgiveness. Williams put a strong emphasis on forgiveness and largesse in his theological writings and in All Hallows' Eve.⁸ MacDonald was also emphatic on the necessity of mutual forgiveness as a prerequisite for receiving divine forgiveness.

⁸See also his volume The Forgiveness of Sins, first published in 1942. Cf. also chapter VI, p. 133, footnote 14 above.

It may be an infinitely less evil to murder a man than to refuse to forgive him. The former may be the act of a moment of passion: the latter is the heart's choice. It is spiritual murder, the worst, to hate, to brood over the feeling that excludes, that, in our microcosm, kills the image, the idea of the hated.⁹

Thus, in MacDonald's fantasies, cruel or stupid actions may cause dismay, suffering, or disappointment, but they do not inspire grudges. In Phantastes, for instance, the young girl whose magical colored globe-toy Anodos carelessly breaks later is the agent who teaches him how to escape from his self-imposed prison.

"Rise, rise," she said; "I have nothing to forgive; I thank you. But now I must be gone, for I do not know how many may be waiting for me, here and there, through the dark forests; and they cannot come out till I come."

(Phantastes, ch. xxii)

A consequence of the world-view described above is a belief that each individual is required to undertake a spiritual exploration, that it is in fact unavoidable. Examples have already been given to show that, in both writers, the

heroes and heroines have to develop and they usually do it the hard way. . . . [They] have not only

⁹George MacDonald, "It Shall Not be Forgiven," in Unspoken Sermons, First Series, quoted in George Macdonald: An Anthology, ed. C. S. Lewis, p. 26. The passage is, of course, strongly reminiscent of Blake's "A Poison Tree" (for a brief discussion of the possible influence of Blake on some of Lilith's imagery, see Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 554-555; MacDonald himself included a short essay on Blake in England's Antiphon [London, 1874], pp. 301-304). See also Joseph Johnson, George MacDonald: A Biographical and Critical Appreciation (London, 1906), p. 145, which briefly summarizes MacDonald's thoughts on forgiveness.

to prove themselves through action . . .
they have also to achieve a spiritual
evolution.¹⁰

The journey is necessary, and action is the key. Each parabolist pursues the theme of free choice as the moving and deciding factor which bears within itself the possibility of horror or of glory, and pictures his imagined universe as noting, weighing, and responding to each choice.

MacDonald was a universalist, i.e., he believed in the possibility of ultimate salvation for all, including the devil himself, when repentance is achieved; Lilith and the Shadow "'will be the last to wake in the morning of the universe'" (Lilith, ch. xl). Williams does not go so far as to imagine that everyone will "get home," but, like MacDonald, he posits the chance of redemption as always being present, if it is actively desired and chosen.¹¹ In both authors, hell is conceived of not as a place to which one is sent, but as a state of self-isolation and misery into which the individual insists on sinking, as Wentworth does, in Descent into Hell, and as Anodos does (symbolically) for a time when his doppelgänger seals him in a tower (self imprisoning self), the door of which he eventually discovers is unlocked.¹² Good

¹⁰ MacNeice, op. cit., p. 101, speaking of MacDonald.

¹¹ Cf. the remark in an anonymous review of The Greater Trumps that "it is typical of Williams that those of his characters who selfishly try to deny God are not cast out but saved" ("Sophisticated Sermon," Time, April 10, 1950, p. 100). This assertion is true of the characters in The Greater Trumps, but does not apply to such personages as Giles Tumulty, Wentworth, or Simon the magician in other of Williams' works.

¹² MacDonald and Williams both used the idea of the door locked from the inside to symbolize willful self-isolation. See Phantastes, ch. xxii: "Hardly knowing what I did, I opened the door. Why had I not done so before? I do not know." And Descent into Hell, ch. v:

and evil--the true nature of which it is the purpose of the spiritual journey to teach--are presented in a special way in these parables. Both authors held the view that evil does not have a positive existence, but is a warped or misperceived shape of the good, and that the universe itself is good.

Yet I know that good is coming to me--
that good is always coming; though few
have at all times the simplicity and
the courage to believe it. What we call
evil, is the only and best shape, which,
for the person and his condition at the
time, could be assumed by the best good.

(Phantastes, ch. xxiv)¹³

. . . something more than the sun, greater
than the light, is coming, is coming--none
the less surely coming that it is long
upon the road!

(Lilith, ch. xlv)

Fuller has pointed out (op. cit., p. 220) that Williams saw as one of the major significances of co-inherence the "paradoxically

"The door wouldn't open for anyone; it was his [Wentworth's] door, and though he hadn't fastened it, it wouldn't open, because it knew his wish, and his wish was to leave the two who had worried him outside the door." Cf. Anne Ridler, review of The House of the Octopus, by Charles Williams, Poetry (London), 3, 11 (September-October 1947), 49: "Hell, for Charles Williams, is always the seeing of good as evil . . ."

¹³On Williams, cf. Reilly, op. cit., p. 157. Ridler (introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, pp. ~~xiii~~-xiv) mentions that, in Descent into Hell, Williams paraphrased the closing lines concerning Lucifer in Longfellow's The Golden Legend, in which Williams had acted as a boy: "'The son of mystery;/And since God suffers him to be,/He, too, is God's minister,/And labours for some good/By us not understood!'" In the same introduction (p. xxx), she states that "at the centre of Williams' teaching lies this dogma, that the whole universe is to be known as good." In her introduction to "Seed of Adam" and Other Plays, by Charles Williams, p. viii, she points out that in his dramatic works, the conflict between good and evil almost always "resolves itself into a state where the old terms are no longer true, and what was originally seen as evil is also part of perfection."

intermingled web of good and evil." They are "everywhere inseparable, each curiously capable of transmutation to the other in anything that has begun as either one." Fuller also has noted (ibid.) the affinity between Williams' outlook on the nature of good with that expressed in the passage from Phantastes just cited. There are many instances of evil turned to good in MacDonald. For example, each time Anodos or Vane disregards a warning, some evil results which makes his path longer and more difficult, but which impresses on him with greater clarity the necessity for obedience to what he knows to be good. And to cite an instance from Williams: Damaris' disregard of Anthony's warning and her subsequent narrow escape from the Pterodactyl (The Place of the Lion) are her salvation because of the lesson she learns in intellectual integrity. Such actions as Anodos' mistreatment of the girl with the magical glass globe are also shown as transformed into good; having lost the toy, the girl has herself learned to sing better songs than the globe was able to play to her, and she can now make others happy:

"I could not sing at all before. Now I go about everywhere through Fairy Land, singing till my heart is like to break, just like my globe . . . And wherever I go, my songs do good, and deliver people."

(Phantastes, ch. xxii)

In both authors, evil is marked by one overriding characteristic: its voraciousness and self-consuming nature, which is the opposite of the outwardness and generosity characteristic of a healthy spiritual state. It is the paradox of these opposite states that, in the first, the more one takes, the less one has; in the second, one's riches increase the more one gives outward in love. MacDonald has symbolized

the former, for instance, in the Ash-Tree, whose hunger only grows with the number of victims he consumes. Similarly, the love in which the Alder-Maiden and Lilith delight, because of the sense of power it imparts, induces a self-destructive process that causes them to decay inwardly. In Williams, Wentworth is the prime example of the paradox; the love which he turns inward by creating a succubus who is in the image of the woman he wants as he wants her to be completely destroys him.

Related to the theme of good and evil is that of illusion, with which both MacDonald and Williams were deeply concerned. The term illusion in its broader sense may, of course, apply both to the concept of good appearing as evil, and the reverse. Within the worlds of the fantasies, however, when the word illusion is specifically used, it is used in its pejorative sense, in both authors. In MacDonald, the concept of illusion is frequently symbolized by a creature whose outward beauty conceals a cancerous inner ugliness (the Alder-Maiden and Lilith). These are representations of external temptations which the journeying soul is expected to learn to recognize and reject. And, as has been seen, MacDonald also uses the concept of the Shadow to project the propensity towards self-induced illusion which exists in every soul; skepticism and pessimism impose an artificial mask of ugliness or ordinariness on what is in actuality beautiful and extraordinary. In Williams also the concept of illusion is equivalent to delusion or deception. In many of his novels, illusion takes the form of the dream of power which the deniers of the City (e.g., Giles Tumulty in Many Dimensions, Gregory Persimmons in War in Heaven, and Simon in All Hallows' Eve) believe they can achieve over it. His

villains engage in a fruitless struggle to unmake reality; the irony of their situation lies in the contrast between the impossibility of their goal and the strength of their delusion, of which they ultimately die. Descent into Hell presents a much subtler study of the workings of illusion; its Lilith-character is, as in MacDonald, both the concept of illusion made flesh within the plot itself and a human character. She stands in the same relationship to Wentworth as the Alder-Maiden does to Anodos in Phantastes, with the great difference that Wentworth allows her to use and destroy him, believing all the while that it is he who is in command. Her strategy, somewhat like that of the Shadow in Phantastes, is to disguise reality and thus slow down the progress of the spiritual pilgrim. The Shadow casts a discouraging blight on the beauties of the journey; Mrs. Sammille discourages progress by extolling the "goodness" of what is in fact self-indulgence, laziness, and moral cowardice, i.e., seeking the pleasurable and avoiding whatever is unpleasant or demanding.

It may be useful at this point to recapitulate, in outline form, all the points of resemblance detected between MacDonald and Williams with respect to the doctrinal views, or formalizing elements, of their fantasy novels.

The list is not unimpressive. In both writers,

- (a) Religious beliefs, divorced from denominationalism, are the groundwork of their writing; their fantasy has an adult seriousness of intention; doctrinal content determines plot and characterization;
- (b) The universe is imagined as operating in obedience to certain unalterable moral laws, the most important

of which is that of mutual interdependence, a concept to which Williams gave the name of co-inherence;

- (c) The universe is understood to be governed by a vast intelligence which is exacting but loving, the source of all law; as a consequence, it is ordered and moral, its components constantly interact in accordance with the law of interdependence, and it maintains a direct and vital contact with each of its inhabitants; the universe is good: what appears to be evil (in the sense of mishap or misfortune, which of course occur with frequency) is only another aspect of the good;
- (d) The word natural is understood to include what is commonly termed supernatural, because its laws, while not immediately discernible to the human mind, form a natural part of cosmic law; the tangible world is imagined as being a sensible imitation of the invisible or archetypal world (the sacramentalist approach);
- (e) Man's main concern is posited as being the attainment of spiritual salvation; and the universe is imagined as requiring each of its human members to undertake a spiritual pilgrimage and exploration, i.e., action is the key to becoming, or "getting home;"¹⁴ (in MacDonald's fantasies, the focus

¹⁴Cf., in particular, in Phantastes, ch. xix, the old wise woman's parting admonition to Anodos: "'Go, my son, and do something worth doing!"; Mr. Raven's advice to Mr. Vane in Lilith, ch. iii: "'How am I to begin that [making myself at home] where everything is so strange?'" / "By doing something." / "What?" / "Anything; and the sooner you begin the better!"; and Vane's reason for avoiding the gleam of the mirror which might return him to the earthly world: "here I might learn to be something by doing something!" (Lilith, ch. xvi). Cf. also,

is on one spiritual pilgrim, and in Williams', on several); as one proceeds through the journey, the desire to reach one's destination grows stronger;¹⁵

- (f) The themes of free choice and willing obedience (in the Miltonic sense) are uppermost; the course of the spiritual journey is left to the free choice, or series of choices, of the individual; man is envisaged as holding the key to his own spiritual liberation (salvation) or imprisonment (self-damnation) by either choosing voluntary, joyful obedience to moral law, which is conceived of as true freedom, or by choosing rebellion against the ordered spiritual hierarchy, in the name of "freedom" and for the purpose of self-aggrandizement; hell is conceived of as total self-absorption; the main theme in both writers is, in short, the struggle between good and evil within the individual and among men;

in All Hallows' Eve, ch. i, Lester's realization that Evelyn's protest-- "I haven't done anything at all"--although intended as self-justification, is in reality an accusation against both of them: "The landscape of death lay round them . . . Let them go to it; let them do something."

¹⁵ Cf., in particular, Anodos' conversation with the farmer's wife in the magical forest (Phantastes, ch. vii): "' . . . for those who enter Fairy Land, there is no way of going back. They must go on, and go through it. . . .'/ 'That is quite the impression on my own mind. Something compels me to go on, as if my only path was onward . . .'" And, in All Hallows' Eve, ch. ix, Lester's reflections as, imprisoned in the dwarf-woman which Simon has magically created, she stops to gaze at the real and shadowy Thames: "To her now all states of being were beginning to be of their own proper kind, each in itself and in its relationships . . . So the Thames was still the Thames, but within it the infinite gradations of clarity deepened to something else. That other flow sustained and carried the layers of water above it; and as Lester saw it she felt a great desire to discover its source . . ."

- (g) The cosmic intelligence, sentient and unremittingly aware, is imagined as responding to every human choice and action; and
- (h) The journey is also studied in relation to the interaction between the themes of free choice and the destructive power of illusion, i.e., both writers are concerned with the nature of the difficulties on the journey, especially the struggle to distinguish between the spiritual lie and truth; the acceptance of illusion is equivalent to spiritual self-destruction.

On the strength of MacDonald's and Williams' preoccupation with these ideas, they have on occasion been called mystics,¹⁶ possibly in the loosely-applied sense which, as has been seen, Williams himself deplored.¹⁷ But they were, rather, as Grierson points out with respect to MacDonald (op. cit., p. 11), questers after a mystical solution rather than mystics, a term which Grierson reserves for such figures as Blake, Jacob Boehme, and St. Paul. A number of writers have been careful to avoid the application of the term mystic to Williams, since "it implies to many a contemplative rapture which has no relation to the incredibly full years Williams himself lived, or to the active

¹⁶See Chesterton, introduction to George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 12-15; and "George MacDonald," p. 6. And, on Williams, John Heath-Stubbs, "The Poetic Achievement of Charles Williams," Poetry (London), 3, 11 (September-October 1947), 43. Heath-Stubbs later qualified his opinion (see footnote 18).

¹⁷See quotation from "Walter de la Mare," p. 316 above. See also Ridler, introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xxii: "No one, taught by him [Williams], could ever again use the word mystical as though it merely meant mysterious . . ."

sharing with one's fellows that was the heart of his faith."¹⁸ Eliot seems to have come closest to settling the question by calling Williams a mystical writer, rather than a mystic. The term is also applicable to MacDonald. Neither writer was a contemplative, but both were concerned with working out the implications of their religious world-views. Both turned to fantasy in order to do this, thus bearing out MacNeice's assertion that "a religious theme, when it gets into literature, requires some sort of parable form."

Each author, that is, was a combination of theologian and disciplined romantic, and used fantasy in order to communicate his views on the Christian ethos in an imaginative manner, that would entertain while it taught. Each was a wholly committed writer, interpreting "all of natural or familiar life, plus all of its other extraordinary and mysterious dimensions, in terms of Christian theology";¹⁹ this unembarrassed commitment tends to evoke extremes of criticism--great admiration, sneering hostility, or olympian condescension.

¹⁸Geoffrey Parsons, "The Spirit of Charles Williams," The Atlantic, 184, 5 (November 1949), 77. Cf. John Heath-Stubbs, "Charles Williams: Spiritual Power and its Temptations," Time and Tide, 1 May 1948, p. 451: "It would not be incorrect, I think, to describe him as a mystic. But this must not be understood as implying that he possessed, or claimed to possess, a perception of supernatural reality different in kind or even, necessarily, in degree from that which is apprehended, in moments of exalted imagination, by the ordinary run of human beings." Also Eliot, "The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 895: "It would be misleading to call Williams a mystic, though he seemed to me to approximate, more nearly than any man I have ever known familiarly, to the saint. If a mystic means a man wholly detached from the world, detached from private affections and public activity, a man wholly dedicated to contemplation, then the term does not fit. . . . He would, however, have disclaimed the title. As a mystical writer--which is quite a different thing from a writer about mysticism--he seems to me unique in this generation, and in an age when the mystical faculty has almost disappeared."

¹⁹Fuller, op. cit., p. 203, speaking of Williams.

The importance of the didactic element in their work, however, should not eclipse the fact that both authors were concerned with fantasy as a literary art form as well. Both fulfill the criteria which MacDonald laid down for a good fairy tale or fantasy: that the laws operating within the imagined world, however strange, should be consistent and harmonious, creating a credible Secondary World; that the tale should be capable of a variety of interpretations;²⁰ and, therefore, that while the fantasy may contain allegorical elements, it should be more than allegory.²¹ MacDonald and Williams present in their fantasies a broad religious world-view unhampered by theological precision, reserving their direct statements on theology and dogma for other writings. It is this broadness of scope which opens the stories out beyond (Christian) allegory and which lies at the root of their mythopoeism, i.e., their ability (if Jung is correct) to release the spring which opens the floodgate of the collective unconscious, awakens the natural religious instinct, and evokes a strong sense of personal involvement with the spiritual issues raised.

That which specifically raises Williams' and MacDonald's fantasies to the level of mythopoeism is the element which catalyzes the reactions just described: a specialized manipulation of symbol. Consciously or unconsciously, MacDonald and Williams chose the same way of

²⁰"The best thing you can do for your fellow, next to rousing his conscience, is--not to give him things to think about, but to wake things up that are in him; or, say, to make him think things for himself . . . thoughts of high import . . ." (MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," p. 319).

²¹"He must be an artist indeed who can, in any mode, produce a strict allegory that is not a weariness to the spirit" (MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," p. 317).

using doctrine to spark imaginative and emotional involvement: presenting it in terms of preternaturals and impossibles which (a) possess archetypal meaning and/or traditional associations; and (b) can be used to symbolize the author's ground themes or aspects of these, and ultimately even be shown as contained in them.

Preternaturals and impossibles, that is, are used in two ways: their traditional associations are first used to engage a predictable emotional and imaginative set, and, subsequently, the same preternaturals are made to bear a new symbolic (generally Christian) meaning.²² Or, put another way, doctrine is handled in terms of traditional symbols which the writer's fantastic imagination modifies either (according to one's point of view) by adding new overtones or by bringing implicit meanings to light. Either way, doctrinal content transforms the symbols. For example, the archetypal wise woman in MacDonald retains certain of the primary associations connected with this figure in folklore, e.g., magic powers such as preternatural knowledge or mysterious healing powers. While allowing his wise women figures to retain these characteristics, MacDonald presents them as agents of an overall moral authority; in thus defining the source of their mysterious powers, he heightens, rather than diminishes, their imaginative effect, because of the sense they convey of being the instruments of a much greater, but controlled, rational, and benevolent mystery, which directs them in their work. In Williams, the motif of the doppelgänger, for instance, traditionally an inexplicable quantity which arouses fear and

²²In Borrow's phrase, used with respect to Williams (*op. cit.*, 328 and 352), old symbols are recharged with new glamor.

dread, is developed into a representation of a spiritual state which is shunned and feared only until its true nature emerges.

The wide variety of fantasy motif categories used by MacDonald and Williams has already been discussed, as well as the fact that such variety must necessarily compound the already complex task of effecting a harmonious and plausible fusion of traditional associations with newer one. Spacks, it will be remembered, feels that Williams uses the supernatural as a bridge between the psychological and the theological, but that the fusion fails to occur (i.e., the combined meanings fail to mingle harmoniously) when the psychological and theological significances of the supernatural motif are opposites; and that the motif of the doppelgänger (Descent into Hell) cannot comfortably be made to subsume fear and evil on the one hand and joy and goodness on the other. What seems to be implied in this view is that the traditional psychological association of the motif is fixed and dominant, and that therefore Williams could not be successful in grafting a contradictory meaning on to it. Other readers, of course, may have an entirely different reaction. In this particular case, it seems to the present writer that Williams meant the theological significance to supersede, rather than to coexist, uneasily or otherwise, with the traditional psychological one (although, as discussed, it is questionable whether he was consciously thinking in terms of paired theological and psychological meanings). Williams uses the traditional idea of horror at seeing one's duplicate as a point of departure and builds upon it in order to show that this horror results from a miscomprehension of the image's true spiritual meaning. He exhibits ingenuity in doing so, by causing Pauline to see her double fully only after she has come through the test of fear,

beyond fear, so that the doppelgänger, like many misunderstood unknowns, is seen to be, and always to have been, the opposite of her imaginings. Williams was, of course, attempting a difficult task in using a symbol in a way that runs counter to its traditional associations, even though he attempted to explain and supersede, rather than to ignore them. MacDonald, in using the doppelgänger (the Shadow in Phantastes) as a projection of the uglier facets of the human soul—though in ways which are his own invention—still let the traditional association work for him.²³

Yet one might also search out inconsistencies in MacDonald which result from an involved conception which contains inherent contradictions. To return to the example of Lilith being struck down when she crosses a stream: as a witch and a symbol of evil self-preoccupation, she is logically rendered inoperative by the waters of grace or baptism; as a living woman and human soul, which she also is, she should not be. It is logical, however, that in the latter capacity, she should revive when placed in the warm stream, but this is inconsistent with her other two aspects, even when one considers the fact that MacDonald believed in the possibility of salvation for the devil himself. He regarded repentance as a necessary prerequisite, and this is not yet true of Lilith either when she leaps over the stream, or when she revives.

²³As Williams does, in Descent into Hell, with the succubus made in Adela's image, and which therefore is also a type of doppelgänger. She brings home to Adela the horror of what she could become, just as Pauline's doppelgänger shows her the true image of the person she was meant to be.

In this case also one might say that the psychological, theological, and supernatural elements do not dovetail. Like Williams, MacDonald was simultaneously exploiting the traditional associations of a supernatural motif and injecting non-traditional ones which ran counter to them, while trying to absorb and explain them. But one must not lose sight of the fact that the main concern in both authors' fantasies is the doctrinal intent. Consequently they used those aspects of a fantasy motif which lent themselves, or could be modified or extrapolated upon, to embody that doctrine in a given episode and tell a good story at the same time. Chosen aspects are highlighted at given points, and others are put in abeyance.²⁴ If MacDonald presents Lilith in two opposite aspects, an evil witch and a potentially redeemable soul, with now the one, now the other coming into the foreground, it should be remembered that these complexities are corollaries of the doctrinal intent, and each aspect has the virtue of being handled consistently within itself. Moreover, the invention of non-traditional aspects for familiar fantasy motifs helps to create a wider imaginary world than would be the case if only traditional aspects had been adopted. A many-sided use of symbol enriches variety of interpretation and helps to lift the story above mere allegory. Last but not least, one may seriously question whether psychological-theological consistency is essential to a good fantasy, and whether its seeming lack in isolated instances such as the above reduces the effectiveness of the story to any appreciable degree; or, indeed, whether it is even noticeable in the

²⁴ Cf. MacNeice's remark (op. cit., p. 78) that "the parabolist, whether he uses prose or verse, is following a poetic rather than a documentary procedure."

reading; it is perhaps an artificial defect which shows up only in analysis.

Among the similarities between MacDonald's and Williams' imagined universes, one of the most important is the idea of their being suffused by a sentient and benevolent intelligence which is concerned with the spiritual evolution of its inhabitants, and whose reality is composed of seen elements (the physical world) and unseen (spiritual and moral law), which interact. An immediate result of this conception is that there can be no clear boundary between a "real" world and another kind. They fade into and out of one another, interpenetrate, and are superimposed as well. In both of MacDonald's fantasies, the action begins in the real world and then slips into a dream-like country (but not a country in a dream) in which the physical world is in itself marvellous and in which the working of the spiritual world is more easily apparent than in the original world of the narrator. In Lilith, the two physical worlds between which the narrator travels are conceived of as coexistent in space but in different dimensions, and coexistent with the spiritual world which contains them both. In both Phantastes and Lilith, once the narrator is back in the "real" world, he is convinced of the other world's imminent and (for him) probably permanent reappearance.

All but one of Williams' novels begin in the everyday world, through whose fabric the unseen world soon breaks, after which the two are shown as always having been coexistent and interacting. In All Hallows' Eve, the action begins in the other world and then is seen to be happening in the physical world as well; from this point onward, the two worlds are shown as interpenetrating and eternally interacting.

Greville MacDonald considered the secret of his father's gift for fantasy (faerie-allegory, as he called it) to be its two-world consciousness,²⁵ by which he meant not the superimposition of two worlds, but the sense which MacDonald's stories convey of the seen world's figuring forth the unseen. A two-world consciousness, in this sense, is also characteristic of Williams' novels, and proves, upon examination, to be another term for sacramentalism, in C. S. Lewis' understanding of the word: imagining the physical world as the shadow of the spiritual--the real real--world.

Moreover, the characters in both authors' novels themselves experience a consciousness of two worlds. Space and time are no longer delimited concepts, but open-ended continua. By divesting the ideas of reality and the concepts of space and time, and even of life and death, of their normal meanings, MacDonald and Williams created the open-ended universe on which Chad Walsh has remarked. In MacDonald, the ambiguity is heightened by a persistent play upon the idea of real life proving one day to be a dream, and dream to be the reality, e.g., in the episode of Vane's puzzlement when, fleeing from the sexton's house, he passes through a door back into his own world:

Had I come to myself out of a vision?--
or lost myself by going back to one? Which
was the real--what I now saw, or what I had
just ceased to see? Could both be real,
interpenetrating yet unmingling?

(Lilith, ch. vii)

The characters move in two worlds simultaneously and are aware of the fact; in Williams especially there is deliberate ambiguity as to which

²⁵George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 361.

of the two is uppermost at a given moment.

It is by virtue of this, in part, that, in both authors, thought (in Hadfield's phrase) can be made into action. In a world-frame which postulates the equal validity, reality, and effectuality both of the abstract or unseen, and of the tangible and sensible, thought and spiritual meditation become live (and, in Williams, visible) forces. The visionary experiences of Damaris and Anthony in The Place of the Lion and Wentworth's dreams in Descent into Hell are as much a part of the action and advancement of the plot as, say, Damaris' lecture or the rehearsal of Peter Stanhope's play. From the earliest to the latest of Williams' novels, the action is thrust forward as much by mental and spiritual events as by physical--perhaps even more. The effectiveness of these waking visions is heightened by their being presented as happening in the normal everyday world. In MacDonald, however, in whom the everyday world is itself in the realm of the marvellous, a different technique is used to make thought advance the plot. The narration is in the first person throughout. The reader is therefore immediately made to see events only through the eyes of the person whom they mainly concern, and the recounting of his successive mental states, his spiritual reactions to the unusual country through which he travels, and his consequent spiritual growth are the most forward thrusting elements of plot movement, indeed, are the plot. The wonders that surround the hero are continuous catalysts in this process.

. . . the prevalence of the subjective in his [MacDonald's] habit of thought--his thorough domiciliation in the world of ideas and abstractions and spiritual things . . . gives him a singular power

of describing mental realities and²⁶ the
interplay of thought and feeling.

Anodos' journey through the underground country, for instance, is less an account of the goblins' country than of Anodos' mental journey through depression and remorse towards an acceptance of the necessity of giving service without expectation of reward through possession; he comes through his experience a more generous and forgiving man. Although this and similar scenes in MacDonald are dreamlike, because of the country where they take place, they are not to be regarded as dreams, but as reality, just as in Williams visionary experiences in the wide-awake world are a form of affective reality. In both authors, the spiritual journey is the true plot, and the focus on inner rumination and its consequent effect on spiritual development is natural. The rest--all the paraphernalia of the fantasy, designed to engage the imagination's interest--is surface plot.

The effectiveness with which the theme of spiritual development is handled lies largely in MacDonald's and Williams' ability to particularize the details of mental processes, thereby giving form and reality to what might otherwise be nebulous and uninteresting. Anthony's waking vision in The Place of the Lion and Anodos' description of the effect which his new Shadow has upon the objects and people around him and on his own perceptions and mental attitude, in Phantastes, are cases in point.

²⁶"Works by George MacDonald," (Littell's) Living Age, already cited, 721. Cf. also, from Lilith, ch. xvi: "That which is within a man, not that which lies beyond his vision, is the main factor in what is about to befall him . . ."

MacNeice has noted (op. cit., p. 96) that MacDonald's main problem was "that of the mystical poets, how to express the Ineffable," and that he attempted to do this by piling up sensuous detail.

The orthodox Christian belief in personal immortality is complicated in him [MacDonald] by an individual and mystical vision of a universe which can only be understood by the assumption of extra dimensions, a universe where, regardless of time and space, two or more worlds are continually superimposed. This special vision MacDonald, like the mystical poets, could only attempt to convey through physical imagery . . . MacDonald's course requires a very unusual gift of sheer invention, which fortunately he possessed.²⁷

MacNeice touches here upon another aspect of MacDonald's approach of particularization. Physical wonders are as carefully detailed as are psychological processes; the problem is never sidestepped. Williams also was able to meet this particularly demanding requirement of good fantasy; and, as has been mentioned, both authors heightened the effectiveness of the marvellous by physicalizing and detailing it.

The transformation of Miss Wilmot into a serpent in The Place of the Lion,²⁸ Simon's creation of the magical homuncula in All Hallows' Eve,

²⁷MacNeice, op. cit., p. 97. He places particular emphasis on MacDonald's ability to embody the ideas of the interpenetration of time and eternity in genuinely concrete images (ibid., p. 125).

²⁸It is interesting to note that MacDonald also dealt with the idea of the kinship between the human soul and the various qualities symbolized by different animals. The librarian-sexton-raven in Lilith, ch. vi, for example, tells Vane: "'Upon occasion . . . it is more convenient to put one's bird-self in front. Every one, as you ought to know, has a beast-self--and a bird-self, and a stupid fish-self, ay, and a creeping serpent-self too--which it takes a deal of crushing to kill! . . . and I don't know how many selves more--all to get into harmony. You can tell what sort a man is by his creature that comes oftenest to the front.'" The theme is treated also in The Princess and Curdie.

the description of the dead dragon in Phantastes, and that of Lilith's transformation from leopard to woman and back again are a few examples of this process.²⁹ Both authors, in sum, used concrete detail to lend reality (1) to the unseen spiritual process, which is the main concern of the story; and (2) to the fantasy motifs, which provide the surface plot.

Another salient characteristic of MacDonald's and Williams' technique and style, deriving from the basic didacticism of both writers, is the folding in of little sermon-like passages which deal with doctrine or which contain astute psychological observations, ie., explanations of the moral base of their characters' motivations and actions. These are,

²⁹The two last-mentioned examples, not expanded upon to any degree elsewhere in this study, merit quotation. The description of the dead dragon (Phantastes, ch. xxiii): "It was no wonder that, with such a drag at his heels, the horse could make but slow progress, notwithstanding his evident dismay. The horrid, serpent-like head, with its black tongue, forked with red, hanging out of its jaws, dangled against the horse's side. Its neck was covered with long blue hair, its sides with scales of green and gold. Its back was of corrugated skin, of a purple hue. Its belly was similar in nature, but its colour was leaden, dashed with blotches of livid blue. Its skinny, bat-like wings and its tail were of a dull gray. It was strange to see how so many gorgeous colours, so many curving lines, and such beautiful things as wings and hair and scales, combined to form the horrible creature, intense in ugliness." The description of Lilith's transformation occurs in an episode in which Vane observes a fierce struggle between the two leopardesses--the white (one of Mara's forms) and the spotted (Lilith's cat-form): "From the spotted throat at length issued a howl of agony, changing, by swift-crowded gradations, into the long-drawn crescendo of a woman's uttermost wail. The white one relaxed her jaws; the spotted one drew herself away, and rose on her hind legs. Erect in the moonlight stood the princess, a confused rush of shadows careering over her whiteness--the spots of the leopard crowding, hurrying, fleeing to the refuge of her eyes, where merging they vanished. The last few, outsped and belated, mingled with the cloud of her streamy hair, leaving her radiant as the moon when a legion of little vapours has flown, wind-hunted, off her silvery disc--save that, adown the white column of her throat, a thread of blood still trickled from every wound of her adversary's terrible teeth. She turned away, took a few steps with the gait of a Hecate, fell, covered afresh with her spots and fled at a long, stretching gallop" (Lilith, ch. xxvi).

as already mentioned, often phrased in the form of aphorism or paradox and are meant to catch the attention of the reader so that a lesson may be put across, in somewhat the same manner that an exemplum's moralisatio was used in medieval sermons. When cast in the form of dialogue, these passages sometimes seem less than natural, in Williams at least, possibly because the device is too Victorian, i.e., condescendingly explanatory and moralistic, for modern taste. There is, nevertheless, much more than simply a flair for the bon mot in these; and some are beautifully evocative, in their crypticism, of the kind of universe Chad Walsh describes in these two writers: one in which God's ways are veiled, and whose mysteries of human and divine love can therefore only be expressed, in language, in terms of seeming paradox or in a special code. This is another facet of the sacramentalist or mythopoeic approach.

A few selected passages may be put down here to illustrate similarity of phrasing and effect.

MacDonald:

I learned . . . that the best way to manage some kinds of painful thoughts, is to dare them to do their worst; to let them lie and gnaw at your heart till they are tired; and you find you still have a residue of life they cannot kill.

(Phantastes, ch. viii)

The merest trifles sometimes rivet the attention in the deepest misery; the intellect has so little to do with grief.

(Phantastes, ch. xix)

Not yet pure in love, he hesitated.

(Phantastes, ch. xiii)

that which is within a man, not that which lies beyond his vision, is the main factor in what is about to befall him: the operation upon him is the event.

(Lilith, ch. xvi)

"A man is as free as he chooses to make himself, never an atom freer," answered the raven.

(Lilith, ch. iv)

"The only door out is the door in!"

(Lilith, ch. viii)

"No one who will not sleep can ever wake."

(Lilith, ch. ix)

. . . to understand is not more wonderful than to love.

(Lilith, ch. xii)

I was not yet alive; I was only dreaming I lived! I was but a consciousness with an outlook!

(Lilith, ch. xvi)

"But indeed the business of the universe is to make such a fool of you that you will know yourself for one, and so begin to be wise!"

(Lilith, ch. v)

"To wait is harder than to run, and its meed is the fuller."

(Lilith, ch. xxxi)

". . . no one can die who does not long to live."

(Lilith, ch. xlii)

"A desert, wide and weary, parts him who lies down to die from him who lies down to live."

(Lilith, ch. xlii)

"In this world never trust a person who has once deceived you. Above all, never do anything such a one may ask you to do."

"I will try to remember," I answered;
"--but I may forget!"

"Then some evil that is good for you will follow."

"And if I remember?"

"Some evil that is not good for you,
will not follow."
(Lilith, ch. xvii)

Williams

Duty with a strong inclination looked so
dreadfully selfish beside duty with a mild
inclination.
(Many Dimensions, ch. v)

. . . being a modern normally emotional girl
she was, quite naturally, an idolater.
(Many Dimensions, ch. v)

"For as you cannot know any study but by
learning it, or gain any virtue but by
practising it, so you cannot be anything
but by becoming it."
(Many Dimensions, ch. iii)

Richard . . . broke out, "Why isn't one
taught to be loved? Why isn't one taught
anything?"
Betty said, "Don't worry, Richard; we
can't be taught till we can learn."
(All Hallows' Eve, ch. ix)

"You won't have her if you keep her."
(All Hallows' Eve, ch. x)

The strength . . . had now no power upon him;
he was within it, and under the protection of
another of the great Ideas, that Wisdom which
knew the rest and itself also, the very tradi-
tion of the Ideas and the Angelicals being but
a feather dropped from its everlasting and
effectual wing.

(The Place of the Lion, ch. x)

Macneice has pointed out (op. cit., p. 101) that the fact of
MacDonald's heroes and heroines having to prove themselves through
action and to achieve a spiritual evolution involves paradoxes "which
are nearly all variants on the Christian paradox that one must lose
one's life to save it." MacDonald--and Williams--seem to have had a
natural bent for seeing doctrinal ideas under the form of apparent

paradox and for expressing them in a comparable manner; although, as an examination of the above examples shows, the paradox lies less in the doctrine itself than in the way words are used: to imply that their true meaning is the opposite of their commonplace one. The effect is startling, and this, of course, is intentional. The reader's attention is engaged; he stops to think the problem through; and the author's intention--to convey a doctrinal message--is fulfilled.

Doctrine, as the moving force of both authors' fantasies, is the informing element of plot structure and characterization. The basic story line is one of struggle between good and evil; the good characters are givers, the evil ones devourers, and all are intended to illustrate one or more aspects of their author's world-view, although they do not leave off having individual human personalities. Both MacDonald and Williams were careful to make their human characters flesh-and-blood individuals by the use of psychological portraiture. Anodos, for instance, states that when he crept through the narrowing tunnel out of the underground goblin country, his experience had recalled terrible dreams of childhood (Phantastes, ch. xviii); and Lilith, in her human aspect, gives away through a slip of the tongue the fact that she can assume cat-form: "I set out on my journey, reached the stream, bounded across it,-- --!A shadow of embarrassment darkened her cheek: I understood it, but showed no sign. Checked for the merest moment, she went on:/!--you know what a step it is in parts!"³⁰ In Williams, psychological

³⁰Cf. C. S. Lewis, preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, pp. 19-20: "His [MacDonald's] psychology also is worth noticing: he is quite as well aware as the moderns that the conscious self, the

process and spiritual analysis are almost constantly before the reader, and, as discussed, constitute much of the action. In these ways MacDonald and Williams present their characters under a universal and a particular aspect, hovering between the archetypal and the individual "real" human being. And, of course, both used Lilith as a key character, depicting her as possessing both abstract and real aspects; in MacDonald, moreover, although not in Williams, she is also a soul on a journey, destined to reach salvation, although she and the Shadow (the devil, her consort) will be the last to do so.

Beyond these similarities with regard to characters and characterization, however, MacDonald and Williams shared a rare ability which some critics have mentioned with respect to one or the other of the two writers, and C. S. Lewis to both: the ability to draw good characters convincingly and interestingly. It is in the vision of good, Hadfield states, that Williams went furthest, "as in his novels the examination of good was always outstanding in his generation of contemporary writing, which all had skill in examining evil."³¹ "The technique for conveying pure goodness," Ridler remarks with respect to Williams, "is one of the rarest of attainment[s] . . ."³²

thing revealed by introspection, is a superficialities. Hence the cellars and attics of the King's castle in The Princess and the Goblins [sic], and the terror of his own house which falls upon Mr. Vane in Lilith: hence also his formidable critique . . . of our daily assumptions about the self." Alexander Reid's remarks about the Jungian affinities in MacDonald's fantasies have already been discussed.

³¹ An Introduction to Charles Williams, p. 194. She goes so far as to say (p. 81) that the development in goodness is unique in Williams' novels (among contemporary writers).

³² Introduction to "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, p. xliv.

W. H. Auden has written of MacDonald that his "most extraordinary, and precious, gift is his ability, in all his stories, to create an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony or moralistic" and that "nothing is rarer in literature."³³

C. S. Lewis points out concerning MacDonald:

One rare, and all but unique, merit these novels [MacDonald's non-fantastic novels] must be allowed. The "good" characters are always the best and most convincing. His saints live; his villains are stagey.³⁴

And, as already noted, Lewis wrote of Charles Williams' novels as "full of love and excelling in the creation of convincing good characters."³⁵

Auden also refers to Simone Weil's observation that

"Imaginary evil is romantic and varied; real evil is gloomy, monotonous, barren, boring. Imaginary good is boring; real good is always new, marvellous, intoxicating. 'Imaginative literature,' therefore, is either boring or immoral or a mixture of both."³⁶

Auden points to MacDonald's tales as disproving the latter statement.

There is no basic difference between Weil's view of real good and evil and that held by MacDonald and Williams. But whereas Weil

³³"Afterword," 177.

³⁴Preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 18.

³⁵Letters, p. 167. Lewis recommends to a correspondent a list of reading material; Williams follows immediately upon MacDonald in the list. See also Lewis, "Williams and the Arthuriad," in Arthurian Torso, p. 193. Walsh (C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics, p. 164) discerns a contrast between Lewis, on the one hand, and MacDonald and Williams, on the other, in that the former seems to delineate damnation more convincingly than salvation, while the opposite is (for him) true in the latter case.

³⁶Auden, "Afterword," 177.

considers imaginative literature and reality to be opposites, MacDonald and Williams used imaginative literature to represent reality. Therefore they give the lie to Weil's dictum on this literature, for they present evil as barren and stupid, and good as exciting and interesting.

It is entirely true that in both MacDonald and Williams, the good characters are more interesting than the evil ones. With respect to MacDonald, this is more clearly seen in his non-fantastic novels, in which all the characters are humans; but even in the fantasies, where the truly good characters are usually more than human, e.g., the old wise woman in the magic cottage in Phantastes, the above statement holds true. A familiar good fairy figure on the one hand, and the agent of a benevolent power on the other, who both suffers with Anodos and yet is able to help him, the old woman epitomizes the combination of elements which, in MacDonald (and in Williams), makes the conception of the Good absorbing: a combination of the known and of the mysterious, which is felt to be kind and which therefore draws us to it. The mystery, moreover, is conceived of as a sentient intelligence which permits itself to be understood by degrees--indeed, welcomes this--and which imparts growing happiness as it lets itself be more and more clearly comprehended.

Herein lies the contrast between the conception of good and evil in both authors: good requires becoming; evil is static. Evil is imagined as excluding the possibility of growth and change; therefore, however frightening or horrendous it may be, it is, in the last analysis, uninteresting; neither MacDonald nor Williams romanticized it. The Ash-Tree (Phantastes) constantly seeks to devour new victims to fill up the

hole in his heart; Lilith does much the same. But their hunger is never satiated, and, unless they repent, they must, as characters, be doomed to eternal repetition of their frightful and unchanging acts. Similarly, Williams' villains, such as Gregory Persimmons in War in Heaven, and Giles Tumulty, Williams' one truly stagy villain, in War in Heaven and Many Dimensions, exemplify the futility and increasing desperation incident upon an attempt to achieve satisfaction, in the form of power, by taking from others to oneself. As spiritual creatures, they have refused to develop into union with others and have therefore ceased to grow; as literary creations, they seem to be deliberately monistic and are made entertaining chiefly by the supernatural acts which they are imagined as performing and, perhaps, for the spectacle they present of the final stages of spiritual deterioration.

Good, on the other hand, allows of organic spiritual changes, imagined as being successive stages in an ascending, i.e., increasingly happy, journey. Moreover, the idea of goodness in MacDonald and Williams is free from the usual associations of nebulousness, moral smugness, and bloodlessness which, even today, persist as the legacy of much Victorian fiction. It is, on the contrary, positive, specific, active, and free of moralistic condescension. Far from being static, is it shown as requiring a necessary struggle; each stage in the journey is depicted in detail; each successive stage is conceived of as growth in understanding of one's own spiritual potentialities, which, by implication, are those of everyone. It is because MacDonald's and Williams' personal conception of the good and goodness is itself positive, interested, and dynamic that their "good characters" are interesting--that, and their

ability to particularize psychological/spiritual states believably. The good characters in MacDonald--both the superhuman ones and the human, such as Anodos and Vane; and in Williams--both those who are already well advanced in spiritual goodness, such as Sybil in The Greater Trumps, and those who grow into goodness, such as Lester in All Hallows' Eve and Nancy in The Greater Trumps; all are interesting chiefly for the action of this process in them, and not for the thrill value of the preternaturals which act upon them, although the latter (within the fantasy framework) often catalyze the process. In making goodness interesting and credible, both authors also rendered the concept of salvation, the logical culmination of the process, credible.³⁷ Another corollary of the process of making the good credible is, in both authors, to create what C. S. Lewis has called, in respect to MacDonald, "a certain quality of Death, good Death,"³⁸ i.e., acceptably transforming the idea of death as an ending into the idea of its being but one step in a continuing, evolving process of spiritual development, as, in a universe conceived of as being good, would be entirely logical.

* * * * *

³⁷Cf. the sense of expectation, at the close of Phantastes and Lilith, of an imminent summons to Anodos and Vane to return to the other country; and the final vanishing of Lester, in All Hallows' Eve (ch. x), which is quiet, undramatic, and entirely logical as the culmination of the painstaking account of her growth from an impatient and somewhat selfish young woman into one who understands, accepts, and obeys the exacting but joyful laws of the City: "She stood, quiet and very real, before them; almost she shone on them; then the brightness quivered in the air, a gleam of brighter light than day, and in a flash traversed all the hall; the approach of all the hallows possessed her, and she too, into the separations and unions which are indeed its approach, and into the end to which it is itself an approach, was wholly gone. The tremor of brightness received her."

³⁸Preface to George Macdonald: An Anthology, p. 21.

This broad review of the similarities with respect to substance (doctrine and world-views) and fantasy technique in the writings of George MacDonald and Charles Williams has, as indicated at the beginning of this study, been undertaken in order to document the kinship between these two unusual writers, which thus far has been touched upon in the critical literature in only the most general terms. The chief emphasis has been upon an analysis of Williams, using MacDonald as a touchstone and for comparison.

As far as can be ascertained, there seems to be no evidence of MacDonald's having been either a source for, or a direct influence upon, Williams,³⁹ although, as has been shown, there is the possibility of indirect influence through C. S. Lewis. But this fact only serves to heighten the interest generated by the similarities between the two, who, as fantasists, seem to be classifiable only in terms of one another. This may, of course, be due to the confluence, in both cases, of parallel religious convictions and world-views, as well as similar imaginative gifts, and the fact that both were, for these reasons, somewhat alien to the spirit of their times in the same way. Their similarities as individuals may have been sufficient to produce similar writings because of the similarity of external circumstances. The question is insoluble, however, and, in any event, is not of the first importance.

Both were Christian parabolists, one in the nineteenth century, and one in the twentieth, and, by virtue of this fact, they can be

³⁹In the sense in which C. S. Lewis uses the words: "A Source gives us things to write about; an Influence prompts us to write in a certain way. Homer is a Source to Lydgate, but Homer was an Influence on Arnold when he wrote Sohrab and Rustum. . . . Malory was both a Source and an Influence in Tennyson's Morte d'Arthur. . . ." ("The Literary Impact of the Authorised Version," in They Asked for a Paper, p. 35).

viewed as late developments in a very old tradition, that of the sermon and the exemplum, which sought to teach at least partly through the use of imaginative and entertaining, i.e., attention-holding, story.⁴⁰ Fantasy, in a variety of forms, some very simple, has been used as a vehicle for apologetics and served as the natural companion of clear reason, drawing directly from reality, for a very long time. Therefore MacDonald and Williams, in using fantasy for a serious purpose, basically to make doctrinal ideas interesting (although to them personally doctrinal questions were far from dull), were not innovators. They were not the first whose particular vision of the world required them to turn to fantasy to express it, although, in view of the temper of the times in which they lived, they risked, by so doing, the possibility of their work being classified as belonging to a subliterary genre. The innovation lies in the particular components of their fantasy, the selection of which is, after all, a very personal thing. Both wove into the fabric of their stories a vast selection of traditional fantasy motifs from a variety of traditional sources, among which folklore and the occult loom large. These motifs were, as has been described, used in a manner which, owing to the imaginative and synthesizing gifts of the two authors, mirrors and symbolizes a Christian supernatural cosmos which is remarkably similar in the two.

⁴⁰One critic has expressed the opinion that Williams' use of allegory and symbolism kept alive a technique that had all but disappeared and to which, in our time, only George MacDonald had given attention (Frederick S. Wandall, "Charles Williams," in Minor British Novelists, ed. Charles Alva Hoyt [Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois, 1967], p. 133).

A good deal of background has been given on MacDonald's debt, in so far as his fantasy materials are concerned, to the German romantic fantasists. His works seem to owe their uniqueness to the fact that they were the product of a most particular stream of fantasy acting upon an imagination strongly tempered by a religious vocation. Therefore, while MacDonald's religious views lent specific meaning to the archetypal and mysterious beings and situations he found in the German romantic fantasists--the goblins, the underground caverns, and the like--these same motifs imparted to his stories some of the dream-edged psychological implications and inexplicability which they possess in their original settings. MacDonald therefore represented a new departure in Christian fantasy--Christian supernatural fantasy, with romantic symbology. And Williams, by whatever combination of similar circumstances or coincidence of mental set, and partly through an interest in the history of the occult, also produced Christian supernatural fantasies in English whose motifs are derived from a body of largely romantic material. In both writers, their Christianity or world-view imparts discipline to the romanticism of the basic material in which it is clothed. Symbols are partly transformed by and partly transform the message, as has been seen, and folklore is made to serve the Christian ethos. It is in this new departure in the materials and execution of fantasy that MacDonald's and Williams' root resemblance lies.

In summary, then, that which sets MacDonald and Williams apart from other practitioners in the parable tradition in English, constitutes the basis of their literary kinship, and raises them to high stature in the field of imaginative writing is their highly specialized

type of parable, Christian mythopoeic fantasy deriving from the use and transformation of traditional, and predominantly romantic, symbolology.

MacDonald and Williams generally either please or displease greatly, a fact borne out by the critical literature. "It is the inescapable commitment of the books that alienates some readers automatically," Fuller wrote of Williams' novels (op. cit., p. 203), referring, of course, to their religious commitment. Eliot phrased this in another way when he wrote that

the capacity for recognising the realities to which Williams was trying to draw our attention, is numbed and almost atrophied in the world in which we live today. If this capacity is latent in you, Williams is the writer to bring it to consciousness.⁴¹

These statements apply equally to George MacDonald. Unless there is a shared sympathy between author and reader with regard to the idea of an ordered universe, or at least the attractiveness of such a conception, MacDonald's fantasies and those of Williams are likely to arouse only antipathy, boredom, or embarrassment, especially if the reader does not care for fantasy, which is a special taste.⁴² "The response to fantasy requires the preservation of the sense of wonder, a ready acceptance, and a self-giving," Fuller writes (op. cit., p. 139). C. S. Lewis has remarked on the intensity of like or dislike which fantasy in the

⁴¹"The Significance of Charles Williams," p. 895.

⁴²Cf. Dunn, op. cit., 369: "I think, further, that what makes many people uncomfortable with Williams is that he believes, quite literally and with utter conviction, a number of things which more up-to-date Christians . . . have forgotten, or wish they could forget."

form of the mythopoeic evokes in different people,⁴³ adding that "it would seem from the reactions it produces, that the mythopoeic is . . . for good or ill, a mode of imagination which does something to us at a deep level."⁴⁴

It has not been the purpose of this study to defend MacDonald's and Williams' doctrine per se, but merely to explain it in terms of the fantasy framework in which it is embodied, and to point out the significance of the two writers within a tradition of major importance, the history of which stretches back over many centuries; a tradition which, it is true, is somewhat less than popular today, although the stream of books and articles on MacDonald, Williams, and other writers in a related vein, such as C. S. Lewis and Tolkien, has been growing steadily over recent years. It is far too soon to conjecture whether Williams will have a lasting reputation as a novelist, or any permanent effect on writings in the literary genre of fantasy; or whether, on the contrary, he will prove to be a lastingly unique phenomenon, and didactic fantasy of the deeply committed sort, based on an emotional faith, which he and MacDonald wrote will remain largely anachronistic, forming the study of specialists and small bands of enthusiasts. Hillegas feels that

the cultural movement to which Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams belong . . . [is breaking up]. (One sign is the weakening of the opposition to scientific utopianism.) Projecting the two trends--

⁴³"On Science Fiction," p. 71.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 72. For a discussion of Lewis' views on modern attitudes towards fantasy and realism, see, especially, his essays "On Myth," "The Meanings of 'Fantasy,'" and "On Realisms" in An Experiment in Criticism.

the swing from realism and the end of the antirationalist movement [represented by these authors]--we might speculate that we will eventually see fantasy of major importance presenting what Lewis has called the idea of the "other side." It would be something like science fiction, but more substantial than anything yet written in this form. And as in the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, the writers of this new fantasy will have learned something, at least about writing fantasy, from Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams.⁴⁵

One thing is fairly certain, however: imaginative literature, and parable in particular, is likely to continue to thrive, although its purpose and message--to say nothing of its form--may evolve into something very different from what is found in MacDonald and Williams, as theirs was different from earlier kinds. "The ultimate aim of all imaginative literature," Colin Wilson has written (op. cit., p. 178), "is to teach men 'what life is.'" The urge to teach is strongly rooted in human nature, and therefore, although the convictions of one generation may come to seem old-fashioned and naive to the next, as the idea of "'what life is'" changes; and although the sermon as such may have grown unpopular and fallen into disuse; nevertheless, the sermon tradition itself--the urge to propagate a gospel (not necessarily religious, of course)--will undoubtedly survive and is unlikely to renounce its traditional companion, the imaginative faculty.

⁴⁵Introduction to Shadows of Imagination, p. xviii.

Appendix I

Summaries of
Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women
 and
Lilith: A Romance
 by
 George MacDonald

A. Phantastes

The story of past adventures is narrated in the first person by Anodos.

Chapter I. Having reached the age of twenty-one and inherited his father's papers, Anodos discovers in his father's desk a hidden drawer containing a packet of old letters. From the little chamber a tiny woman emerges, who promises to grant Anodos a wish he had expressed, that one might find one's way into fairyland. She assumes human size and hints that she is one of his great-grandmothers, several times removed. She is nevertheless youthful and beautiful. Warned against touching her, because it would hurt him, Anodos obeys her command to look into her eyes. He is reminded of how his mother died when he was a baby and is filled with longing for the fairy country. The lady disappears, and Anodos retires.

Chapter II. Anodos' room changes gradually into a forest glade: the water in the basin becomes a rivulet streaming over the carpet; the flowers on the carpet, a field of grass and daisies; the carved foliage on the dresser and the branches and leaves on the bed curtains, real ivy and foliage. Anodos crosses the rivulet and follows a path leading to a wood in fairyland.

Chapter III. In the depth of the woods, Anodos encounters a maiden who warns him that he may trust the Oak, the Elm, and the Beech, but to beware the Ash, who is an ogre, and the Alder, who will smother him if he lets her near him at night. He comes to the cottage where the young girl's mother lives. She guesses that Anodos possesses some fairy blood; it is this which has allowed him to penetrate so far into the wood. Those with fairy blood fall ill if they do not visit the fairies' country and occasionally eat of their food; moreover, no one comes to that country without some reason either known to him or to those in charge of him. Anodos remains at the cottage all day, reading a romance of Sir Percivale and his encounter with the Alder-Maiden, and observing the antics of the flower fairies in the garden. His hostess warns him that the Ash-Tree always watches the cottage and becomes fully awake after dark.

Chapter IV. Taking his way through the forest, Anodos is gradually possessed by the feeling that something evil is watching him. Spying the shadow of a large, knotted hand clasping and unclasping, Anodos forces himself to look at what is casting the shadow, an apparition faintly human in form, but hideous. Its eyes are alive with a greediness which seems to drive it towards its victims and to consume

the spectre itself. The shadow of the hand is nearly upon Anodos when he is clasped by a woman, somewhat larger than human size; the shadow withdraws. The woman tells Anodos that the Ash has a hole in his heart which he tries to fill up by burying his victims at the foot of his tree. She warns him against any like herself whom he may find who are particularly beautiful. She gives him some of her hair as a talisman, and sings him to sleep. At dawn he awakes, to find himself under a beech tree, and wearing a garland of beech leaves.

Chapter V. Continuing his journey, Anodos finds that the food he eats in fairyland sharpens his understanding, so that he is able to comprehend the birds and animals; he also finds that he can compose poetry and sing. In a cave he discovers a block of alabaster, in which a beautiful woman, with a face nearer the one "born with him in his soul" than he has ever seen, is imprisoned, asleep. She gradually awakens to Anodos's poem, bursts free of the alabaster, glides from the cave, and is gone.

Chapter VI. Anodos encounters a knight whose armor has rusted because he has fallen prey to the Alder-Maiden (as had Percivale, in the romance Anodos read at the cottage). Warning Anodos against the "terribly beautiful" maiden of the alder tree, he predicts that the armor can be made to shine again only through knightly encounter. Anodos feels confident that, having been warned, he cannot be duped by the maiden. He begins to sing again, in hopes that this will call back the lady of the marble, and is answered by a woman who says she is that lady. Disregarding a feeling that there is something wrong about her, he accompanies her to a grotto, where he sees her face fully for the first time; it is intensely beautiful. They spend the night together. In the morning, Anodos sees at the mouth of the cave a coffin-like object, made as if from tree bark, standing on end. When it turns round, its face and front prove to be those of the beautiful woman. She has removed Anodos' garland of beech leaves and is tearing it apart. The Alder-Maiden, for it is she, consigns Anodos to the Ash-Tree, who reaches out to seize him, but desists when the sound of axe blows from somewhere in the wood are suddenly heard.

Chapter VII. Pondering on the riddle of how beauty and ugliness can coexist in one being, and disenchanted as to the nature of the Alder-Maiden, Anodos feels, nevertheless, that she is still beautiful. He learns from a kindly farmer's wife why the Alder-Maiden is so beautiful: she loves to receive love for her own power and delight. But this is a self-destructive process, which is slowly wearing her away within, until one day the decay must destroy the lovely mask, and she will vanish forever. Next morning Anodos is reluctant to continue his journey, but feels compelled to do so. The farmer's wife tells him that for those who enter fairyland, there is no way of going back; one must go on and go through it. She warns him to avoid the house of the ogre.

Chapter VIII. Anodos comes to a hut in the forest, in which a woman is reading aloud from an ancient book affirming the eternal nature of darkness and the transitory nature of the inroads which light and mankind make upon it. He is seized with an irresistible desire to open the door of a cupboard in the room, and, despite the woman's warning, does so. The back of the cupboard stretches down a passage into the distance; from the far end a figure comes running until it passes Anodos and enters the cottage. The woman points to a black shadow on the floor; it is his. She tells him that everyone's shadow is ranging up and down searching for its owner, and that when one has looked into the closet, especially after meeting the evil being in the forest, it is almost certain that his shadow will find him. Anodos sees her face fully; her long teeth reveal her as the ogre(ss). The shadow follows Anodos from the cottage, and seems even blacker in the sunlight.

Chapter IX. Anodos' shadow now takes all joy out of his journey. The flowers on which it falls wither. It moves about on its own, and at will shoots out rays of darkness that blot out even the face of the sun; it makes beautiful and romantic objects seem plain and commonplace. Encountering the knight again, whose armor is beginning to regain its luster, Anodos is about to confide in him concerning his shadow, when the shadow encloses his friend, and causes Anodos to cease to trust him. It incites Anodos to deal violently with fragile objects, and obliges him to keep at a distance from other people in order that they may not appear grotesque.

Chapter X. Even the forest goblins, mocking Anodos with handfuls of gold and jewels, cease tormenting him when they see his shadow following him. He finds a little boat, and lets it take him downstream where it will. He arrives eventually at a marble palace, which appears to be empty. Feeling that he is observed by invisible and friendly presences, however, Anodos comes upon a room which is a replica of his own in the earthly world. His meal is served by invisible hands.

Chapter XI. During Anodos' sojourn in the fairy palace, his shadow becomes faint, and slowly he is able to distinguish the forms of some of the palace's inhabitants. He passes the days exploring, swimming in a jewel-bottomed pool, and reading in a magnificent library, whose books have the power of making the reader feel that he is participating in the events they recount.

Chapter XII. Anodos relates one of the stories he has read in the fairy library, of a planet where children are found, not born, as on earth.

Chapter XIII. Anodos relates a second story, which, while he read it, made it seem that he had "a kind of double consciousness," and the story "a double meaning." It describes how Cosmo von Wehrstahl, a young student in Prague, freed a lady from an enchantment that forced her to enter a mirror and be gazed at by its owner each day. He had broken the mirror at last and freed her, but had lost his life in doing so.

Chapter XIV. Wandering through the palace one day, Anodos is dimly aware of the sound of multitudes of dancers and unheard music. He comes upon a group of statues which seem to have an invisible tremulousness, as if they had just ceased from dancing and sprung on to their pedestals a moment before. Eventually he is able to surprise a group of dancers before they can immobilize themselves; he looks among them for the lady whom he had freed from the alabaster in the Alder-Maiden's cave, and, on one of the pedestals, seemingly vacant, he discerns the indistinct outline of feet.

Chapter XV. Next night Anodos sings before the pedestal; gradually the form of a woman appears, as if a veil were being lifted slowly upward.

Chapter XVI. When the lady is completely visible, Anodos, disregarding the law of the palace--"Touch not"--lifts her down from the pedestal. Crying that he should not have touched her, she runs away; he follows her through a door reserved only for those who have the leave of the (Fairy) Queen, and finds himself alone on a barren windy hill. The palace has disappeared.

Chapter XVII. Thinking the lady may have fallen into an opening in the ground which he has spied nearby, Anodos descends into a shaft and finds himself in an underground country inhabited by goblins. They taunt him that his lady will belong to someone else, but are silenced by his reply: that if the other is a better man, he should have her.

Chapter XVIII. The path through the underground country leads steadily downward and becomes ever narrower, while the roof slopes lower and lower; this is the only way out of the underground country. Anodos eventually finds a small opening through which he is able to creep out into the daylight again. He finds himself on the stony shore of a gray wintry sea, and, discouraged, plunges in and lets the waves take him where they will. Again he finds a little boat, which sails with him to a summer region. As he floats along, he sees beneath the water scenes of the past and the faces of loved ones. He falls asleep and awakes, refreshed and contented, on the shore of a grassy island.

Chapter XIX. A motherly old woman with young-looking eyes takes him in, comforts him as if he were a child, and sings sweet songs.¹ Her cottage has four doors (of Tears, Sighs, Dismay, and the Timeless), through each of which Anodos passes, into other times and places: once

¹One of these is a ballad about Sir Aglovaile, who loses the ghost of his dead wife when he disregards her warning not to touch her. It contains some familiar lines: "'Alas, how easily things go wrong!/
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long,/And there follows a mist and a weep-
ing rain,/And life is never the same again.'"

to relive a day in his childhood and the remorse of not having settled a quarrel with one of his brothers before he drowned; once to see his beloved lady together with the knight of the rusty armor (now clean and shining), to learn that the knight had wielded the axe that had felled the Ash-Tree and saved Anodos, and to learn that, although the lady is grateful to Anodos for having twice freed her from an enchanted sleep, she loves the knight; and once to see and avoid someone whom he had wronged, and is now dead. Each time he finds his way back to the old woman's cottage by going through a door marked, as the old woman has instructed him, with a dark red symbol.² Despite the old woman's warning, Anodos goes through the fourth door (the Timeless), but loses consciousness and knows nothing of his adventure this time, other than that the old woman has had to go out the door herself to rescue him. Because of this, the waters must rise over the cottage, although her fire, if kept burning, will keep the waters out, and, after a year, they will recede. She sends Anodos away, with the admonition to do something worth doing.

Chapter XX. Anodos meets and casts his lot in with two kings' sons who are forging armor in which to fight three giants that are terrorizing the land. The old woman had promised them a third man to help them.

Chapter XXI. Surprised by the three giants, Anodos and his friends are forced to fight not in armor, but with the weapons nearest to hand. Although each kills a giant, Anodos is the only survivor. He observes that his shadow is still with him, although he had not seen it all the while he was working on his armor. Feeling guilty at the praise he receives from the princes' old father, Anodos, now himself a knight, continues on his journey.

Chapter XXII. A youth warns Anodos against the enchanted nature of the forest through which he is riding. His shadow disappears, and Anodos finds himself thinking proud thoughts regarding his victory over the giant. He encounters a fierce knight, the image of himself, but larger, who cowers Anodos into following him. He imprisons Anodos and his shadow (with which the knight is identical) in a tower. After many weary days and nights passed in longing for freedom, Anodos hears a woman singing a song summoning the man of pride from his narrow desert. He tries the door for the first time and finds that it is open. Waiting outside is a beautiful woman, in whom Anodos recognizes the girl

² Cf. this passage from one of MacDonald's letters, quoted in Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, p. 326, regarding some stories he had read: "As stories they just want the one central spot of red--the wonderful thing which, whether in a fairy story or a word or a human being, is the life and depth--whether of truth or humour or pathos--the eye to the face of it--the thing that shows the unshowable" (1862).

whose colored toy globe of resounding glass he had broken when his shadow first began to guide his actions. She has forgiven him and helped him free himself, a service she renders to many in the dark forest. Anodos strips himself of his armor, wishing to humble himself. Saying that he has failed, that he has lost himself, and wishing that he had lost his shadow, he finds that his shadow has at last left him. He has lost his false pride, which had caused him to behold, if not his ideal in himself, at least himself in his ideal; now he will begin to seek out his ideal.

Chapter XXIII. Anodos encounters the knight of the erstwhile rusty armor, who is loved by the lady Anodos twice rescued; this fact only strengthens his wish to be the knight's squire. They become firm friends and arrive at length at a place where a multitude are worshipping what appears to be a venerable prophet on a throne. Anodos, however, whose sight has grown keener the longer he has been in fairyland, discerns that the people brought to the foot of the throne shrink back with fear, but are pushed through a door in its pedestal. Determined to expose what he feels is evil, and thus save his companion, who, incapable of evil himself, does not suspect it in others, Anodos pulls the figure down from the throne. It proves to be only an image, and from the gaping hole at its base, a wolflike animal rushes, which Anodos chokes before he himself loses consciousness.

Chapter XXIV. Anodos is dead and aware of a peaceful new kind of consciousness, knowing that "it is by loving, and not by being loved, that one comes nearest the soul of another" and that despair one day "dies into infinite hope." But in the midst of his joy, a convulsion goes through him, and he becomes conscious again of a bodily and earthly life.

Chapter XXV. Anodos finds himself lying on a hill, just before sunrise. He has a shadow, but only a natural one. He hastens home and is reunited with his family, who inform him that his disappearance lasted twenty-one days; to him it seems to have been much longer. Since returning, he has tried to translate his experiences in the other world into common life. Having set out to find his ideal, he has come back rejoicing in the loss of his Shadow, and anxious never to have it return. He longs for the day when he can go back to the fairy world. A comforting memory in his present life is that of the old woman in the cottage with four doors, who had assured him that she knew "something too good to be told." And, more recently, as he lay under a beech tree, it seemed as if he could make out her face among the leaves and her voice telling him that a great good was coming to him. He is convinced that it will be as she says, and that evil "is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good."

B. Lilith

The story of past adventures is narrated in the first person by Mr. Vane.

Chapter I: "The Library." After inheriting his parents' estate, Vane spends much time in the huge family library reading books on science, when some odd occurrences take place. He thinks he sees a tall figure at the other end of the room, but the figure, as well as the book for which it is reaching, disappears. Similarly, a sham book, forming an immovable part of a front of mock books on a closet door in the library, also disappears. Vane sees the ghostly figure, a slender old man in a long, dark, shiny coat, go into the closet, but the closet proves to be empty. The sham book is later found back in its place. Vane learns from the butler that the ghost of Mr. Raven, former librarian to Sir Upward,³ one of Vane's ancestors, is said still to inhabit the house.

Chapter II: "The Mirror." Vane follows the mysterious figure to the garret, where there is a tall mirror, whose glass does not reflect the room, but rather shows a landscape of wild country and mountain ranges; in the foreground a raven is hopping about. Leaning forward to obtain a better view, Vane falls through the mirror into the other country.

Chapter III: "The Raven." The raven, who is another form of the ghostly librarian, tells Vane that he has come through a door he was not aware of, and possibly too soon, but that he must get to be at home in the new region, i.e., he must learn to be able both to enter and to leave it. In order to do this, he must begin to be active. Entering a wood and endeavoring to pass between two trees where a strange translucence shimmers, he stumbles and finds himself back in the garret, on the other side of the mirror. Terrified, he rushes back to the library and tries to pry open a corner of the sham book. He is able to discern fragments of strange poetry, which awake a great longing to know the full contents of the poems.

Chapter IV: "Somewhere or Nowhere?" Vane follows the raven into the garden and watches him dig up worms, which he tosses into the air and which become gorgeous butterflies. Once more Vane finds himself in another world, his house having disappeared from view. The raven tells him that he is only beginning to become an individual, and that he must reach his real home. He is in that part of the region of the seven dimensions which occupies the same space as his house in the "real" world. Unwillingly, Vane realizes he must accept the situation and try to make his way in this unfamiliar world. The raven enjoins him to begin immediately what has to be done.

³Cf. the meaning of the name of Anodos, hero of Phantastes: "ascent of the soul to its original source."

Chapter V: "The Old Church." The raven shows Vane how the prayers of those who still visit the ruins of an old church nearby take the living form of doves or particularly beautiful flowers. Vane must of himself learn to know the nature of things; only he has the power to open his eyes.

Chapter VI: "The Sexton's Cottage." Vane already knows that the raven is also a sexton. Once arrived at the raven's cottage, he is curious to know what cemetery it is that he tends; the bird points his beak round to all points of the compass. Retransformed into a man, he introduces Vane to his beautiful wife. They have a supper of bread and wine, which seems to Vane "to go deeper than the hunger and thirst." Vane wishes to sleep, but is filled with foreboding when his host tells him that in this house no one wakes of himself or can be waked by others.

Chapter VII: "The Cemetery." Mr. Raven and his wife show Vane a vast roomful of couches occupied by sleepers whose sleep is deeper than death, but who will awake one day. He is offered a couch next to that of a beautiful woman with a dark spot in the middle of her palm, and of a man who still clutches a sword. But the cold, the moonlight, and his own repugnance overcome Vane. He flees the room, rushes through a door, and finds himself back in his own library.

Chapter VIII: "My Father's Manuscript." Vane learns from a written account that his father had known Mr. Raven, and had learned from him that the mirror in the garret was a door to another world, and that one could pass through it when the light shone on it in a certain way.

Chapter IX: "I Repent." Regretting his hasty flight from Mr. Raven's house, Vane finds the way back through the mirror, but the raven tells him his moment for sleeping has not come, or he would not have run away. The raven is unable to tell him how to get home, for they understand the expression in different ways.

Chapter X: "The Bad Burrow." Setting out on his journey, Vane comes to a place where hideous beasts and serpents continuously burrow up out of the ground, only to disappear into it again. He is as yet unaware that only the rays of the moon prevent their tearing him to pieces. He encounters a beautiful woman, with dead eyes and a dark spot on her left side, who faints in agony and who, before his eyes, dissolves into the forms of serpents and a bat. He reaches safety as the moon sets.

Chapter XI: "The Evil Wood." The country through which Vane journeys is dry, although it seems that he can hear the sound of waters. That night, in a forest, he witnesses a battle among skeletons and phantoms, murdering each other even in death, and shouting "The Truth!" as their battle cry. A woman, whom Vane recognizes as the one he had seen near the burrow, urges the battle on; it ceases at sunrise.

Chapter XII: "Friends and Foes." Vane encounters a group of friendly children (the Little Ones) in the wood, but is captured by an ill-natured giant.

Chapter XIII: "The Little Ones." During the Little Ones' secret visits, Vane learns from Lona, their leader, that they have always lived in the woods, and that the babies are, in fact, always found there. She tells him that some of the children grow indifferent, greedy, and lazy, and eventually grow into bad giants. They then forget what they once were and continue to grow bigger; when they cannot grow bigger, they try to grow fatter, of which they are very proud. Vane comments that it is the same in his world, but that one does not say "fat" there, one says "rich;" just as the growing bigger there is called growing up.

Chapter XIV: "A Crisis." Vane escapes from the giants and sets out for a city where he hopes to find out more about the children and how he can help them. He is warned against its ruler, a witch, who hates the children, and against an ugly woman who lives in the desert, known as the Cat-woman.

Chapter XV: "A Strange Hostess." He awakes in the desert, to find himself guarded by a woman who has turned her face away. She tells him that people call her the Cat-woman, but that it is not her name. Vane has forgotten his own; the Cat-woman, whose real name is Mara, tells him that his real name is written on his forehead, but that it whirls about so that it cannot be read yet. She relates the history of the princess of Bulika, the city to which Vane is traveling. The princess is an evil person, who came from Vane's world, and is a friend of the Prince of the Power of the Air. She taught the people to forego farming and pasturing for trading in precious jewels. Enraged by their having killed a snake, she imprisoned all the waters of the country. Some, however, had managed to escape underground; these continue to nourish the living things left in the land. She keeps her people in terror, yet they think themselves prosperous, happy, and honorable, even as they cheat and hurt one another. An ancient poem has predicted that once the Lovers (the Little Ones) have gone through great troubles and learned their own name, they will fill the land and make the Bags (the giants) their slaves.

Once arrived at her cottage, Mara swathes her face in a white cloth. Vane spends the night there, dreaming of the sexton's house, and waking once to see Mara sending a white animal like a panther off on a mission to Bulika. Next day Mara tells Vane that he will return one day to spend many days and nights in her house. He sees her face at last; it is very beautiful, but shows signs of constant weeping. Once outside her house, Vane can no longer find the door.

Chapter XVI: "A Gruesome Dance." As Vane travels across the desert (beneath which the sound of waters can be heard), his desire "to be something by doing something" grows stronger, and he begins to see that living for oneself alone is a very lonely existence. Passing the night in a forest, he awakes at midnight in what seems to be a ghostly palace inhabited by a crowd of gorgeously dressed men and women, also shadows, who seem alive in every respect, except that their heads are fleshless skulls. Vane wonders whether these ghosts, having in

life "made their faces masks," were now "deprived of those masks, and condemned to go without faces until they repented."⁴ They whirl about in a wild dance, until a beautiful woman appears in the doorway. The shadows stare at a dark spot on her side; she flees, the flesh falls from the bones of the shadowy company, and Vane finds himself alone on his couch of leaves in the forest.

Chapter XVII: "A Grotesque Tragedy." Vane overhears a quarrel between two skeletons who in life had been man and wife. Wondering whether it can ever come right between them, he is answered by the raven, who appears on a bough overhead and turns into the librarian once more. He explains that these skeletons are in hell, and, with respect to advancing on the path to love, they are centuries behind the beings Vane had seen in the ghostly palace. The latter can dress themselves, although they cannot retain their flesh for long; but eventually they will develop faces, "for every grain of truthfulness adds a fiber to the show of their humanity." Mr. Raven warns Vane never to trust a person who has deceived him, and not to do anything such a person asks him to do; if he forgets, some evil that is good for him will follow; if he remembers, some evil that is not good for him will not follow.

Chapter XVIII: "Dead or Alive?" Vane discovers the terribly emaciated body of a woman in the forest. Desperately longing for human companionship, he tries in every way to revive the spark of life, bathing her for days in a warm stream nearby. Her hand remains clasped on something, and there is, for a moment, a discoloration on her left side.

Chapter XIX: "The White Leech." Vane begins to lose blood from the bites of a mysterious creature who visits him during the night. At length the lady revives, and claims she has saved him from a white leech. Learning the circumstances of her own rescue, she is mortified rather than grateful. He has compelled her to live and put her to shame, acts which she considers unpardonable.

Chapter XX: "Gone!--But How?" Vane follows the woman despite her scorn and contempt. That night she feeds on his blood again. He sees her change into a spotted animal and head swiftly away. A second creature, pure white, streaks past after her.

Chapter XXI: "The Fugitive Mother." Vane learns from a woman who has just rescued her baby from the spotted leopardess that the princess of Bulika kills babies because of a prophecy that a baby will be her death.

⁴Cf. the title of C. S. Lewis' novel Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold.

Chapter XXII: "Bulika." Vane, realizing that he is responsible for having revived an evil woman, and beginning to suspect the vampirish nature of the creature, as well as her close relationship with the spotted leopard, presses on to find out how he may be of assistance to the Little Ones. He finds the inhabitants of Bulika to be idle, rude, and unkind to the poor, and catches his first glimpse of the Shadow, who is followed by a leopardess.

Chapter XXIII: "A Woman of Bulika." Vane learns that in Bulika it is a disgrace to work, and there is stern class distinction. The princess has only recently returned, and her leopardess already roams the streets.

Chapter XXIV: "The White Leopardess." Vane tries to stop a white leopardess which is carrying off a baby, but Mara takes the child. This leopardess acts in a friendly manner towards Vane, keeping him warm throughout a cold night spent in the open air. It seems to Vane that he must have some power with, if not over, the princess, since he saved her life, and he is more than ever determined to seek her out.

Chapter XXV: "The Princess." Vane enters the princess' castle, where he finds a spotted leopardess in a cage. He himself is followed by the white leopardess, which ensures him easy passage into the princess' presence. Her behavior is now as courteous as before it was rude and contemptuous. She tells him that she is thousands of years old, and has at last found in him someone worthy of her. In answer to his question as to how she had come to be in the deathlike state in which he had originally found her, she inadvertently reveals that she had been in cat form when she had bounded over the warm stream; she attributes her nearly dying to a spell cast by another woman. Vane sees a glove on her left hand and knows that, inside, the hand is clenched hard. He is tempted to love her, but is recalled to himself by the roar of a leopardess, which he knows to be the white one; he is struck by the fear which the sound arouses in the princess.

Chapter XXVI: "A Battle Royal." Vane realizes from the princess' slip of the tongue that the warm stream had disenchanting her from her leopardess form and left her prostrate on the bank. She had been in pursuit of the Little Ones, and he had saved their enemy's life. He awakes later to find that the princess had been feeding on his blood again while he slept. Following her out of the palace, he sees her, again in cat form, accompanying the Shadow to a house where Vane had been refused shelter the night before. The spotted leopardess steals a baby, but is attacked and defeated by the white leopardess, which carries the baby off.

Chapter XXVII: "The Silent Fountain." When Vane rejoins the princess in the palace, the blood of her battle wounds has dried; she lies to him, that one of the Cat-woman's creatures had attacked her before she could strike. Vane realizes that the princess is the same woman that had urged on the ghostly fight in the Evil Wood (ch. xi) and been stared at by the skull-headed dancers (ch. xvi). She asks him to climb a tree to fetch a blossom that would cure her wounds;

pitying her, he does so, only to find himself, when near the top, freezing cold, and unable to keep a steady hold. He falls, drenched through, and finds himself . . .

Chapter XXVIII: "I Am Silenced." . . . lying in the fountain basin on the lawn of his estate back in the "real" world. Mr. Raven pulls him out, reminding him that he had warned him not to do anything for anyone he distrusted. Had Vane accepted Raven's original invitation, he would have known the right way to go about helping the Little Ones. As it is, he has gone about it entirely the wrong way. He should have stayed with them and brought them to know what water is, by digging wells into the underground streams he had heard. Instead, he has tried to overprotect them.

Chapter XXIX: "The Persian Cat." Mr. Raven tells Vane that the princess has followed them into Vane's world, in the shape of a magnificent Persian cat. In order to make her reveal herself, he takes the half-volume, now whole, from the door in the library and begins to read aloud from it, in a language Vane has never heard, but which he understands immediately, a poem about a woman who had allowed herself to fall from a state of beauty and blessedness to one of life-in-death. The cat howls in agony at hearing the tale. Mr. Raven addresses her as Lilith⁵ and tells Vane that she had been his first wife and borne him a child, but that she had gone over to the Shadow and now lives on the blood, lives, and souls of men. He predicts that Lilith's hated daughter will one day save her. Vane understands that Mr. Raven is Adam, and his wife, Eve, and that both, having repented, minister in the house of the dead. Raven/Adam tells Lilith that the dark spot on her side must eat through to her heart and destroy her beauty. She refuses to repent.

Chapter XXX: "Adam Explains." Adam reveals that Lona, the leader of the Little Ones, is Lilith's hated daughter. Although Vane feels that he should go to the Little Ones' protection, since he is responsible for having saved Lilith's life, Adam tells him he must first sleep in his house. They reenter the other world through the mirror, and Lilith, in leopardess-form, also darts through.

Chapter XXXI: "The Sexton's Old Horse." Adam shows Vane the magnificent horse that will carry him to the Little Ones in the morning. Eager to ride the beautiful creature, and impatient with Adam's warning that he must sleep first or bring evil on the Little Ones, Vane gallops off in pursuit of the spotted leopardess. The horse has magnificent speed, but when the moon, setting suddenly, as it does in this world, leaves them in darkness, he fails to clear a jump properly and is killed.

Chapter XXXII: "The Lovers and the Bags." Vane is attacked by wolves, which are driven off by a horde of cats; these scratch and

⁵First mention of the name.

chastise him all night, but drive him along a safe road till morning, when they disappear. Vane falls into the giants' hands once more, but is ultimately rescued by the Little Ones in a surprise attack on the giants.

Chapter XXXIII: "Lona's Narrative." The Little Ones have begun to grow up, and have learned, with the help of the forest animals, how to put the giants to rout. Vane learns that the white leopardess has already driven the spotted one away from the children once.

Chapter XXXIV: "Preparation." Vane is in love with Lona, but does not tell her that her mother is Lilith. The Little Ones are mounting an attack against the evil princess of Bulika and hope to find their real mothers in the city--the mothers who had had to leave them in the forest to prevent Lilith from killing them.

Chapters XXXV and XXXVI: "The Little Ones in Bulika" and "Mother and Daughter." The Little Ones, mounted on various wild animals, and with Vane and Lona at their head, come to Bulika. Lilith awaits them with fear; the dark spot on her side has been growing larger. Lona runs up to her, calling her mother; Lilith dashes her to the floor and kills her. In her moment of triumph, Lilith reverts to the wasted, wild-eyed being she had been when Vane first found her. Vane and the Little Ones leave Bulika, with Lilith as their prisoner.

Chapter XXXVII: "The Shadow." Some of the children explain why they ran away from the fighting in Bulika: a great black shadow had terrified them. When he had overshadowed them, he seemed to enter into them and fill them with hatred of the others. Now, however, he has probably gone "home into the night where there is no moon."

Chapter XXXVIII: "To the House of Bitterness." Vane brings Lilith and the dead Lona to Mara's house. He reassures the children, who think of Mara as a fearful cat-woman, that she is neither frightful nor ugly, and that, if she should ever hurt them, it would only be for their own good, and not out of unkindness. She takes charge of Lilith, whom she must chastise in order to save her. One of the children pleads with her not to cause Lilith too much pain; she unmuffles her face to let him see her true visage, and he loses all fear in delight.

Chapter XXXIX: "That Night." That night it seems to the Little Ones that something silent and terrible is taking place in Mara's house: the house quivers in the wind; the sound of invisible cats swarm through the house, scratching. What is actually taking place is the chastisement, surrender, and salvation of Lilith. Mara attempts first to persuade her to lay aside wickedness, but Lilith refuses to do other than what she herself desires, maintaining that she was never made by any creator. Since she will not willingly or gently forsake her pride, Mara begins a process of purification through suffering which forces Lilith to see herself as she really is. An incandescent worm enters the dark spot on her side, piercing to her secret thoughts; the first step away from self-deceit is taken. Lilith is horrified at the vision of her own evil, and acknowledges that she

has been created by something outside herself, but she now blames that creator for what she has become. She is forced to look deeper into her soul and to realize that she has made herself into a being so empty and removed from the source of life and true freedom that she is, as it were, negation made palpable. A vision of the contrast between the hideous being she has become, and the resplendent being God intended her to be, breaks her will. However, she insists that she is unable to make the final gesture of submission and open her claw-like, clenched right hand. She then undergoes the last trial: to be brought to full realization of what eternal death-in-life and utter aloneness is, and to realize that she has fashioned this fate for herself. What she clenches her hand on so tightly is nothingness. She now submits entirely, but only wants to die; Mara tells her she will die out of death into life. Mara will take her to her father's house; Mara, the Lady of Sorrow, is the daughter of Raven/Adam and Eve.

Chapter XL: "The House of Death." The Little Ones see rain for the first time and the tears of Lilith's repentance, which Mara describes as rivers "'so clean that they make the whole world clean.'" Lilith cannot remain in Mara's house, however, for she would not "'keep good'" there. The whole company, including Mara, set out for Mr. Raven's house, where Lilith will get the help she needs to open her hand, clenched for a thousand years. Their way lies through the bad burrow; the monsters which rise from it frighten only Lilith. The Little Ones do not notice the deformities, and when Mara's white leopardess springs at the monsters, they prove to be only phantoms. Arriving at length at Raven/Adam's house, Lilith is wary of him, her first husband. She refuses his offer of bread and wine, wishing only for death and escape from the Shadow. Adam explains that the death she will undergo is not a journey into nothingness, but one out of corruption, a waking that is a dying into true life. The Shadow cannot enter the house, although he too must one day come to Adam's house to sleep; and he and Lilith will be the last to waken. Lilith cannot sleep until she opens her hand and yields up that which is "'not [hers]" to give or to withhold.'" Unable to do so, she requests Adam to cut it off, which he does with the sword which the angel gave him when he⁶ left the gate of paradise. Lilith can sleep at last, and the process of healing begins at once. The Little Ones also lie down to sleep. Lona sleeps already on a couch next to Lilith.

Chapter XLI: "I Am Sent." Vane carries out Adam's instruction to bury Lilith's hand on the spot where the sound of the underground waters is loudest. This time he obeys Adam's instruction to the letter, neither laying the hand down, nor looking back, nor speaking until he has buried the hand. He is successful, although the Shadow sends phantom forms of Lilith, Mara, and a troop of armed men to try to deceive and frighten him.

⁶In Milton, the archangel Michael. Cf. Genesis.iii.24.

Chapter XLIII: "I Sleep the Sleep." The waters now flow through the land, and Vane returns to Adam's house, to be given a place to sleep. Lona comes to him as if walking in her sleep. She leads him to the couch beside her and his earthly father and mother. Adam, Eve, and Mara give him bread and wine, and Eve sings a little verse about the one home to which all paths lead;⁷ Vane sleeps.

Chapter XLIII: "The Dreams That Came." In his dreams, time seems both to last for centuries, and yet to flit by in a second. All the wrongs he has ever committed return to memory, and he confesses and atones for each and all to the persons he has wronged; love possesses him. Then it seems to him that he awakes alone in the house of the dead and rushes out to find the others. The land is beautiful with the sight of the waters he has released. Adam appears and tells him that he is only dreaming that he has left the house of the dead. Vane then dreams that he is travelling through the land; in the dream he willfully rolls himself into a pit, knowing that this usually wakes him. He finds himself back in his earthly house, and for days cannot find his way back through the mirror in the garret.

Chapter XLIV: "The Waking." It seems to Vane that eventually he sleeps and awakes to find himself back in the house of the dead, with Lona awake beside him. Adam tells them that, now that the dying is over, they must live with all their strength, growing ever upward. Vane recognizes Mara as "'the shepherd whose wolves hunt the wandering sheep home ere the shadow rise and the night grow dark'"; Adam and Eve seem to be the angels of the resurrection, and Mara the Magdalene at the sepulchre. The Little Ones awake at the sound of a golden cock crowing, and they, with Vane and Lona, leave Adam's house in great joy.

Chapter XLV: "The Journey Home." They travel through a landscape where nothing casts a shadow and where all things interchange light. Vane is suffused with a sense of being at one with all created things and their common source; life is joyous, a "cosmic holiday." The bad burrow is quiet, covered by the waters of a lovely lake. At its bottom lie the brood of monsters, quiescent but not dead, their existence never to end as long as men and women of unwholesome mind exist. The company follows a river through the blossoming land.

Chapter XLVI: "The City." The river leads them to a mountain crowned by a celestial city. The children and their animals run up a flight of stairs and are welcomed into the city. The river is seen to flow from a throne situated above the city. Lona and Vane climb the last stairs leading to the throne and pass through a cloud; a hand takes Vane's hand, draws him to a door with a golden lock, and, when the door opens, pushes him gently through. He is once more alone in

⁷Identical with one sung by the lady who frees Anodos from the tower (Phantastes, ch. xxii).

his library.

* * * * *

Chapter XLVII: "The 'Endless Ending.'" Having finished the account of his adventures, Vane is not sure whether he is not still dreaming in the house of death, and that he has only dreamed of waking and finding the eternal city. He has never sought the mirror again, however, since he will not try to return to the place whence the hand dismissed him. He lives on in the "real" world, with the feeling that another world is about to break through the commonplace surface of things. But, awake or asleep, he waits.

Appendix II

List of Chief Works of George MacDonald (1824-1905)¹

- 1855 Within and Without: A Dramatic Poem
 1857 Poems
 1858 Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women
 1863 David Elginbrod
 1864 Adela Cathcart
 1864 The Portent: A Story of the Inner Vision of the Highlanders, Commonly Called "The Second Sight"
 1865 Alec Forbes of Howglen
 1867 Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood
 1867 Dealings with the Fairies
 1867 The Disciple and Other Poems
 1867 Unspoken Sermons: 1st Series
 1868 Guild Court
 1868 Robert Falconer
 1868 The Seaboard Parish
 1870 The Miracles of Our Lord
 1871 At the Back of the North Wind
 1871 Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood
 1872 The Princess and the Goblin
 1872 The Vicar's Daughter
 1872 Wilfrid Cumbermede: An Autobiographical Story
 1873 Gutta Percha Willie: The Working Genius
 1874 England's Antiphon
 1875 Malcolm
 1875 The Wise Woman: A Parable
 1876 Thomas Wingfold, Curate
 1876 St. George and St. Michael
 1876 Exotics: A Translation of the Spiritual Songs of Novalis, the Hymn-Book of Luther, and other Poems from the German and Italian
 1877 The Marquis of Lossie
 1879 Sir Gibbie
 1879 Paul Faber, Surgeon
 1880 A Book of Strife in the Form of The Diary of an Old Soul
 1881 Mary Marston

¹ Extracted from Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife, pp. 563-565, with a few emendations. For an exhaustive list of MacDonald's publications, as well as of articles on MacDonald, see John Malcolm Bulloch, "A Bibliography of George MacDonald," Aberdeen University Library Bulletin, V (February 1925), 679-747. A few emendations are given in M/uriel/ Hutton, "Writers for Children: 4--George MacDonald," The School Librarian, XII, 3 (December 1964), 244-254.

- 1882 Castle Warlock, A Homely Romance
 1882 Weighed and Wanting
 1882 The Gifts of the Christ Child, and Other Tales
 1882 Orts
 1883 Donal Grant
 1883 A Threefold Cord: Poems by Three Friends, ed.
 George MacDonald / one of the three /
 1883 The Princess and Curdie
 1885 Unspoken Sermons. 2nd Series
 1885 The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke: A
 Study with the Text of the Folio of 1623
 1886 What's Mine's Mine
 1887 Home Again
 1888 The Elect Lady
 1889 Unspoken Sermons. 3rd Series
 1890 A Rough Shaking
 1891 There and Back
 1891 The Flight of the Shadow
 1891 A Cabinet of Gems, Cut and Polished by Sir Philip
 Sidney, Now for Their More Radiance Presented
 Without Their Setting by George MacDonald
 1892 The Hope of the Gospel
 1893 Heather and Snow
 1895 Lilith: A Romance
 1897 Salted with Fire

Appendix III. Chief Works of Charles Williams

Poetry

Novels

Literary Criticism

Plays

1912	<u>The Silver Stair</u>			
1917	<u>Poems of Conformity</u>			
1919				
1920	<u>Divorce</u>			
1921				
1924	<u>Windows of Night</u>			
1925		(<u>Shadows of Ecstasy</u> written ²)		
1927				
1929				<u>A Myth of Sha</u>
1930	<u>Heroes and Kings</u>	<u>War in Heaven</u> published	<u>Poetry at Present</u>	
1931		<u>Many Dimensions</u> published <u>The Place of the Lion</u> published		<u>Three Plays</u> / <u>The Chaste Wa</u> <u>The Rite of t</u>
1932		<u>The Greater Trumps</u> published	<u>The English Poetic Mind</u>	
1933		<u>Shadows of Ecstasy</u> published	<u>Reason and Beauty in</u> <u>the Poetic Mind</u>	
1934		(<u>Descent into Hell</u> completed) ³		

¹Bibliographies of works by and about Charles Williams are given in: Alice Mary Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, Robert Hale Limited, 1959), pp. 215-216; John Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams, No. 63 in the Writers and Their Work Series published for the British Council and the National Book League (London, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1955), pp. 43-44 (bibliography by Linden Huddleston); Anne Ridler, bibliography on Charles Williams in "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, by Charles Williams (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 196-199; Mary McDermott Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay, in the Contemporary Writers in Christian Perspective series (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 47-48; Mary McDermott Shideler, The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 223-234; and Elizabeth Wright, "Theology in the Novels of Charles Williams," Stanford University

Honors Essays
of book review
given in Lawr
Papers of the

²Shid

³Daws

Works of Charles Williams (1886-1945)¹

	Plays	Biography and History	Theology	Miscellaneous (Selected)
			<u>Christian Symbolism</u> (parts)	
				<u>Poems of Home and Overseas</u> (anthology)
				<u>A Book of Victorian Narrative Verse</u> (anthology)
	<u>A Myth of Shakespeare</u>			
				<u>Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins</u> (introduction)
	<u>Three Plays / The Witch, The Chaste Wanton, and The Rite of the Passion</u> 7			
<u>Mind</u>				
<u>in</u>		<u>Bacon</u> <u>A Short Life of Shakespeare</u>		
		<u>James I</u>		<u>The Ring and the Book</u> (retold)

Alice
ited,
ers and
eague
en
of the
s,
Essay,
Michi-
eler,
(Grand
liza-
ity

Honors Essays in Humanities, No. VI (1962), 59. In addition, a comprehensive list of book reviews which Williams wrote for various newspapers and periodicals is given in Lawrence R. Dawson, Jr., "A Checklist of Reviews by Charles Williams," Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 55 (Second Quarter 1961), 100-117.

²Shideler, Charles Williams: A Critical Essay, p. 14.

³Dawson, "Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction," 26.

Poetry	Novels	Literary Criticism	Plays
1935			
1936			<u>Thomas Cra</u> <u>Canterbu</u>
1937	<u>Descent into Hell</u> published		
1938	<u>Taliessin through</u> <u>Logres</u>		
1939			<u>Judgement</u> <u>Chelmsfo</u>
1940		<u>The English Poems of John Milton</u> (introduction, Oxford World's Classics series)	
1941			
1942			
1943		<u>The Figure of Beatrice</u>	
1944	<u>The Region of the</u> <u>Summer Stars</u>		
1945	<u>All Hallows' Eve</u> published		<u>The House</u> <u>Octopus</u>
1946			
1948			<u>Seed of Ad</u> <u>Other Pl</u>
1958			
1963			<u>Collected</u>

⁴Chiefly reprints of selected essays, articles, reviews, and pamphlets, cutting across the categories of literary and poetic criticism, biography, and theology.

Plays	Biography and History	Theology	Miscellaneous (Selected)
	<u>Rochester</u>		<u>The New Book of English Verse</u> (ed.)
<u>Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury</u>	<u>Queen Elizabeth</u>		<u>The Story of the Aeneid</u>
	<u>Henry VII Stories of Great Names</u>		
		<u>He Came Down From Heaven</u>	
<u>Judgement at Chelmsford</u>		<u>The Descent of the Dove</u>	<u>The Passion of Christ</u>
<u>Milton World's</u>			
	<u>Witchcraft</u>	<u>Religion and Love in Dante</u> <u>The Way of Exchange</u>	<u>The New Christian Year</u> (anthology)
		<u>The Forgiveness of Sins</u>	
			<u>Letters of Evelyn Underhill</u> (intro- duction)
<u>The House of the Octopus</u>			<u>The Duchess of Malfi</u> (intro- duction)
	<u>Flecker of Dean Close</u>		
<u>Seed of Adam and Other Plays</u>			"The Figure of Arthur" in <u>Arthurian Torso</u>
			"The Image of the City" and <u>Other Essays</u> ³⁴
<u>Collected Plays</u>			

s,
d

Bibliography

A. Primary Materials: Editions Used

MacDonald, George. Lilith: A Romance. London: Chatto & Windus, 1895.¹

----- . Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858.

----- . Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women. London: Arthur C. Fifield, 1905. Preface by Greville MacDonald.²

----- . Phantastes. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1940. Introduction by Greville MacDonald.³

----- . The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald: Lilith [and] Phantastes, ed. Anne Fremantle. New York: The Noonday Press, 1954. Introduction by W. H. Auden.

Williams, Charles. All Hallows' Eve. New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1948. Introduction by T. S. Eliot.

----- . Descent into Hell. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1959.

----- . The Greater Trumps. New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1950. Preface by William Lindsay Gresham.

----- . Many Dimensions. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1952.

----- . The Place of the Lion. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1952.

----- . Shadows of Ecstasy. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1965.

----- . War in Heaven. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1947.

¹Quotations from Lilith in this study are from this edition.

²Underlining of an author's name within a bibliographical entry indicates that the preface, introduction, or article in question is also to be considered as an entry.

³Quotations from Phantastes in this study are from this edition.

B. Chief Books and Articles Consulted

- Altomirano, Alberto I. Lo maravilloso en el cuento y la novela. Mexico: Libreria Cosmos, 1937.
- Amis, Kingsley. New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960.
- Annals of English Literature 1475-1950. 2nd edition. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961.
- Anon. Review of Dealings with the Fairies, 'Where more is meant than meets the Ear,' by George MacDonald. The British Quarterly Review, LXVI, XCI (July 1, 1867), 247.
- "Don v. Devil." Time, September 8, 1947, pp. 65-66, 68, and 71-74. (Deals with C. S. Lewis, George MacDonald, and Charles Williams.)
- "George MacDonald." The Outlook, September 30, 1905, pp. 246-247.
- [Child, Harold.] "George MacDonald" [review of George MacDonald and His Wife, by Greville MacDonald]. The Times Literary Supplement, May 29, 1924, pp. 329-330.
- "George MacDonald's Lecture [on Robert Burns]." Cambridge [Massachusetts] Chronicle, October 12, 1872, p. 2.
- "Hamlet: His Character Portrayed--Interesting Lecture by George MacDonald." The New-York Times, May 23, 1873, p. 5.
- "John Milton: Lecture by Mr. George MacDonald, at Association Hall." The New-York Times, May 11, 1873, p. 3.
- "The Late George MacDonald." The Living Age, XXIX, 3199 (October 28, 1905), 254-255.
- "The Lecture Season: George MacDonald on Robert Burns." The Boston Daily Globe, October 17, 1872, p. 8.
- Review of Lilith, by George MacDonald. The Academy, October 12, 1895, p. 291.
- Review of Lilith, by George MacDonald. The Athenaeum, November 9, 1895, p. 639.
- Review of Lilith, by George MacDonald. The Critic, A Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts, January 25, 1896, p. 58.
- "Mr. George Mac Donald's Novels." The North British Review, New Series, VI (September 1866), 1-36.

- ". "[Charles Williams:] The Philosopher-Poet." The Times Literary Supplement, February 6, 1959, p. 71.
- ". "Return of the Grail," review of War in Heaven, by Charles Williams. Time, October 10, 1949, p. 110.
- ". "Robert Burns: Lecture by George MacDonald at Association Hall, Last Night." The New-York Times, January 22, 1873, p. 5.
- ". "Scottish Sage," review of George Macdonald: An Anthology, ed. C. S. Lewis. Time, June 2, 1947, pp. 79-80.
- ". "Sophisticated Sermon," review of The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams. Time, April 10, 1950, pp. 100 and 102.
- ". "The Supernatural in Nineteenth-Century Fiction." The Edinburgh Review, CCCCIV (April 1903), 395-418.
- ". "Theological Thriller," review of All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams. Time, November 8, 1948, pp. 88-89.
- ". "A Vial of the Apocalypse," review of Descent into Hell, by Charles Williams. Time, April 4, 1949, pp. 110 and 112.
- ". "Works by George MacDonald." (Littell's) Living Age, March 21, 1868, pp. 707-724.
- Arnold-Forster, Mary. Studies in Dreams. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.
- Auden, W. H. "Afterword, for a New Edition of George MacDonald's The Golden Key." The Horn Book Magazine, XLIII, 2 (April 1967), 176-177.
- ". "By the Grace of God and Henry Tudor, Archbishop." Holiday, August 1967, pp. 99-100 and 102.
- ". "Charles Williams: A Review Article." The Christian Century, May 2, 1956, pp. 552-554.
- ". Collected Longer Poems. New York: Random House, 1969.
- ". The Enchafed Flood, or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea. New York: Random House, 1950.
- ". New Year Letter. London: Faber and Faber, 1941.
- ". See also under Primary Materials: MacDonald, George. The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald.
- Bailey, J. O. Pilgrims through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction. New York: Argus Books, Inc., 1947.

- Beaumont, Ernest. "Charles Williams and the Power of Eros." The Dublin Review, No. 479 (Spring 1959), 61-74.
- Bernheimer, Richard. Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952.
- Birkhead, Edith. The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1920.
- Bleiler, E. F. See Hoffmann, E. T. A. The Best Tales of Hoffmann.
- and T. E. Dikty, eds. Imagination Unlimited. New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952.
- Blenkin, Hugh. "Two Ways to God--or One? A Study of the Way of Affirmation with reference to the works of Charles Williams." Theology, LVII, 408 (June 1954), 216-222.
- Borrow, Antony. "The Affirmation of Images: An Examination of the Novels of Charles Williams." Nine (Summer/Autumn 1952), 325-354.
- Bottacchiari, Rodolfo. "Romanticismo e realismo in E. T. A. Hoffmann." La Cultura, I, Fasc. 6 (15 Aprile 1922), 245-268.
- Bousquet, Jacques. Les Thèmes du rêve dans la littérature romantique (France, Angleterre, Allemagne): Essai sur la naissance et l'évolution des images. Paris: Didier, 1964.
- Bowker, R. R. "London as a Literary Centre." Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXXVII, CCCCLVII (June 1888), 14 and 17-18.
- Brady, Charles A. Review of Many Dimensions, All Hallows' Eve, and Descent into Hell, by Charles Williams. Renascence, II, 1 (Autumn 1949), 61-65.
- Brook, Peter (?) "Comments on the Play" [A Midsummer Night's Dream, Royal Shakespeare Company production], Playbill, VIII, 2 (February 1971), 23.
- Brown, Robert McAfee. "Charles Williams: Lay Theologian." Theology Today, X, 2 (July 1953), 212-229.
- Bulloch, John Malcolm. "A Bibliography of George MacDonald." Aberdeen University Library Bulletin, V, 30 (February 1925), 679-747.
- Bundy, Murray Wright. "The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought." University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XII, 2-3 (May-August 1927), 183-472 (1-280).
- Butler, E. M. The Myth of the Magus. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

- Carlyle, Thomas. German Romance: Specimens of Its Chief Authors. Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1841.
- Carroll, Lewis [Charles Lutwidge Dodgson]. The Diaries of Lewis Carroll. 2 vols. Ed. Roger Lancelyn Green. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Carter, Lin. "Beyond the Gates of Dream." Introduction to Phantastes, by George MacDonald. New York: Ballantine Books, 1970.
- ". "The Land Beyond the Hidden Door." Introduction to Lilith, by George MacDonald. New York: Ballantine Books, 1969.
- Case, Shirley Jackson. The Origins of Christian Supernaturalism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946.
- Cavaliero, Glen. "The Way of Affirmation: A Study of the Writings of Charles Williams." Church Quarterly Review, CLVII, 322 (January-March 1956), 19-28.
- von Chamisso, Adalbert. Peter Schlemihl's Wundersame Geschichte. Introduction and notes by Sylvester Primer. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1901.
- ". The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl, tr. William Howitt. New York: Burgess and Stringer, 1844.
- ". The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl: The Man Who Lost His Shadow, tr. Frederic Henry Hedge, ed. William R. Alger. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1899.
- ". The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl, tr. Theodore Bolton. New York: B. W. Huebsch, Inc., 1923.
- Chesterton, G. K. A Handful of Authors. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953.
- ". All I Survey. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1933.
- ". All Is Grist. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1931.
- ". All Things Considered. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1926.
- ". As I Was Saying. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936.
- ". Avowals and Denials: A Book of Essays. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1934.
- ". Come To Think of It . . . London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1930.
- ". Generally Speaking. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1928.

- . "George MacDonald." The [London] Daily News,
September 23, 1905, p. 6.
- . G. K. Chesterton: A Selection from His Non-Fictional Prose. Selected by W. H. Auden. London: Faber and Faber, 1970.
- . The Glass Walking-Stick and Other Essays from The Illustrated London News 1905-1936. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1955.
- . The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1963.
- . The Napoleon of Notting Hill. New York: Devin-Adair, 1950.
- . On Running After One's Hat. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1933.
- . The Spice of Life and Other Essays. Beaconsfield: Darwen Finlayson, 1964.
- . The Uses of Diversity. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921.
- . See also MacDonald, Greville. George MacDonald and His Wife.
- Chiari, Joseph. Realism and Imagination. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960.
- Colville, K. N. Fame's Twilight: Studies of Nine Men of Letters. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1924 (?)
- Conquest, Robert. "The Art of the Enemy." Essays in Criticism, VII, 1 (January 1957), 42-55. (Replies to this article may be found in Essays and Criticism, VII, 3 [July 1957], 330-343.)
- Crago, H. "Charles Dickens and George MacDonald: A Note." Dickens Studies, V (May 1969), 86-90.
- Craik, Sir Henry. "Sixty Years Ago: Scottish Circles in London, Interesting Personalities." Glasgow Herald, December 2, 1922.
- Davidson, Clifford. "Williams' All Hallows' Eve: The Way of Perversity." Renascence, XX, 2 (Winter 1963), 86-93.
- Davies, R. T. "Charles Williams and Romantic Experience." Etudes anglaises, VIII, 4 (Octobre-Décembre 1955), 289-298.
- Dawson, Lawrence R., Jr. "A Checklist of Reviews by Charles Williams." Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 55 (Second Quarter 1961), 100-117.

- ". "A Lesser Known Star of the Anglican Pleiades," review of "The Image of the City" and Other Essays, by Charles Williams. The Commonweal, March 27, 1959, pp. 671-672.
- ". "Reflections of Charles Williams on Fiction." Ball State Teachers College Forum, V, 1 (Winter 1964), 23-29.
- Dean, F. R. "George MacDonald." Papers of the Manchester Literary Club, LXVII (1948-1949), 61-78.
- de la Mare, Walter. Behold This Dreamer: Of Reverie, Night, Sleep, Dream, Love-Dreams, Nightmare, Death, the Unconscious, the Imagination, Divination, the Artist, and Kindred Subjects. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1939.
- Douglass, Jane. "Dealings with the Fairies: An Appreciation of George MacDonald." The Horn Book Magazine, XXXVII, 4 (August 1961) 327-335.
- Dow, R. P. "Studies in the Old Testament: I. The Vengeful Brood of Lilith and Samael." Bulletin of the Brooklyn Entomological Society, XII, 1 (April 1917), 1-9.
- Downey, June E. Creative Imagination: Studies in the Psychology of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.
- Dunn, Stephen P. "Mr. White, Mr. Williams, and the Matter of Britain." The Kenyon Review, 24, 2 (Spring 1962), 363-371.
- Eliot, T. S. Letter to David W. Evans. Dated between August 20, 1953 and November 30, 1955. Quoted in "Autograph Letters, Manuscripts, Documents," Catalogue 54 (1970?) of items offered for sale by Kenneth W. Rendell, Inc., 62 Bristol Road, Somerville, Mass., p. 9.
- ". Obituary notice for Charles Williams. [London] Times, May 17, 1945, p. 7.
- ". "The Significance of Charles Williams." The Listener, 19 December 1946, pp. 894-895.
- ". See also under Primary Materials: Williams, Charles. All Hallows' Eve.
- Elkind, David. "Freud, Jung and the Collective Unconscious." The New York Times Magazine, October 4, 1970, pp. 24-25, 94-102, and 106.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una. Masters of Reality. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1942.
- Empson, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity. London: Chatto and Windus, 1947.

- Encyclopedia Britannica. (1) 1966 ed. Article on "Lilith."
(2) 1967 ed. Article on "Erlkönig."
- Evans, David W. "T. S. Eliot, Charles Williams and the Sense of the Occult." Accent (Spring 1954), pp. 148-155.
- Evans, Joan. Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance Particularly in England. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1922.
- Every, George. "Charles Williams: II. The City and the Substitutions." Theology, LI (April 1948), 145-150.
- . Poetry and Personal Responsibility: An Interim Report on Contemporary Literature. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1949.
- Fordham, Frieda. An Introduction to Jung's Psychology. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968.
- Franklin, H. Bruce. Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Freidus, A. S. "A Bibliography of Lilith." Bulletin of the Brooklyn Entomological Society, XII, 1 (April 1917), 9-13.
- Fremantle, Anne. "Within and Without: George MacDonald." The Commonweal, November 23, 1945, pp. 142-146.
- Fuller, Edmund. Books With Men Behind Them. New York: Random House, 1962.
- Furlong, E. J. Imagination. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961.
- Gardner, Helen. "Clive Staples Lewis." Proceedings of the British Academy, LI, 417-428.
- Geddes, W. D. "George MacDonald as a Poet." Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXLIX (March 1891), 361-370.
- "Génet" [Janet Flanner]. "Letter from Paris," review of Le Roi des Aulnes, by Michel Tournier. The New Yorker, March 13, 1971, pp. 116-117.
- Gibb, Jocelyn, ed. Light on C. S. Lewis. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965. Contains essays by Owen Barfield and others and a bibliography of C. S. Lewis' writings by Walter Hooper.
- Gigrich, John P. An Immortality for Its Own Sake: A Study of the Concept of Poetry in the Writings of Charles Williams. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954.
- GK's: A Miscellany of the First 500 Issues of G. K.'s Weekly. London: Rich & Cowan Ltd., 1934.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. The Parable [Das Märchen], tr. Alice Raphael. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963.
- Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle, I. Paris: V^{ve} P. Larousse & Cie, 1865(?) Article on "Aune" ["/Alder"/].

- Gray, Mary. "A Brief Sketch of the Life of George MacDonald." The Bookman, XXIX, 170 (November 1905), 61-67.
- Green, Roger Lancelyn. C. S. Lewis. London: The Bodley Head, 1963.
- Gresham, William Lindsay. "The Nature of Reality," review of The Place of the Lion, by Charles Williams. The Saturday Review of Literature, March 24, 1951, p. 14.
- . See also under Primary Materials: Williams, Charles. The Greater Trumps.
- Grierson, H. J. C. "George MacDonald." The Aberdeen University Review, XII, 34 (November 1924), 1-13.
- Hadfield, Alice Mary. An Introduction to Charles Williams. London: Robert Hale Limited, 1959.
- . See also Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination; and Huttar, Charles A., ed. Imagination and the Spirit.
- Hanshell, H. D. "Charles Williams: A Heresy Hunt." The Month, New Series, 9, 1 (January 1953), 14-25.
- Harrington, Michael. "From the New Nineteenth Century." New Republic, December 6, 1954, pp. 27-28.
- Heath-Stubbs, John. Charles Williams. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955.
- . "Charles Williams: Spiritual Power and its Temptations." Time and Tide, 1 May 1948, pp. 451-452.
- . "The Poetic Achievement of Charles Williams." Poetry (London), 3, 11 (September-October 1947), 42-45.
- . "The Posthumous Career of Charles Williams." The New Republic, June 11, 1966, pp. 19-21.
- . See also Williams, Charles. Collected Plays.
- Heppenstall, Rayner. Review of Arthurian Torso, by Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis. The New Statesman and Nation, May 21, 1949, pp. 532 and 534.
- Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969. Introduction by Mark R. Hillegas and containing essays by, among others, Alice Mary Hadfield ("The Relationship of Charles Williams' Working Life to His Fiction"), W. R. Irwin ("Christian Doctrine and the Tactics of Romance: The Case of Charles Williams"), Patricia Meyer Spacks ("Charles Williams: The Fusions of Fiction"), Chad Walsh ("C. S. Lewis: The Man and the Mystery"), and George P. Winship, Jr. ("The Novels of Charles Williams").

- Hines, Joyce. "The Arthurian and the Grail Themes in the Poetry of Charles Williams." M. A. thesis, Columbia University, 1952 (unpublished).
- Hoffmann, E. T. A. The Best Tales of Hoffmann. New York: Dover Publications, 1967. Introduction by E. F. Bleiler.
- Holbeach, Henry. "George Mac Donald." The Contemporary Review, XIX (December 1871), 37-54.
- Horder, W. Garrett. "George MacDonald: A Nineteenth-Century Seer." Review of Reviews, XXXII, 6 (December 1905), 686-688.
- Household Words. A Weekly Journal. Conducted by Charles Dickens. Vols. XVIII (June 19, 1858-Christmas 1858) and XIX (January 1, 1859-May 28, 1859).
- Huneker, James. Visionaries. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.
- Huttar, Charles A. "Charles Williams, Novelist and Prophet." The Gordon Review, X, 2 (Winter 1967), 51-75.
- , ed. Imagination and the Spirit: Essays in Literature and the Christian Faith presented to Clyde S. Kilby. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971. Contains essays by, among others, Alice Mary Hadfield ("Coinherence, Substitution and Exchange in Charles Williams' Poetry and Poetry-Making") and Glenn Edward Sadler ("The Fantastic Imagination in George MacDonald").
- Hutton, Muriel. "Sour Grapeshot: Fault-finding in A Centennial Bibliography of George MacDonald." Aberdeen University Review, XLI, 2 (Autumn 1965), 85-88.
- , "Unfamiliar Libraries XIII: The George MacDonald Collection--Brander Library, Huntly," The Book Collector, 17, 1 (Spring 1968), 13-25.
- , "Writers for Children: 4--George MacDonald." The School Librarian and School Library Review, XII, 3 (December 1964), 244-254.
- Irwin, W. R. "There and Back Again: The Romances of Williams, Lewis, and Tolkien." The Sewanee Review, LXIX, 4 (Autumn 1961), 566-578.
- , See also Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination.
- Jacobi, Jolande. Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung. New York: Pantheon Books, 1959.
- Johnson, Joseph. George MacDonald: A Biographical and Critical Appreciation. London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1906.

- Jung, C. G. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, tr. R. F. C. Hull. New York: Pantheon Books, 1959.
- . Modern Man in Search of a Soul, tr. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Bayne. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1959.
- Kernahan, Coulson. Wise Men and A Fool. New York: Brentano's, 1901.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard presented by W. H. Auden. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1952.
- Kilby, Clyde S. "Charles Williams' Supernatural Novels." His, XXXI, 6 (March 1971), 24-25 and 32.
- . The Christian World of C. S. Lewis. Appleford, Abingdon, Berkshire, England: Marcham Manor Press, 1965.
- Killen, A. M. "La légende de Lilith et quelques interprétations modernes de cette figure légendaire." Revue de littérature comparée, Douzième Année [1932], 277-311.
- Kingsley, Charles. The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for A Land Baby. New York: Macmillan and Co., n.d.
- Kreeft, Peter. C. S. Lewis: A Critical Essay. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1969.
- Kunitz, Stanley J. and Vineta Colby, eds. Twentieth Century Authors: First Supplement. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1955.
- La Lande, Sister M., S.S.N.D. "Williams' Pattern of Time In Descent into Hell." Renascence, XV, 2 (winter 1963), 88-95.
- Langton, Edward. Satan, A Portrait: A Study of the Character of Satan through All the Ages. London: Skeffington & Son, Ltd., 1946.
- . Supernatural, The Doctrine of Spirits, Angels, and Demons, from the Middle Ages Until the Present Time. London: Rider & Co., 1934.
- Lawlor, John, ed. Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1966.
- Leach, Maria, ed. Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend, I. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949. Articles on "Alder" and "Ash."
- Leavis, F. R. The Common Pursuit. London: Chatto and Windus, 1952.
- Lehner, Ernst and Johanna. Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1960.
- Lennon, Florence Becker. The Life of Lewis Carroll. New York: Collier Books, 1962.

- Lewis, C. S. The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Christian Reflections. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967.
- An Experiment in Criticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- The Great Divorce. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958.
- Letter to Jane Douglass. 3 May 1960. New York Public Library, Berg Collection.
- Letters. Ed. W. H. Lewis. London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1966. With memoir of C. S. Lewis by W. H. Lewis.
- Letters to an American Lady. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969.
- Obituary notice for Charles Williams. The Oxford Magazine, May 24, 1945, p. 265.
- Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966.
- The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity Reason and Romanticism. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956.
- Poems, ed. Walter Hooper. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964.
- A Preface to "Paradise Lost". New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Review of Taliessin through Logres, by Charles Williams. The Oxford Magazine, March 14, 1946, pp. 248-250.
- The Screwtape Letters. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959.
- Spenser's Images of Life, ed. Alistair Fowler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.
- They Asked for a Paper: Papers and Addresses. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962.
- Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956.
- See also MacDonald, George. George Macdonald: An Anthology.
- See also Williams, Charles and C. S. Lewis. Arthurian Torso.

- et al. Essays Presented to Charles Williams. London: Oxford University Press, 1947. Preface by C. S. Lewis.
- Lewis, Naomi. "Dark Dream Country," review of Phantastes and Lilith, by George MacDonald. The Observer Weekend Review, February 3, 1963, p. 23.
- . "George MacDonald," review of The Light Princess, by George MacDonald and The Golden Key, by R. L. Wolff. New Statesman, 10 November 1961, pp. 693-694.
- Lewis, W. H. See Lewis, C. S. Letters.
- Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, comps. A Greek-English Lexicon, I, ed. Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1940(?)
- A Literary History of England. Ed. Albert C. Baugh. 2nd ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967.
- Lochhead, Marion. "A Genius Uncompleted," review of Phantastes and Lilith, by George MacDonald. The Scotsman (Week-end Magazine section), February 9, 1963, p. 5.
- Loomis, Roger Sherman. The Development of Arthurian Romance. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1963.
- . The Grail from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.
- Lovecraft, H. P. Supernatural Horror in Literature. New York: Ben Abramson, 1945.
- Lowes, John Livingstone. The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927.
- MacDonald, George. At the Back of the North Wind. Published in instalments in Good Words for the Young, volumes for 1869 and 1870. London: Strahan & Co.
- "Awakening." The Chicago Pulpit, III (1873), 151-158.
- . David Elginbrod. Boston: Loring, n.d.
- . A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination and on Shakespeare. London: Edwin Dalton, 1908.
- . Donal Grant. Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1883(?)
- . England's Antiphon. London: Macmillan & Co., 1874.
- . Exotics: A Translation of the Spiritual Songs of Novalis, the Hymn-Book of Luther, and other Poems from the German and Italian. London: Strahan & Co., 1876.

- . Fairy Tales. London: Arthur C. Fifield, 1904. Preface by Greville MacDonald.
- . George Macdonald: An Anthology, ed. C. S. Lewis. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948. With preface by C. S. Lewis.
- . The Golden Key. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967.
- . Poems. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1857.
- . The Portent: A Story of the Inner Vision of the Highlanders, Commonly Called "The Second Sight." London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1864.
- . Preface to Letters from Hell, by Valdemar Thisted, given in English by L. W. J. S. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887.
- . The Princess and Curdie. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943.
- . The Princess and the Goblin. New York: Random House, Inc., n.d.
- . Rampolli: Growths from a Long-Planted Root, Being Translations, New and Old, Chiefly from the German; Along With A Year's Diary of An Old Soul. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897.
- . Robert Falconer. Boston: D. Lothrop and Company, n.d.
- . Selections from the Writings of George MacDonald or Helps for Weary Souls. Compiled by J. Dewey. New York: Thomas R. Knox & Co., 1885.
- . There and Back. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., Ltd., 1891.
- . Unspoken Sermons. New York: George Routledge & Sons, n.d.
- . Wilfrid Cumbermede. New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1872.
- MacDonald, Mrs. George [Louisa]. Dramatic Illustrations of Passages from the Second Part of "The Pilgrim's Progress," by John Bunyan, arranged in the year 1871. London: Oxford University Press, 1925.
- MacDonald, Greville. "The Fairy Tale in Education." The Contemporary Review, CIII (April 1913), 491-499.
- . George MacDonald and His Wife. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press Incorporated, 1924. Introduction by G. K. Chesterton.
- . Reminiscences of a Specialist. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1932.

- . See also MacDonald, George. Fairy Tales; and under Primary Materials: MacDonald, George. Phantastes, 1905 and 1940 eds.
- MacDonald, Philip. Guest in the House. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1964.
- MacDonald, Ronald. "George MacDonald: A Personal Note." In Ian MacLaren et al, From A Northern Window. London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1911.
- McLaughlin, Richard. "Amor Vincit Omnia," review of All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams, Saturday Review of Literature, October 23, 1948, pp. 16-17 and 28.
- . "Drama of Belief and Unbelief," review of Shadows of Ecstasy, by Charles Williams. Saturday Review, September 23, 1950, p. 18.
- . "Tarot Trouble," review of The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams. The Saturday Review of Literature, April 8, 1950, p. 19.
- McMichael, Barbara. "Hell is Oneself: An Examination of the Concept of Damnation in Charles Williams' Descent Into Hell." Studies in the Literary Imagination, I, 2 (October 1968), 59-71.
- MacNeice, Louis. Varieties of Parable. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Maeterlinck, Maurice. "Les Disciples à Sais" et les "Fragments" de Novalis. Brussels: Paul Iacomblez, 1895.
- Malory, Sir Thomas. Le Morte d'Arthur. 2 vols. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1961.
- Manlove, C. N. "George MacDonald's Fairy Tales: Their Roots in MacDonald's Thought." Studies in Scottish Literature, VIII, 2 (October 1970), 97-108.
- Maynard, Theodore. Our Best Poets. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922.
- Milton, John. The English Poems of John Milton. London: Oxford University Press, World's Classics series, 1948. Introduction by Charles Williams.
- Moffatt, James. "George MacDonald." The Bookman, XXIX, 170 (November 1905), 59-61.
- Moorman, Charles. Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and T. S. Eliot. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
- . "Myth in the Novels of Charles Williams." Modern Fiction Studies, 3, 4 (Winter 1957-1958), 321-327.

- Morrow, Christine. Le roman irréaliste dans les littératures contemporaines de langues française et anglaise. Paris: Librairie Didier, 1941.
- de la Motte Fouqué, Friedrich. Undine and Sintram and His Companions, trans. and with preface by Rev. Thomas Tracy. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845.
- Murdoch, Iris. The Sovereignty of Good. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.
- Nicoll, W. Robertson. "Dr. George Macdonald." The British Weekly, September 21, 1905, p. 551.
- Nodier, Charles. Contes fantastiques. Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1913.
- Novalis [Friedrich von Hardenberg]. Fragmente, ed. Ernst Kamnitzer. Dresden: Jess Verlag, 1929.
- . Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Roman. Stuttgart: Port Verlag, 1949. Also contains "Das Märchen von Hyazinth und Rosenblütchen aus dem Romanfragment 'Die Lehrlinge zu Sais.'"
- . Henry of Ofterdingen: A Romance from the German of Novalis. Anonymous translation. Cambridge: John Owen, 1842.
- . Hymns to the Night, tr. Mabel Cotterell. London: Phoenix Press, 1948. Introduction and appreciation by August Closs.
- . Schriften, ed. Ludwig Tieck and Fr. Schlegel. 5th ed. Berlin: Verlag von G. Reimer, 1837.
- . Schriften, I, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960.
- O'Connor, John. Father Brown on Chesterton. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938.
- Oman, John. The Natural & the Supernatural. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931.
- Page, Frederick, Anne Ridler, et al. "Charles Williams 1886-1945." Supplement to The Periodical (July 1945), i-iv.
- Parsons, Geoffrey. "The Spirit of Charles Williams." The Atlantic, 184, 5 (November 1949), 77-79.
- Penzoldt, Peter. The Supernatural in Fiction. New York: Humanities Press, 1965.

- Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco. On the Imagination, ed. Harry Caplan. Cornell Studies in English, XVI. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.
- Press, John. The Chequer'd Shade: Reflections on Obscurity in Poetry. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Ragg, Laura M. "George Macdonald and His Household." English, II (Summer 1956), 59-63.
- Reid, Alexander. "The St. Francis of Aberdeen." Scotland's Magazine, LVIII, 1 (January 1962), 43-44.
- Reilly, R. J. Romantic Religion: A Study of Barfield, Lewis, Williams, and Tolkien. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1971.
- Richards, I. A. Coleridge on Imagination. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962.
- Richter, Jean Paul. The Death of an Angel and Other Pieces, tr. A. Kenney. London: Black and Armstrong, 1839.
- . Jean Pauls Traume, ed. Will Vesper. Munich: C. H. Beck'sche, 1906.
- Ridler, Anne. Review of The House of the Octopus, by Charles Williams. Poetry (London), 3, 11 (September-October 1947), 49-50.
- . See also Page, Frederick, Anne Ridler, et al. "Charles Williams 1886-1945"; Williams, Charles, "The Image of the City" and Other Essays; and Williams, Charles. "Seed of Adam" and Other Plays.
- Robertson, Edward Stanley. "A Literary Causerie: Phantastes." The Academy, March 31, 1906, pp. 308-309.
- Rossky, William. "Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic." Studies in the Renaissance, V (1957), 49-73.
- Sadler, Glenn Edward. See Huttar, Charles A., ed. Imagination and the Spirit.
- Sale, Roger. "England's Parnassus: C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams and J. R. R. Tolkien." The Hudson Review, XVII, 2 (Summer 1964), 203-225.
- Sartre, J.-P. L'imagination. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948.
- Sayers, Dorothy. "Charles Williams." Time and Tide, 2 December 1950, p. 1220.

- Scarborough, Dorothy. The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917.
- Schieder, R. M. "Loss and Gain? The Theme of Conversion in Late Victorian Fiction." Victorian Studies, IX, 1 (September 1965), 29-44.
- Sellery, J'nan. "Fictive Modes in Charles Williams' All Hallows' Eve." Genre, I, 4 (October 1968), 316-331.
- Sen Gupta, S. C. Towards A Theory of the Imagination. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Senior, John. "The Occult in Christian Symbolist Literature." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957 (unpublished).
- Shideler, Mary McDermott. Charles Williams: A Critical Essay. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1966.
- . The Theology of Romantic Love: A Study in the Writings of Charles Williams. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.
- Smeed, J. W. Jean Paul's "Dreams". London: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Smith, Harrison. "The Rise of Fantasy in Literature." The American Scholar, 17, 3 (Summer 1948), 305-312.
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Charles Williams: A Novelist's Pilgrimage." Religion in Life, XXIX, 2 (Spring 1960), 277-288.
- . Reply to "The Art of the Enemy," by Robert Conquest (article on Charles Williams; see under Conquest, Robert above). Essays in Criticism, VII, 3 (July 1957), 335-339.
- . See also Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Faerie Queene.
- Starr, Nathan Comfort. King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature 1901-1953. Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1954.
- Stewart, John L. "Charles Williams's Fiction." The Sewanee Review, LVIII, 1 (January-March 1950), 159-164.
- . "Five New Novels." The Sewanee Review, LVII, 2 (April-June 1949), 307-317. (Review of, inter alia, All Hallows' Eve, by Charles Williams.)

- Tanner, Tony. "Mountains and Depths--An Approach to Nineteenth-century Dualism." A Review of English Literature, III, 4 (October 1962), 51-61.
- Thompson, Stith. The Folktale. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1946.
- Tieck, Ludwig. Oeuvres complètes de Ludwig Tieck. Paris: Ch. Vimont, 1832.
- Tillotson, Geoffrey. "Dreams in English Literature." The London Mercury, XXVII (November 1932 to April 1933), 516-523.
- Tindall, William York. Forces in Modern British Literature 1885-1956. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.
- . The Literary Symbol. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1967.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. Tree and Leaf. London: Unwin Books, 1964.
- Tournier, Michel. Le Roi des Aulnes. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
- Trese, Leo J. Review of The Greater Trumps, by Charles Williams. The Commonweal, May 5, 1950, pp. 104-105.
- Tuveson, E. L. The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
- Underhill, Evelyn. The Column of Dust. London: Methuen & Co., 1909.
- . The Letters of Evelyn Underhill, ed. and with introduction by Charles Williams. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944.
- Urang, Gunnar. Shadows of Heaven: Religion and Fantasy in the Writing of C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1971.
- Versinger, Georgette. "Charles Williams." Etudes anglaises, XVIII, 3 (Juillet-Septembre 1965), 285-295. In French.
- Wagenknecht, Edward. Six Novels of the Supernatural. New York: The Viking Press, 1948.
- Wain, John. Sprightly Running: Part of an Autobiography. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1962.
- Walsh, Chad. "Charles Williams' Poetry," review of The Region of the Summer Stars, by Charles Williams. Poetry, 79, 2 (November 1951), 103-104 and 106.
- . C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

- . "The Supernatural Was Also Natural." The New York Times Book Review, March 11, 1951, pp. 1 and 19.
- . See also Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination.
- Wandall, Frederick S. "Charles Williams." In Minor British Novelists, ed. Charles Alva Hoyt. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967, pp. 121-134.
- Ward, Barbara. Review of The Figure of Beatrice, by Charles Williams. Dublin Review, 214, 428 (January 1944), 71-76.
- Ward, R. H. Names and Natures: Memories of Ten Men. London: Victor Gollancz, 1968.
- Watts, Alan W. Myth and Ritual in Christianity. London: Thames and Hudson, 1954.
- Webster, Deborah. "Books for Convertibles." The Catholic World (October 1950), 39-44.
- Welch, Livingston. Imagination and Human Nature. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1935.
- West, Anthony. Review of The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald [Lilith and Phantastes], ed. Anne Fremantle, with introduction by W. H. Auden. The New Yorker, December 11, 1954, pp. 193 and 196-198.
- White, T. H., tr. and ed. The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960.
- Willcox, Louise Collier. "A Neglected Novelist." The North American Review, CLXXXVIII, DXCVII (August 1906), 394-403.
- Willey, Basil. Christianity Past and Present. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952.
- Williams, Charles. A Book of Victorian Narrative Verse, Chosen by Charles Williams. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1927. Preface by Charles Williams.
- . Collected Plays. London: Oxford University Press, 1963. Introduction by John Heath-Stubbs.
- . The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church. New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, n.d.
- . "A Dialogue on Mr. Eliot's Poem." The Dublin Review, 212, 425 (April 1943), 114-122.
- . Divorce. London: Oxford University Press, 1920.

- . The English Poetic Mind. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963.
- . The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1953.
- . Flecker of Dean Close. London: The Canterbury Press, 1946.
- . The Forgiveness of Sins. London: Faber & Faber, 1950.
- . He Came Down From Heaven. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938.
- . "The Image of the City" and Other Essays. London: Oxford University Press, 1958. Introduction and extensive biographical and critical memoir by Anne Ridler.
- . Judgement at Chelmsford. London: Oxford University Press, 1946. Published originally under the pseudonym of Peter Stanhope.
- . Poetry at Present. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1931.
- . Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933.
- . The Region of the Summer Stars. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- . "Religion and Love in Dante." Nottingham Mediaeval Studies, ed. Lewis Thorpe, IX (1965), 55-70.
- . Review of New Year Letter, by W. H. Auden. The Dublin Review, CCIX, 418 (July 1941), 99-101.
- . Review of Mr. Fortune Wonders, by H. C. Bailey. [London] News Chronicle, December 29, 1933, p. 4.
- . Review of From Virgil to Milton, by C. M. Bowra. Time and Tide, 26 May 1945, pp. 439-440.
- . Review of Education and Social Change, by Fred Clarke. Time and Tide, 23 March 1940, pp. 319-320.
- . Review of The Novel and the Modern World, by David Daiches. Time and Tide, 9 March 1940, pp. 254-255.
- . Review of East Coker, by T. S. Eliot. Time and Tide, 5 October 1940, p. 990.
- . Review of The Family Reunion, by T. S. Eliot. Time and Tide, April 8, 1939, pp. 450-451.
- . Review of The Idea of the Soul in Western Philosophy and Science, by William Ellis. Time and Tide, 14 September 1940, p. 927.

- Review of Tradition and Romanticism, by B. Ifor Evans. Time and Tide, 3 February 1940, pp. 113-114.
- Review of The Murder of a Midget, by M. J. Freeman. [London] News Chronicle, March 15, 1934, p. 4.
- Review of Moses and Monotheism, by Sigmund Freud. Time and Tide, 10 June 1939, p. 758.
- Review of Memories of the Supernatural, by W. H. G. Holmes. Theology, XLIV (March 1942), 181.
- Review of Chariot of Wrath, by G. Wilson Knight. Time and Tide, 20 June 1942, p. 508.
- Review of Good and Evil Spirits: A Study of the Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development, by Edward Langton. Theology, XLV (October 1942), 232-234.
- Review of The Screwtape Letters, by C. S. Lewis. Time and Tide, 21 March 1942, pp. 245-246. A second review may be found in The Dublin Review, 423 (October 1942), 170-171.
- Review of The Choice, by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, April 6, 1931, p. 5.
- Review of Death on My Left, by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, January 31, 1933, p. 4.
- Review of Harbour, by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, November 17, 1931, p. 4.
- Review of R.I.P., by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, April 23, 1933.
- Review of Rope to Spare, by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, October 7, 1932, p. 4.
- Review of The Wraith, by Philip MacDonald. [London] News Chronicle, September 7, 1931, p. 4.
- Review of Studies in Humanism, by J. W. Mackail. The London Mercury, XXXVIII (June 1938), 187.
- Review of An Anthology of Nature Poetry, by Viola Meynell. Time and Tide, 5 July 1941, pp. 564-565.
- Review of The Nature and Destiny of Man, by Reinhold Niebuhr. Time and Tide, 14 February 1942, pp. 136-137.
- "Memories of G. K. Chesterton," review of Father Brown on Chesterton, by John O'Connor. [London] Sunday Times, October 10, 1937, p. 8.

- Review of Mystery at Friar's Pardon, by Martin Porlock
[Philip MacDonald]. [London] News Chronicle, October 7, 1931,
p. 4.
- Review of Mystery in Kensington Gore, by Martin Porlock
[Philip MacDonald]. [London] News Chronicle, March 7, 1932,
p. 4.
- Review of The Facts about Rudi Schneider: A Scientific
Examination of His Mediumship, by Harry Price. [London] News
Chronicle, July 24, 1930, p. 4.
- Review of The Pattern of Freedom, anthology chosen by
Bruce Richmond. Time and Tide, 13 July 1940, pp. 736-737.
- Review of Rainer Maria Rilke: Aspects of his Mind and
Poetry, ed. William Rose and G. Craig Houston. Time and Tide,
9 April 1938, pp. 500 and 502.
- Review of Milton, Man and Thinker, by Denis Saurat. The
Spectator, August 18, 1944, p. 154.
- Review of An Anthology of Catholic Poets, compiled by
Leslie Shane ("Peter and the Muses"). G. K.'s Weekly,
January 30, 1926, p. 494.
- Review of The Divine Comedy. Hell: Purgatory: Dante.
With translation and comment by John D. Sinclair. Time and
Tide, 24 June 1939, p. 833.
- Reviews of Life and the Poet, by Stephen Spender; Beyond
the 'Isms, by Olaf Stapledon; and Masters of Reality, by Una
Ellis-Fermor. Time and Tide, 23 May 1942, p. 436.
- Review of The Miltonic Setting: Past and Present, by E. M. W.
Tillyard. The London Mercury, XXXVIII (May 1938), 82. A second
review is to be found in The Criterion, XVII (July 1938), 738-740.
- "'Staring at Miracle,'" review of A Vision, by W. B. Yeats.
Time and Tide, 4 December 1937, pp. 1674 and 1676.
- Reviews of various thrillers, detective stories, and murder
mysteries in the [London] News Chronicle, April 15, 1931, p. 5;
October 22, 1931, p. 4; December 13, 1932, p. 4; December 21, 1932,
p. 4; January 3, 1933, p. 4; February 13, 1933, p. 4; June 14, 1933,
p. 7; January 17, 1934, p. 4; and March 15, 1934, p. 4.
- "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--I," review of Victoria
of England, by Edith Sitwell. G. K.'s Weekly, March 5, 1936,
pp. 382-383.
- "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--II," review of the
Home University Library. G. K.'s Weekly, April 2, 1936, pp. 52-53.

- ". "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--III," review of the autobiography of William Hayley. G. K.'s Weekly, April 30, 1936, pp. 114-115.
- ". "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--IV," review of Trent's Own Case, by E. C. Bentley and H. Warner Allen. G. K.'s Weekly, May 28, 1936, pp. 178-179.
- ". "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--V," review of An Essay on the Restoration of Property, by Hilaire Belloc. G. K.'s Weekly, June 18, 1936, pp. 229-230.
- ". "Roughly Speaking: Letters to Peter--VI," review of Murder off Miami, by Dennis Wheatley and J. G. Hinks. G. K.'s Weekly, July 23, 1936, pp. 306-307.
- ". "Seed of Adam" and Other Plays. London: Oxford University Press, 1948. Introduction by Anne Ridler.
- ". Selected Writings chosen by Anne Ridler. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- ". Taliessin through Logres. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- ". Witchcraft. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960.
- ". See also Milton, John. The English Poems of John Milton; and Underhill, Evelyn. The Letters of Evelyn Underhill.
- and C. S. Lewis. Arthurian Torso, Containing the Posthumous Fragment of "The Figure of Arthur" by Charles Williams and a Commentary on the Arthurian Poems of Charles Williams by C. S. Lewis. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- et al. "Taste in Literature: Discussion between Charles Williams, Edward Sydney and Desmond Hawkins." The Listener, 26 December 1940, pp. 913 and 914.
- Williams, Florence [Mrs. Charles Williams]. "As I Remember Charles Williams." Episcopal Churchnews, April 12, 1953, pp. 12-14.
- Wilson, Colin. The Strength to Dream: Literature and the Imagination. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1962.
- Winship, George Parker, Jr. "This Rough Magic: The Novels of Charles Williams." The Yale Review, XL, 2 (December 1950), 285-296.
- ". See also Hillegas, Mark R., ed. Shadows of Imagination.
- Wolff, Robert Lee. The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

Woods, Katharine Pearson. Review of Lilith, by George MacDonald.
The Bookman, II, 2 (October 1895), 133-135.

Wordsworth, William. The Prelude.

Wright, Elizabeth. "Theology in the Novels of Charles Williams."
Stanford University Honors Essays in Humanities, VI (1962), 15-59.

Young, Vernon. "Hell on Earth: Six Versions," review of, inter alia,
All Hallows' Eve and Descent into Hell, by Charles Williams.
The Hudson Review, 2, 2 (Summer 1949), 311-318.

C. Correspondence

Letters to the author from:

Auden, W. H. March 22, 1971.

Barfield, Owen. May 27, 1971.

British Museum, Department of Manuscripts. January 18, 1972.

Eliot, T. S. December 4, 1962.

Goffin, R. C. (assistant publisher at Oxford University Press).
 January 11, 1952.

Green, Roger Lancelyn. November 23, 1971.

Hadfield, Alice Mary. December 13, 1971.

Hooper, Rev. Walter. December 4, 1971.

Kilby, Clyde S. November 14, 1971.

Lewis, C. S. February 12 and June 25, 1952.

Lewis, W. H. March 27, 1971.

Mathew, Gervase. May 30, 1971.

Ridler, Anne. September 8, 1971.

Shideler, Mary McDermott. October 29 and November 12, 1971.

Tolkien, J. R. R. May 6, 1971.

Walsh, Chad. August 16, 1971.

Williams, Mrs. Florence S. March 4, 1952.

Williams, Michael. July 9, 1971.

* * * * *

* * * * *

N.B. The following list of dissertations does not constitute a list of bibliographical references for this paper, but is set down here as at least a partial index to the degree of attention paid to George MacDonald and to Charles Williams as a novelist in American dissertations over nearly two decades. The list does not include dissertations which deal chiefly with Williams' poetry and drama, the earliest of which, as far as the present writer has been able to determine, dates from 1952.

1954

Christopher Edward Fullman. "The Mind and Art of Charles Williams: A Study of His Poetry, Plays and Novels." University of Wisconsin.

1958

Clinton W. Trowbridge. "The Twentieth Century British Supernatural Novel." University of Florida.

1959

Lawrence Russell Dawson, Jr. "Charles Williams as Reviewer and Reviewed." University of Michigan.

1960

Marjorie Evelyn Wright. "The Cosmic Kingdom of Myth: A Study in the Myth-Philosophy of Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien." University of Illinois.

1962

Richard H. Reis. "George MacDonald's Fiction: A Study in the Nature of Realism and Symbolism." Brown University.

1964

Robert Wilson Peckham. "The Novels of Charles Williams." University of Notre Dame.

1965

Mariann Barbara Russell. "The Idea of the City of God." Columbia University.

1966

Glenn Edward Sadler. "The Cosmic Vision: A Study of the Poetry of George MacDonald." University of Aberdeen. Dissertation by an American doctoral candidate.

1969

Sape Anne Zylstra. "Charles Williams: An Analysis and Appraisal of His Major Work." Emory University.

1970

Thomas Howard. "Charles Williams' Experiment in the Novel." New York University.

1971

Rolland Neal Hein. "Faith and Fiction: A Study of the Effects of Religious Convictions in the Adult Fantasies and Novels of George MacDonald." Purdue University.

Vita

Joyce Rose Hines

Born Poughkeepsie, New York on June 23, 1929

Attended P.S. 3 (The Bronx) and Hunter College
High School, New York City

Received B.A. in French, summa cum laude, from
Hunter College, January 1951

Received M.A. in English from Columbia University,
June 1952

Title of thesis: "The Arthurian and the
Grail Themes in the Poetry of Charles
Williams"

Member Phi Beta Kappa

Since 1952, has been with the United Nations