



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 13 | Number 2 | Issue 48, Winter

Article 4

12-15-1986

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Recommended Citation

Bratman, David; Kollmann, Judith; Bosky, Bernadette, et al. (1986) "A Centennial Retrospective on Charles Williams," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 13 : No. 2 , Article 4. Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol13/iss2/4>

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A Centennial Retrospective on Charles Williams

Abstract

Edited transcript of a panel discussion (including audience contributions) at the 17th Mythopoeic Society Conference.

Additional Keywords

Williams, Charles—Characters; Williams, Charles—Imagery; Williams, Charles—Technique; Williams, Charles. Novels; Williams, Charles. Plays; Williams, Charles. Poetry

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A Centennial Retrospective on Charles Williams

A few preliminary notes on the transcript:

1. Words that could not be distinguished are indicated thus: [...].
2. Words inserted by the editors, either as guesses at an unclear pronunciation, or that were not spoken but which clarify a sentence, are marked off in brackets: [].
3. When a remark is addressed specifically to another person, that person is identified in parenthesis: ().
4. Bearing in mind that this panel was fully two hours long, which makes for a very lengthy transcript indeed, we have had to edit out queries that went unanswered, or commentary that did not relate to the ongoing discussion. Also, bearing in mind that conversational English differs from written language even when spoken by our erudite panelists, we have used some editorial discretion in tightening sentences.

Transcript: Sarah Beach Editing: Glen GoodKnight
Typing: C.I.S. Lowentrout

DAVID BRATMAN: Welcome to the Charles Williams Panel. The main subject is: which of these people sitting next to me is Charles Williams? (laughter)

Starting from this end we have Judith Kollmann, who is the Scholar Guest of Honor at the Conference, who teaches at the University of Michigan-Flint; Bernadette Bosky, who is a student at Duke University; David Samuelson, who teaches here [California State University at Long Beach]; and Richard Purtill, who is an author and teaches at Western Washington University. I am David Bratman and [am here] as mere moderator. I am a librarian at Stanford University and thus not a full academic like the rest of these distinguished people. I see my job as riding herd on them.

I'd like to begin by throwing out one basic thought about Williams and asking the panelists to express what thought they might have on this. In his book Charles Williams, Poet of Theology, Glen Cavaliero makes a remark about Tolkien, Lewis and Williams in comparison. He says that Tolkien was primarily, fundamentally, a storyteller; Lewis was fundamentally a teacher; and Williams was fundamentally a poet. What I'd like us to consider is what this actually means in terms of their writings, in particular their novels, because that was one point that they had in common -- they were all novelists. So, what are the differences, then, what are the distinguishing marks of a poet's novels and a poet's writings in general? Judith?

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Oh ho. I can't help but be reminded of something I hope is not going to be irrelevant. That is that Shakespeare always wanted to be remembered as a poet, too. Yet what do we remember him as, but a playwright. I think Williams is going to suffer (I'm not sure that's the right word) from the same thing. We're going to remember him as a writer of novels, rather than [of] the Arthurian poems, even though they are magnificent.

Now, how poetic are the novels? Now we have to define what we consider poetry, and I'm not sure I want to even try that.

DAVID BRATMAN: Well, what I'd been specifically thinking of is not whether the novels are poetic, but what are the marks of his having a poetic imagination on his novels? Just as Shakespeare's poetic imagination is obviously present in his plays.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: One possibility is his love of the masque. The novel is supposed to be a realistic genre. To me many of his novels are like masques. They are deliberately artificial, and I mean that in a very positive sense. I don't mean it to be at all pejorative. He sees his people going through a dance. It's a very complex dance between one's free will and what is fated to have happened.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I would agree with what you're saying about him being remembered for his novels, instead of his poetry. One of the things that I've noticed in going through the scholarship for the paper that I just presented [on the Golden Dawn], was how much of his [contemporary] fame was based on his poetry. Less in itself, I think, than [in] the important people who liked his poetry, like Eliot and Auden. In fact a number of critics will say, "Well, gee, we really don't like his poetry, but Eliot and Auden like it."

Now, his poetry is not what he's known for. It's his novels. As far as what sign of his poet nature is in his novels, I think you (to David Bratman) raised a good point. The more I think about it the more it [seems] similar to a comment made by Joanna Drake (wife of writer Dave Drake, and a good friend of mine), who said "C.S. Lewis writes as a theologian; Charles Williams writes as a saint." And I show my bias here, but, heck, I'm not on a Lewis panel.

I think one of the signs of the poetic imagination in Williams' novels is the intense importance of personal experience, and the use of elaborate techniques of language (which is something else I'm working with; as Chuck Huttar calls it, "his rhetoric of vision") to convey kinds of personal experience in a way that is both more detailed and more intimate than one usually gets in prose. There is a poetic sensibility in his presentation of religious and psychological states.

DAVID SAMUELSON: Well, I just had my first line stolen. I was going to talk about the masque as well, but I guess I'll let that drop, and think more in terms of Williams' focus on the individual word, which is something the poet's more interested in. Poets, for the most part, deal in smaller verbal entities. They focus on the importance of any one word and its resonance throughout. This, [it] seems to me, is perfectly typical of Williams' fiction. And even in the fiction characters call attention to it. It's almost like the sin against the Holy Ghost to use a word incorrectly in a Williams novel.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Yes. That wonderful scene in All Hallows' Eve, where Evelyn, I think, is in Simon Leclerc's vestibule and says something like -- I think it's "damn," and the word scuttles away from her as that little repulsive creature. I mean, language is real.

RICHARD PURTILL: Yes, well, I want to do a philosophical kind of thing, which is challenge the

premise on which the question is based. As a matter of fact, I think it's false to make that simplistic distinction: all of them were both teachers and poets, and a novelist is a bit of both. It's not a separate category.

Starting off with Lewis, it's rather interesting that in his teaching he was proudly unoriginal. That is, he gave no new insights into theology, but he explained traditional theology about as well as it's ever been explained. However, in his novels, the poetic side of Lewis came out, and he did things in the science fiction and fantasy novel that I think had never been done before. He genuinely advanced the techniques and the depth of the genre in many ways. In the space trilogy first, where his descriptions of Mars and Venus are miles beyond anything the earlier science fiction writers have come up with; in the Narnia Chronicles; and then finally in Till We Have Faces, his best, though least popular, book.

Tolkien was also a teacher as well as a poet. His teaching is only known to us non-professionals in the field of Anglo-Saxon in a few things like "On Fairy stories." But what a magnificent piece of teaching that is! Illuminating the whole genre. And in his writing, the poetic element comes out in all sorts of different ways. But I want to mainly focus on Williams, since that's the main focus of this panel.

Now, Williams -- and that's why I talked a bit more about Lewis than I talked about Tolkien -- was an interesting contrast to Lewis, in that he was extremely original in his theology, in his teaching. And that's what attracted Lewis to him. He [Lewis] found new insights into theology, new developments in ideas like the co-inherence in Williams, that had never been quite developed in just that way, in any traditional theology. So that in his writing about theology, Williams was extremely original, both in content and in form. So original, in fact, that a lot of his theology is readable only with great difficulty; but it's well worth persisting and doing. In his novels, both sides of him came out a bit, but you notice that he sticks to conventional forms a little more than, say, Tolkien does. Tolkien created a new form, really; he revitalized fantasy in certain ways. Williams wrote "supernatural thrillers," but they're basically on the thriller framework. But I don't want to overexaggerate that kind of contrast. So I think Cavaliero is simply wrong in making a three-fold distinction in which "novelist" isn't really commensurate with the other two. And if you think about it more clearly and more closely, all three of them had both aspects -- the poet and the logician, the teacher and the creator.

DAVID BRATMAN: I don't think that it was meant, specifically, so much as a dividing line between them as a particular way to emphasize what distinctions there are. You can also, if you choose to take the other perspective, emphasize their similarities. And they did have an enormous number of similarities actually, despite the fact that their thinkings were very different.

RICHARD PURTILL: Yes, but I think it's just false to say that Lewis' novels were the novels of a teacher. They aren't.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Well, another way of -- we've got to get some arguments here. This is too nice a panel! Your discussion of their theology undercuts what you've said, in that creativity and the emphasis on the "romantic theology," if we will, as opposed to the dedicatedly....I don't want to say "unoriginal" as

a negative thing, but traditional; isn't that to a certain extent supporting Cavaliero's distinction? They're both doing theology, but the way they're doing theology --

RICHARD PURTILL: Precisely. But Cavaliero was talking about their novels, where what he says is false.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: (pause) Okay.

RICHARD PURTILL: Now, if he had said, "Williams writes theology as a poet and Lewis as a teacher," I'd say, "Exactly." That's just what I was saying, put in his terminology. But when he says, "Lewis writes novels as a teacher and Williams as a poet," that's just not so.

DAVID BRATMAN: Don't take that too firmly as a test, but it is a starting point.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: I'd like to point out that you were talking about Williams as poet and Williams as novelist. He was actually well known in his time for his plays, which appear [now] to be forgotten -- or very difficult to know. I'm interested in David's [Samuelson] opinion in comparison with Yeats in this respect [David Samuelson gave a paper on Yeats at the Conference]. I notice you have made mention of the masque and the dance as being important in Yeats as well as in Williams. To what degree [is] there a relationship?

DAVID SAMUELSON: I'm afraid that Williams' plays are another lacuna in my education. I have tried, and have not been able to summon up enough concentration to read them.

RICHARD PURTILL: I think with his plays Williams bears comparison to Dorothy Sayers. Both of them did plays for Church of England festivals, both of them had an extremely...influential effect on the Church of England in their time. Charles Williams never got on the radio, which Dorothy Sayers did, which increased her effect a little bit. But so far as the plays that were presented at festivals, he was quite as effective as she was.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: One thing this raises about Williams' plays (for it to be as effective as it seems to be, from people's accounts and also taking into account the reportage of the play in Descent into Hell) I wonder how much his plays are dependent on staging?

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Very much so, because again you get that heavy masque-like quality. There's often very little verbal dialogue, little text, little script, and a great deal is dependent on the imagination of the producer.

RICHARD PURTILL: I think the picture in Descent into Hell of the play, the way people have to work together, the way things are being groped for, and effects are being tried out is based on Williams' own personal experience.

I've never been fortunate enough to see either Sayers' or Williams' plays in the kind of setting they were intended for. But one of the memorable theatrical experiences of my life was seeing Christopher Frye's A Sleep of Prisoners presented in the cathedral at Bury-St.-Edmund's. The church setting and the deepening of the ritual quality of the play in a church -- where the great drama of the Mass

has been performed -- adds immeasurably to it. So I'd say, yes, the staging means a great deal to the plays.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I had suspected that, as you said, that would be the case. And that may very well be a reason why the plays seem, why they're so unportable, so to speak.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: That's right. The one that is most famous, which is Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury, was designed, was written specifically for the production in Canterbury Cathedral. It was part of a famous series of three. They then had to stop, because [of] the World War. The first one was Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot. I believe the second one was either Williams' Archbishop or it was Dorothy Sayers' play, the name of which escapes me.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: He was the year after Eliot, I know. I recall that.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: I remember a lady who was doing a presentation on what's involved when you're dealing with theatrics for the church. These [plays] were written specifically for that setting, and they can be transposed, but transposed with only much difficulty. For example, it wasn't even at Canterbury where they ran into this problem: she was doing a play for Southwark Cathedral. Southwark has very high bays on the top of two towers on either side of the nave, and they were being used for the presentation of two angels. That was the only place where you could put that particular little moment in the play. Now it was spectacular, but you can't transpose that elsewhere. I've seen Murder in the Cathedral done in a church, that was marvelous. It was almost perfect and the transposition was electric. To see it done on a stage would take away about one half of the impact of that play.

And then the other plays that Williams wrote were primarily these masque-like effects, that I think would be even more difficult to put on. And yes, there is script for the Archbishop of Canterbury but it's harder than most plays.

DAVID BRATMAN: I would like to throw in, as far as the plays are concerned, that two of Williams' lesser known plays that are not included in his volume of complete plays, are a pair of allegorical masques that he wrote for private production at the Oxford University Press, where he worked. The Masque of the Manuscript was the name of the first one, and it was an allegory about how a manuscript is submitted to the press, approved for publication, edited, and finally laid down in the press and arises reborn in the form of a book. It's not easy to find this, but there are excerpts and descriptions of it in Alice Hadfield's first book about Williams, and it's definitely worth reading.

RICHARD PURTILL: Yes, that's so very medieval, sort of making the mystery of your craft into a drama. Chesterton would have just loved that.

AMY FALKOWITZ: In terms of the idea of Williams' being a poet, writing novels and how that influenced him, can we consider poetry as a refinement of word per image? That is, using the minimum to get the most impact, in a sense of imagery. That always struck me about Williams' novels. The imagery was so vivid. It's like he really worked at getting that image out, bringing all into a very intense setting, a motion to get the response. That works with the idea of dance and masque, that it's image that is evoking a response

from the audience; it's not the words, it's the image presented.

DAVID SAMUELSON: But the image has a lot of resonance because of the way he builds it into the story. You have much more in the way of imagery in C.S. Lewis' stories. He's profligate with the images, whereas Williams will sometimes present an image and spend a whole chapter building up to it and elaborating it.

AMY FALKOWITZ: Yes. He's working on refining that image and making it more and more intense, and [he] keep[s] refining it through the novel. It always comes back, to me, in perhaps my favorite Williams novel, The Greater Trumps, which to me is visually a very, very strong, effective book. And I'm talking in an artistic sense. It resonates for me in terms of visual images and [dance].

BERNADETTE BOSKY: And yet, it's intriguing how often the visual imagery breaks down in Williams. The effect...[a] symbol almost, in a way more than just image, because there are whole passages where there's a very strong presentation of something going on and the affect is absolutely clear. And two people reading it will have almost the same affect. But as far as "what happened," as far as who is standing where or what the exact image is...It's like jello. You try [to] pin it down and it just falls apart. That's, to me, one of the most intriguing things about his language, how it manages to convey things.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: I would say that this is a question of oral rather than visual writing. That being a poet, he was tending to write things for reading aloud. A very visual writer usually is meant to be read entirely with the eyes and transferred to the visual centers, inducing sort of a movie in the back of the head. Whereas writers like -- an extreme example -- Joyce, have almost no visual content. He's meant to be read orally, and the beauty is in the sounds of the language, the music.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: But there's a third kind of approach, which is the approach I'm taking with Williams now. It's my pet current project with Williams, aside from the Golden Dawn. [It] is what Stanley Fish calls "affective stylistics," where the rhetorical structure of the passage is designed to have a certain affective response in the reader, and it's not necessarily visual and it's not sound. It's syntactic more than anything else. For instance, just to give an example, there's a very striking passage in All Hallows' Eve, when Lester, I believe -- right, the good dead one -- is withdrawing to join the company of saints. There's a sense of unity and yet division. For instance, throughout the passage in the use of "rose," and how the color permeates [it]. But beyond that, rhetorically, the noun "it" is used constantly. Now we're seeing through Lester's eyes: everything is "it." Even Richard becomes not "Richard" but "the figure of Richard," so that he can be referred to as "it." The effect is one of someone who is getting experience of a reality that is unified and yet is being withdrawn, is becoming separated off, from her. And I think Williams does this consistently.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: [Williams'] complexity of grammar is amazing.

ANTOINETTE BRENION: Have any of you read the eighth novel of Williams which [...] did in [...]

short stories about Sir Arglay?

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Yes, I've read it. It was a very long time ago. I can only remember it very hazily. Lord Arglay is taking a walk in a country town. He sees this little house, and it's burning. He walks inside of it, and you slowly realize that he's just walked into Hell. The place is very definitely haunted by the most serious of demon types and he gets out of there and feels very lucky to have escaped with his life. But that's all I can remember.

DAVID SAMUELSON: There isn't much more to it. It's essentially a sketch.

ANTOINETTE BRENION: But the title of it translates....I think it's Et in sempiternum pereant. It's something from Dante.

RICHARD PURTILL: Before we get away from it, I just want to comment on something Bernadette said. I think she's very right about the way in which Williams uses images symbolically. So you don't have much visual sense. Williams wasn't like that, he didn't have that particular style. He's almost in a category by himself for using language symbolically in such a way that the affect, as Bernadette says, gets over, whereas "What did they look like? Where were they standing?" that kind of thing just isn't there at all.

DAVID SAMUELSON: But this is more like the American Romantics.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: The hands in The Greater Trumps are an extremely good example. The rose in All Hallows' Eve.

ANTOINETTE BRENION: [...] said Williams novels make great 1930's movies and the fact that a movie -- I can't remember the title -- it's on a ship and people go on it [...] sent to Hell?

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Outward Bound.

RICHARD PURTILL: Right.

ANTOINETTE BRENION: The thing is, you see that movie and you think that that is something Williams would have written.

DAVID BRATMAN: (to David Samuelson) You mentioned Williams' resemblance to the American Romantics?

DAVID SAMUELSON: In terms of this use of the symbolic image. Look at Moby Dick, look at The Scarlet Letter, look at some of the stories of Edgar Allen Poe -- you do not remember what anybody looks like, or where they were in relation to anybody else, but the symbols are almost all you remember of the story, unless you've been reading it recently. The image is extremely packed, and this again is part of the artificial division that we're making here in terms of the primary emphasis being on poetry.

But another thing, if we want to fight about Williams -- as Bernadette says we should argue, get into more of a fight -- I would say that Williams might be better thought of as a good, cheap pulp writer than as a bad, great writer. That essentially he -- although he is complex, he's complicated -- he has the same kind of ethno-centrism, he has the same kind of prejudices that H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith had in the same time period. Lovecraft, incidentally, also thought he was a poet primarily.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: I could argue with you on that, on Shadows of Ecstasy. Look very carefully at some of the underpinnings of that novel, the structures.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: In terms of ethno-centrism?

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: Africa as metaphor.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Yes, but they still need a white man to show them how to really do it.

DAVID SAMUELSON: Don't forget that it's that terrible Jewish guy, Simon Leclerc....

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I disagree on that, though.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: (to Bernadette Bosky) You want to take that?

DAVID SAMUELSON: ...who's going to take over the world, at the time of World War II, when the Jews are the ones being exploited.

RICHARD PURTILL: He's working against "that other Jewish fellow."

BERNADETTE BOSKY: (to David Samuelson) We're waiting in line to take you on. (laughter)

RICHARD PURTILL: Let me make a comment on that "good pulp writer." In some sense that's not entirely wrong to say that the genre within which Williams works is sort of related to pulpdom. But it doesn't bar him from being a great writer. It seems to me that people who dislike him as a writer are looking for the wrong kind of virtues in him. If you look for the kind of virtues that are in the pulp thrillers, raised to the height of genius, then Williams is the person to look for.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Let's get back to Simon Leclerc, and then to that.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Again, whenever you raise something new in Williams, you've just opened up a huge door. But first of all, I don't think you can draw up numbers and say, "Well, he's got two Jews that he dislikes and draws negative pictures of, and two over here that he draws more positive pictures of." One of things that Williams was working with, especially in the poetry, where it really becomes evident, is that he was setting up a triad. There is Palomides, who is the Saracen; and then there is at least one very minor Jewish person -- maybe it's more than one, maybe it's another set of brothers -- they're the two who teach Palomides the meaning of the word netzach, which means "the blessing." When Palomides dies, he makes the recognition that the entire universe is "the blessing." In other words, the Jews have taught a Saracen a fundamental truth about the existence of the universe.

On the other hand, Williams is going to be a dedicated Christian. And we know that. That's working in there. I think he's trying not to deal with anti-Semitism; he's trying to deal with the traditions of three great religious systems.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: There are other grounds for calling Williams anti-Semitic. With Simon Leclerc it seems to me absolutely clear that the only reason why he's Jewish is because he's the Anti-Christ. Because he's the mirror image of the Christ who was Jewish, so he's got to be Jewish. There are so many consistent

comparisons made; "unlike that other son of a Jewish magician" you know, "he was not willing to die," and so on. So, as I say, I think there are other grounds, but I just cannot admit Simon Leclerc as evidence.

DAVID SAMUELSON: There's a clear theoretical reason why he's doing it and that is that the Jews have denied the light, which the Christians have seen.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I don't think he views it that way. My impression of his view of the Jews is sort of a condescending but not unpleasant, "Gee, those guys almost made it."

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: The Stone of Solomon in Many Dimensions.

AMY FALKOWITZ: But he also falls into the trap of the culture of the period, which is...He doesn't necessarily specifically say that people are Jewish. He says they look Jewish. That's the anti-Semitism. That is a more subtle trap to fall into, than just saying blatantly, "The person was a Jew and did this because they were a Jew."

BERNADETTE BOSKY: That's a very good point.

CHRISTOPHER HENRICH: There is a more serious expression of anti-Semitism in All Hallows' Eve. I mean, the idea that someone looks Jewish implies a stereotype. But it is not in the same league as explicitly saying that the Jews are cursed because they denied Christ.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Does he say that in All Hallows Eve? Per se?

CHRISTOPHER HENRICH: Yes. I think I could find the sentence. And I don't know if it's possible that what he's doing is expounding Simon Leclerc's mentality.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: Well, Simon Leclerc specifically states that Joseph was a magician, who caused a woman to utter the Tetragrammaton in every atom of her body, therefore...The pitiful offspring had died under unfortunate circumstances thirty years later -- as I recall. I can't remember it verbatim at this point. But, now this is the only place I can remember of the explicit denial of the divinity of Christ.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: It's not by the Jewish faith, it's by Simon.

PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER: It is by the individual, Simon Leclerc, whose sin is that he's a materialist magician. Who believes that the word has power because it is the word, and not because it represents divinity. And this is specifically a Kabbalist's heresy.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I would say also a number of places, for instance, through the Golden Dawn stuff, I was on the alert for his [Williams'] attitude towards Hebrew and anything related to the Kabbala. He did treat Hebrew as an ur-language, which was closest to the spiritual truth. He considered a number of Hebrew utterances, at least, to have genuine spiritual power. So I think he viewed them [Jews] if anything as holy people who went wrong, rather than just degraded people.

ALEXEI KONDRATIEV: Yes, in his play Seed of

Adam, the angel speaks Hebrew. He's supposed to speak the words of annunciation in Hebrew on stage as representing a higher form of utterance, of language. And he stated that, it was very important to get the pronunciation right.

AMY FALKOWITZ: It's true in all forms of ritual.

FRED WILLIAMS: Pointing your attention on the image quality of this again, I get the distinct feeling that he was using extant images in setting up Simon Leclerc, things that would have been common or fairly ordinary pulp images at the time. Now, anybody who tells me that Williams puts an image in his stories and does so unintentionally because it's there in his subconscious, is sort of rubbing me the wrong way. The guy is far too conscious of images and symbols for any of those things to be incidental.

RICHARD PURTILL: Yes. You have to think of the use that's being made of the image; a body in the office. "Oh, it's going to be a thriller. It's going to be a mystery story, isn't it?" It is a thriller, of sort. So the image is used, to be transcended.

AMY FALKOWITZ: This is why I like Williams' novels. The anti-Semitism per se does not bother me, because I consider it in terms of the framework he is writing in. In fact, we're talking about Williams as being the poet writing novels -- he's also the teacher in the sense that he's using a specific structure to be able to present something that a lot of people who are not involved with the immediate group would probably not want to bother looking at. He's got something to say on his ideas about theology and all, he's presenting them in a framework to make them accessible to the general public, if you will. He's using a popularization to present non-popularized ideas.

DAVID SAMUELSON: And of course the popular form of the thriller lends itself well to his two-dimensional view of everything, mankind and every kind of symbolic feature. There is only good and evil, and today -- this is part of the position I was taking -- today we look back on the ethno-centrism of the 30's, not recognizing our own ethno-centrism, and we see that he (as most popular fiction does) mainly labelled as villains people of other... from other cultures. Of course, he had heroes from other cultures.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I would take issue about the "only good and evil" though. Do you want to expand on this a little?

DAVID SAMUELSON: I think it was Patricia Meyer Spacks who talk[ed] about how he was setting up three different kinds of action or kinds of meaning: the psychological; I can't remember what the second one is; the third one, of course, is the salvation [in history]. And the only thing that really matters to Williams is the salvation: how do you relate to God, how do you relate to your Maker and to the ultimate question? So there's only accepting God or rejecting God, the positive/negative. Now this fits into "good guys and bad guys."

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Well, yes and no. He says in one of the essays in The Image of the City, ultimately there is only the City or the Infamy. What is so intriguing about Williams, and which I think does make his novels more that of a poet than a teacher, as opposed to Lewis, is that when it comes to the experience as we experience it, he is not binary. The

reason why life is so tough is that you have these completely contradictory goals. Along the path everything's gray, and you have to choose whether you're going to the City or the Infamy. Experience isn't binary. It's all mixed up. Something as trivial as the buttons on a costume can be ultimate; ignoring [it] can be ultimate evil, and something that doesn't seem that important can be ultimate good. So while his good guys and bad guys are the least convincing and the least interesting people, you [also] get people who are just sort of muddling through and trying to be better, or gravitating towards the worst. [Like] Lester and Evelyn.

DAVID SAMUELSON: As your example of the buttons shows, there is nothing too trivial to be subjected to this binary system.

RICHARD PURTILL: Well, but now wait a minute. What you're saying is, "Charles Williams says that the only thing that ultimately matters is salvation or damnation and of course we know that's not true." I don't know that's not true; any convinced traditional Christian will agree with Williams. If somebody says that's two-dimensional thinking, then it may be that reality is in that sense two-dimensional. But what you're doing is using the unfavorable associations of "two-dimensional thinking" to attack something without arguing.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: We're worrying here about the ultimate binary choice. In the meantime, if you ask somebody if they've read Williams: "Oh no. I've heard of him, but I won't read him, because he talks about the occult. This is terrible." For someone who is so narrow as to choose one or two choices in life, the middle part of his books are some of the most wide-open exploratory of all possibilities in the realm of the supernatural. Of course, what he is going to come down to at the end is what he is committed to, what he is interested in proving emotionally, perhaps logically if he can achieve it. [It] is that in the end there are only two choices. But in the meantime, the fascination rests largely, to me, in watching these people [in Williams' novels] play with the occult, and then slowly, you begin to realize where they are failing in the ultimate scheme of life.

DAVID SAMUELSON: This is terribly schematic, which is exactly one of the problems with Williams. You can say that he's exploring, but in fact he's just titillating. He's just tempting us with ideas about possible exceptions, when in fact they are all going to line up in this determined way by the end.

RICHARD PURTILL: What do you mean by "determined?" Determined by whom?

DAVID SAMUELSON: Determined by Williams, and determined by the tradition that Williams is working out of, and which seems to know what good and bad is.

RICHARD PURTILL: In what way is Williams different from any other novelist in the fact that he determines what happens to his characters?

DAVID SAMUELSON: Somebody was saying out there (the audience) about how you don't believe that he ever put an image in that he didn't intend. You are not going to find in Williams a character who grew by himself. Williams has determined to begin with which way he's to go.

RICHARD PURTILL: Seems to me that Williams is full of characters like that [that grew by themselves].

BERNADETTE BOSKY: For instance, where would you put Damaris Tighe, in The Place of the Lion?

DAVID SAMUELSON: Well, ultimately she becomes good. At first she appears to be bad.

RICHARD PURTILL: At first she is bad.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Do you think it's "appears" or do you think she really changes?

DAVID BRATMAN: I think there's an important distinction here that needs to be made. The one schematic is between good and evil; things are either good or they are either evil. But, people do not sit at either one end or the other of the schematic. They can be combinations.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Some do sit at one extent or the other. But most people are inbetween.

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: David, it seems to me there needs to be a distinction made -- and I'm not sure, I don't know enough about Williams -- it seems to me that you're dealing with two kinds of things in Williams' novels. One, you're talking about (to put it in metaphor) vehicles and destinations; that Williams is trying to take you Somewhere and it really doesn't make too much difference what the vehicle is: it it's anti-Semitism, if it's the occult, if it's characters who have two dimensions -- or "Many Dimensions." (laughter and groans) Sorry, you have to expect that sort of thing. But in any event, Williams again is the teacher. He's trying to take us Somewhere and he doesn't care (I use that loosely) what he uses to get us there, as long as we're there when the story is over. Is Williams an anti-Semite? Well, no, I don't think so. Does he use anti-Semitism? Yes. That's a distinction that's very important.

(FROM AUDIENCE): So what you're saying is he's a propagandist.

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: Well, that's a loaded term.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: But he does have designs on the reader.

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: If teachers are propagandists, yes.

GRACIA FAY ELLWOOD: I don't think one can say he doesn't care what he uses to get there. What he says about the importance of the image is [...]

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: The destination, I believe, is more important than the vehicle.

RICHARD PURTILL: Well, but some vehicles won't get you to that destination. If there were genuine anti-Semitism, that is, blaming the Jewish people for being Jewish, then that is a vehicle that ^{couldn't} possibly get you to the destination Williams wanted.

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: Certainly it would not work for us. And if Charles Williams is indeed an artist -- which I believe he is -- I think he'd be very much concerned about us [arriving]. Maybe you're right. Maybe what we're sensing here is that there were some

things in his -- I hate to use the word "character" because it sounds like he's flawed. But, he may have some predilections, some prejudices, some feelings that maybe he's not as aware of as we are now, thirty or forty years later.

RANDOLPH FRITZ: It occurs to me that part of the [...] quality of the novels comes from the fact that they're thrillers. Every thriller has a plot that ends up with a very definite distinction between good and evil. Because, from what I've read about Williams (the people on the panel know more than I, certainly), it doesn't sound like he lived life as someone who believed in that kind of sharp distinction between people. He was not a sharply bigoted man. He was very tolerant.

DAVID SAMUELSON: The point that I'm trying to make is that by adopting the thriller form, he has, in the novels, adopted some of the thriller values. And the cardboard characters are among them.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I've come to half agree with your point, and what Randolph said points up where the distinction is. In both the thriller tradition and in Williams the characters end two-valued. In Williams, they don't start that way. I think that's extremely important. You've got me started thinking about ways in which the thriller tradition shaped his work. You're right about that. In this case, I think it was more that that was Williams' view of how life was -- that we start out all sort of jumbled together and the hand of God sorts us out.

DAVID SAMUELSON: I think you're right that the characters don't all begin that way.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: But you see, I would put more emphasis on that than I think you do, that they do not begin that way. They begin as very complicated, and often have very complicated choices. Lester is a perfect example of someone who is no less and no more admirable than any of us. Certain things like the teasing of Betty that were taken for granted; she has hard choices to make. So I guess one can put the emphasis on the sort[ing] out, or one can put the emphasis on the choices.

RICHARD PURTILL: But again, I don't see how anybody who has read Williams can say his characters are cardboard.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: That also has something to do with the experiment he was trying to conduct, that I talked about a little bit this morning. His characters aren't intended to be realistic; I really don't believe that anyone of them were, right from the start. They were intended to be real people: at the same time, he was using them as symbols. That's why he wanted the word "image." He didn't want to lose sight of Lester as a woman, but he also doesn't want us to forget that this is a woman who represents, perhaps, all women as she approaches the positive kind of spiritual definition, while Evelyn represents the kind of woman who lets petty malice just take [her] to pieces.

FRED WILLIAMS: To pick up a line from earlier in the day, there's this "sorting into patterns" -- taking a jumble and weaving things together into patterns. I think that's part of the clue to what all the novels, at least, had depicted. And with that in mind (I'd like to propose "image" also for this), people have been talking about these polarities, the

good and the bad and all that, and the fact that people start out in the middle. What I propose is that instead of being shades of gray, what you've got are [...] white and black dots that can be woven into the streams of black and white. What appears to be gray is actually the neighboring, if you will, black and white.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: Another thing about his characters: maybe we should start making a distinction between the earlier novels and the last two. I reread Greater Trumps for this paper, and I love it, but some of the love by-play -- people would never talk that way! (laughter) On the other hand, talking about Descent into Hell and All Hallows' Eve, I would argue with someone drawing the same conclusions about realism of characters.

RICHARD PURTILL: Well, I don't say that Williams never used cardboard -- as all of us do occasionally, to our sorrow -- but, Sybil, as cardboard?

PAUL NOLAN HYDE: It's interesting hearing all of this talking about Williams' characters. The single most consistent criticism of J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings was "no character development," "two-dimensional characters." Yet if you look at what Tolkien was doing (my little theory about it) is that he was writing in a mode. Which brings me back to what you were saying: Tolkien was writing in a fairy tale mode and because of that, everything is two-dimensional. So if he [Williams] is indeed writing in a thriller mode, then you can have cleverly, skillfully designed two-dimensional characters without being objectional. He may have done it on purpose. I don't know if we can know that.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: That brings up an important distinction, which is why I think we were talking at cross-purposes for a little while. Two ways of being cardboard or two-dimensional. One is that the characters are not realistically portrayed, and the other is that they don't change. Williams is a good example of someone [whose characters] aren't realistically portrayed all the time, but character development is extremely well portrayed.

DAVID SAMUELSON: I think you have to recognize that outside the Mythopoeic Society, most readers of English Literature in the 20th Century don't give two glances at Charles Williams, because the academic establishment has already decided that Williams is inconsequential. And the reason he is inconsequential, as far as the academic establishment is concerned, is because he is doctrinaire and because he is simplistic.

(FROM AUDIENCE): If the academic establishment happens to be wrong on that....

DAVID SAMUELSON: The academic establishment is usually wrong. (laughter) It took three hundred years to discover it.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I don't perceive academic attitudes toward Williams [as] necessarily being that negative. Now of course it might be just by comparison, because I started out in Lovecraft studies. (laughter) I think there is some academic acceptance of Williams -- Chuck Huttar is doing an MLA session and all.

DAVID SAMUELSON: No, I include Williams in my Modern Fantasy class, so obviously there are dents in the armor.

RICHARD PURTILL: But before we get too far away from Paul's comment, one of the best refutations of that charge about Tolkien is Ursula Le Guin's little essay about Frodo. I recommend you all read [it] just to see how these distinctions are beautifully made by somebody who is intellectually out of sympathy with Tolkien, who is a non-Christian, even an anti-Christian writer who can appreciate what Tolkien is trying to do, and not conceal philosophical criticism as literary criticism.

EDITH CROWE: The kind of criticism you just talked about is the essential criticism that is always made about fantasy and science fiction. It's always been character that has been criticized. The academic idea is that there is this definition of what a novel should be, and it's a relatively narrow definition. Any kind of genre that doesn't treat character the same way is criticized. That's the classic kind of criticism that's been made of fantasy, without looking into the idea that maybe that's not what's being done; that there's a different set of parameters for that kind of novel than for a naturalistic novel. I don't think you can necessarily use the same kind of parameters for every single novel, because there are novels and there are novels.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: Yes.

EDITH CROWE: And Williams is writing essentially fantasy novels.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: That's changing to a certain extent. I was a research assistant for a senior professor this past year at Duke, Jane Tompkins, and was doing work on canonicity and literary value. We have really benefitted from a number of people trying to open up the literary canon, including the feminists and women's studies people, who are looking at non-canonical genres like the prairie diary and other things that have been called "non-literature."

DAVID SAMUELSON: No, don't forget that all the linguistic-oriented criticism, structuralism and semiotics, is paying more attention to the genre literature which reveals these things blatantly...

BERNADETTE BOSKY: That's true.

DAVID SAMUELSON: ...than the so-called "realistic" literature, which tends to displace it or hide it somewhere. Any good literature is that which is difficult, and requires me, as a professor, in order to explain it. (laughter)

ANTOINETTE BRENION: About Williams as poet: the plays, I find, read like poetry. And I think that's true of a number of his plays: that there's more feeling of poetry than prose, that it's more designed to be read aloud than to be read on the page. That's a difference basically between prose and poetry. Poetry you feel more when you're reading it out loud than when you see it on the page.

THOMAS CLARESON: It seems to me that the emphasis on characterization comes from, largely, the influence of Henry James, just the way the emphasis upon realism comes from William Dean Howells. Bernadette's earlier remark leads me to Everyman, the medieval morality play. There's a great body of literature [in] which even the academics recognize that the everyday goings on of the human mind, of the human personality, are not important. It's what the character does. One of the central concerns of Williams -- and I'm speaking

from slight acquaintance, forgive me -- and that whole British generation, is the salvation of the soul, and very often the salvation of the masculine soul, which is why there are not as many important women in their novels as in other cases. Is the character going to be saved? Is the character going to achieve salvation? Which is the equivalent perhaps of some of the actions of Arthur or Beowulf. The one point I want to re-emphasize is, even academics recognize that there are some stories in which the workings of characters' minds are not important, but what the character does or does not do is what the story is all about.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: A couple of things I think Bernadette said [are] exactly what I had in mind to some degree. But just one thought: so far we are assuming that what Williams has written are supernatural thrillers. I have very severe reservations in calling them pulp literature at all. I think he uses that as a hook to bait people in, [but] he is writing an entirely different kind of novel. Each one of his works is an attempt at some very serious experimentation; he is trying to do what Dante did in The Divine Comedy. He is writing -- I hate to use the term, because everybody's going to get upset -- he's trying to write a Dantean allegory.

DAVID SAMUELSON: For what it's worth, in writing about Williams I rejected the phrase "supernatural thriller" in favor of calling them "occult fantasies."

DAVID BRATMAN: You can't necessarily, though, put an author down in a particular spot and say that they are circumscribed by that. When you're doing this, you're trying to find some vague general approximation that will give a general description so you can decide how the person is best describable in terms of the traditions, the other authors. But that doesn't mean that other things that don't fall within that category are not also valid points of comparison.

WENDELL WAGNER: There's a very basic objection to the whole idea that you started with, of trying to say that this person is really a poet and this one is really a novelist, or any of those terms you used. [It is] that nobody, including the author, has this omniscient view of what their body of work is really like. Such a view changes not only during an author's life as he puts out new works, but it changes after his death as his work is re-interpreted. Two points: not only did Williams consider himself a poet and other people considered him a poet during nearly all his life, Lewis considered himself a poet also...

DAVID SAMUELSON: Considered Williams a poet. Considered himself a poet?

DAVID BRATMAN: He [Lewis] did write poetry, certainly. So in that sense, he could be considered a poet.

ALEXEI KONDRATIEV: He wanted to be. As a young man, it was his ambition.

DAVID BRATMAN: However I wanted to respond to what you (to Wendell Wagner) said. When I proposed that idea, I was not making it as a universal and exclusive truth, but as a generalization. The proper response to a generalization is not to point out there are all these exceptions to it. There is no generalization about which that isn't true, including this one. (laughter) The proper response is to perhaps see how valid it is, but the most important

thing to do is to see how you can view the thing that you're looking at through that perspective, through that lens.

DAVID SAMUELSON: It's an aid for comparison.

DAVID BRATMAN: Yes, it is.

JOE CHRISTOPHER: I wonder whether anybody here would like to offer a defense of the Arthurian poetry? In other words, where would we go first if we were attempting to defend it in the modern world? What would be the obvious points to make in favor of it?

JUDITH KOLLMANN: In regard to the Arthurian [poetry] -- again personal reaction -- I think that the Arthurian poems are by far Williams' most finest work. They're gorgeous. One of the reasons I think so, is if you read the cycle, and then read virtually anything that has been written in the 20th Century -- huge generalizations, right? And I would not except something as famous and as beautiful as The Once and Future King -- you will find at careful reading that Williams has done the most genuinely innovative, total understanding of the entire legend. And compressed the entire tale, everything that is to him significant, within a very few poems. What took Mallory in Le Morte d'Arthur about a thousand pages to do, Williams has done in approximately forty-eight poems. Every word has been placed carefully. It is done meticulously. The comment about never making, never using an image by accident goes doubly for these poems. They are works of art that to me are so perfect they almost look like something done in enamel.

(FROM AUDIENCE): Actually, I have a comment about the poetry. Would it be right to view Williams' poems the same way we view Pound's poems? Pound doesn't have a wide audience, but he is definitely viewed as one of the great poets. I think maybe the reaction is the same to both. If Williams had stayed alive and kept writing more, he might be recognized more, since there's so little of him.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: I don't think he ever would be acknowledged on the level of Pound. But that is to praise by faint damns. I have seen poetry based on visions as complex, I have seen poetry based on visions as unified, but I have seen precious little poetry that that well explicated a vision both that complex and that unified. And it is a very complicated system, but, hey, you know, acquired tastes have status points! I think that I would not compare the profundity or wit of his vision with Pound, but still I would say that you're right in that because of the degree of complexity, it is an acquired taste. It's a taste that not everybody is ever going to acquire, but I think it is an extremely good example of what it is.

AMY FALKOWITZ: On a totally different direction: I reread all of the novels in time for the Conference. One of the things that struck me, particularly in Many Dimensions: he lets the characters experiment with concepts, and he hit on some concepts that are very popular in current and recent science fiction. Many Dimensions is where he answers the time-travel paradox and does it beautifully. If you look at very popular science fiction such as Dr. Who, the time loop idea: if you do something that creates the paradox by time travel, where the choice is either/or, and you can't make either of those choices, yet you must because the system has been set up. It drops you out of the

current progressive reality where time is going forward. [Williams] does that. He does another thing. This may sound very funny to people but I'd like them to consider that, in some ways, a direct descendant of the novel Many Dimensions, is the movie Raiders of the Lost Ark. In the sense that you have an object, a physical object, that is ultimately destructive to this world because this world cannot tolerate the powerful, the energy if you will, of the divine presence.

DAVID SAMUELSON: But that's in the first five novels.

AMY FALKOWITZ: But it's particularly strong -- it just happened to hit me in Many Dimensions. Because of what happens near the end, with the Stone coming back to itself and destroying things in its way.

DAVID SAMUELSON: And I can see Stephen Spielberg doing that on screen too.

(FROM AUDIENCE): I wonder if any analysts can comment on something that I found when I tried to read all of Williams' novels: there were paragraphs, usually quite big ones, that I really ended up skipping because my eyes would permanently be glazed over.

BERNADETTE BOSKY: This brings [us] to something I've been wanting a hook for all day. One of the odd things I've noticed about Williams -- and I really want to know if other people have experienced this. You like something, so you recommend it to friends, right? But usually you can calibrate a little. You can tell, "Well, if she likes this, she doesn't like that." So, therefore, there's a greater or lesser chance that he or she will like Williams. I have found no pattern like that that I can identify. Most of the people I've recommended Williams to either find him totally impenetrable, or they just lap it up. And I cannot determine grounds for judging who will do which. It's not religion; it's not liking complex versus simple prose style; it's not the amount of action one likes in novels. The only thing I can think that's even close, is that people who like detailed descriptions of states of consciousness or who have interest in standard and non-standard states of consciousness are a little more likely to like Williams. But it baffles me. Have you (to David Samuelson) experienced this?

DAVID SAMUELSON: No. What I have found in classes, and using about three or four different Williams novels, is that 95% of my class has a violent antipathy to Williams. Some of them will do it on entirely opposite grounds from what I heard Judith say before: it isn't because he's occult that they're turned off by him, but because he's Christian.

JUDITH KOLLMANN: But you teach in California, and I teach in Michigan.

DAVID SAMUELSON: They say, "This isn't fantasy, this is just Christian metaphor."

RICHARD PURTILL: Well, there's another factor to be considered. When your eyes glaze over at certain passages, you just haven't quite learned to speak "Charles Williams" as a native speaker. (laughter) Chip Delaney is probably our best critic of science fiction, [and] has some very interesting things to say

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world, why should there not be a sort of "Christianity" in his secondary world? The answer is that there should be, as evidenced by Boromir's absolution, Gandalf's resurrection, and the eucatastrophe of Minas Tirith. The Christian influence brought to Middle-earth is evidenced in ways other than resolution. It is a strange coincidence that the day Frodo departs from Rivendell on his quest is December 25, Christmas Day, and the day on which the Ring is destroyed is March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation.

The very nature of Christianity is optimistic, based on the ultimate triumph of good over evil. The sub-creator of Middle-earth was a devout Catholic and believed in this optimistic faith, and he passed this belief into his sub-creation. Tolkien, the Christian, could not in good conscience allow evil to triumph again.

In each example, we see evil trying to work its will, only to be beaten off by some Christian belief. For Boromir, the lust for the Ring was too much to fend off. Yet in the end, Boromir confesses this sin to Aragorn and dies with a clean conscience. I personally have no doubt that he finally passed over the sea. He was forgiven.

Gandalf fell defending the members of the Fellowship against one of the most powerful evil beings left in Middle-earth, and it appeared that his guidance, wisdom, and motivation were taken from the Free Peoples of the world too soon. Yet he was sent back to complete his task, truly a eucatastrophe, and a miracle to those who thought he was gone.

Minas Tirith was on the brink of disaster, and the Rohirrim suddenly appeared to turn the course of the battle. Each time that evil is on the verge of a victory, there is some sort of saving grace, a eucatastrophe, just as the eucatastrophe of Christ's resurrection saves Man in the Bible. The Christianity of the primary world is mirrored in Tolkien's secondary world.

As shown by examples above, the dissonances of the first victory of Evil (in The Silmarillion) are resolved into the harmony of the victory of Good (in The Lord of the Rings) by the Christian influence brought into Middle-earth by its sub-creator. To Tolkien, the Christian and the sub-creator, it seems almost inconceivable that The Lord of the Rings would end in any way other than a happy ending:

The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the "happy ending"... So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he [man] may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true.... (Ibid.)

NOTES

- [1] J.R.R. Tolkien, "Leaf by Niggle," The Tolkien Reader (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), p.88.
 [2] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), p. 320.
 [3] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Silmarillion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983), p. 153.
 [4] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Two Towers (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), p. 135.
 [5] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), p. 24.

- [6] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Book of Lost Tales -- Part II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), p. 160.
 [7] J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," The Tolkien Reader (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), p. 68.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Robert Boenig of Rutgers University for his advice and assistance in the preparation of this paper.

- Old Germanic Ethics, continued from page 12
 ed., A Tolkien Compass (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1975), pp. 153 ff.
 4. Tacitus, Agricola and Germania, ed. and trans. Maurice Hutton (New York: Putnam, 1925), pp. 282-285.
 5. See Rosemary Woolf, "The Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord in the Germania and in The Battle of Malden," Anglo-Saxon England 5 (1976), pp. 63-81.
 6. C. L. Wrenn and W. F. Bolton, eds., Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), p. 200. Translations from Old English are my own.
 7. See Peter Hallberg, Old Icelandic Poetry, trans. Paul Schach and Sonja Lindgrenson (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), pp. 102 f.
 8. J. Olrek and H. Raeder, eds., Saxonic Gesta Danorum, Vol. I (Hauniae: Levin and Munksgaard, 1931). pp. 54-55. The translation is my own.
 9. The passages from The Battle of Malden are taken from Frederic G. Cassidy and Richard N. Ringler, eds., Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).
 10. J. R. R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
 11. Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation ed. J. E. King (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 161-163. The translation is my modernized version of King's.
 12. See Tolkien's essay, "On Fairy Stories," in J. R. R. Tolkien, The Tolkien Reader (New York: Ballantine, 1966), pp. 5 ff.

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about the way you have to learn a new language to read science fiction. Well, you have to learn a new language -- and it's not just a sub-language, either -- to enjoy Charles Williams. Sooner or later you do, if you keep up with it.

DAVID BRATMAN: I think we've come to a conclusion on Charles Williams and I thank you for coming to this panel.

Art Submissions

Submissions of art are strongly encouraged and requested. They may be drawings of scenes from, or thematic treatments of, the works of Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams, as well as general treatments of fantastic and mythological themes. Art should be 4 1/2" wide and from 1 to 5 1/2" tall. Full page art should be 7 1/2" wide by 10" tall. Address inquiries to the Art Editor (see page 2 for address).