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An Inklings' Bibliography (24)

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An Inklings' Bibliography (24)

Abstract
A series of bibliographies of primary and secondary works concerning the Inklings.
This Bibliography is an annotated checklist covering both primary and secondary materials on J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and the other Inklings. Authors and readers are encouraged to send off-prints or bibliographic references to the compiler:

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This volume of poetry consists of "Prologue" (pp. 11-12), "New Year Letter" (pp. 15-71), "Notes" to the previous poem (pp. 75-162), "The Quest" (pp. 165-184), and "Epilogue" (pp. 187-189). The main interest to this original edition (here photographically reprinted) is in the "Notes," which do not accompany later reprints of "New Year Letter."

Auden writes in "New Year Letter": Each salesman now is the polite Adventurer, the landless knight GWAIN—QUIXOTE, and his goal The Fraudenteist of his weak soul.

(11. 1547-1550)

His note on "the landless knight" quotes two sentences from Lewis: The Allegory of Love about landless knighthood in Provence: "The unattached knight, as we meet him in the romances, respectable only by his own valour, amiable only by his own courtesy, predilest lover of other men's wives, was therefore a reality" (Lewis' second sentence, p. 12 of The Allegory of Love, p. 150 of The Double Man). Lewis' book is listed in the "Modern Sources" (pp. 161-162), appearing at the end of the notes.

Again, from "New Year Letter": How grandly would our virtues bloom
In a more conceivable dust
Where Freedom dwells because it must,
Necessity because it can, And men confederate in Man.

(11. 1598-1602)

Auden's note on "Where Freedom dwells because it must, Necessity because it can" reads in full: "For this quotation, and for the ideas in the poem, v. The Descent of the Dove by Charles Williams" (p. 153, referring to Williams' discussion of the Council of Jerusalem in the first chapter of The Descent of the Dove: "It is the choice of necessity; it is the freedom of all that is beyond necessity"). Oddly, Williams' book does not appear in the list of "Modern Sources."

This poem and these notes are significant since they were written soon after Auden's return to Christianity, which was partly under the influence of Williams' The Descent of the Dove. Since Lewis: The Allegory of Love is quoted and footnoted in Williams' fourth chapter, Auden may have read Lewis because of Williams. Christopher and Ostling do not list this Auden work in their Lewis checklist, nor does Glenn list it in her Williams checklist. Note: The British edition, published under the title New Year Letter, is said to have some differences in its notes; it has not been seen.


The second of the three sections in this paperback of horror stories is titled "Erol Undercliffe: a tribute"; it consists of "The Franklin Paragraphs," a pseudo-corrrespondence between the author and the presumably fictional Erol Undercliffe—and "The Interloper," a story attributed to Undercliffe. In the correspondence, Undercliffe quotes from We Pass from View, by Roland Franklin (an imaginary work), which includes the initiate in certain rites involving "Ag'lak, Sauron, Dolbuth angul' , Ellath Shabag" (p. 44). Thus Tolkien's Sauron becomes a demon master for later devil worshippers. Note: Not all the stories in the other two sections—"Nightmares" (four stories) and "Relationships" (nine stories)—have been checked for allusions to Tolkien.

Carpenter, Humphrey. W. H. Auden: A Biography. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. xvi + 495 pp. Indices. [Barfield, 478n; Campbell, 213, 366; Cecil, 381; Coghill, 53-57, 74, 81, 160, 167n; 169, 223, 366 (in index 281), 480; Christopher Tolkien, 481; J.R.R. Tolkien, 4 (a letter from Auden to Tolkien is briefly quoted but the index omits it because Tolkien is not mentioned), 55, 81, 115, 377, 378n, 379, 397n, photographic note no. 138 and 337) 463n, 475-477 nn; Wain, 384; Williams, 223-224, 231, 237, 283-287, 293 (not in the index), 295-296 (the latter not in the index), 300-301, 310, 337, 358-359 (the former not in the index), 360 (a letter to Tolkien is quoted; not in the index), 400 (a letter to Tolkien is quoted; not in the index), 405 (so the index, but there is no reference on that page), 448, 473n; Wrenn, 55. Previously unpublished Oxford Press memo by Williams, pp. 223-224."

Carpenter's biography is a major study of Auden, putting his poems in the context of his life; it also traces his life (and his usually homosexual love life) in detail. One important lover's name in the New York years seems to be suppressed, and there are such minor omissions as no mention of the two book clubs for which Auden served as one of the three judges. From the point of view of a student of the Inklings, the odd omission is that of C.S. Lewis. In "A Thanksgiving," Auden mentions Kierkegaard, Williams, and Lewis as having guided him back to belief (cf. p. 448 where the first two are mentioned in connection with the poem), but nothing is made of this: Carpenter dates Auden's conversion (or return) to Christianity from late 1939 to October 1940. Perhaps, unlike the reading of Williams' The Descent of the Dove and Kierkegaard's works which can be dated in this period (pp. 283-286), no significant trace of Lewis can be found in Auden's reading at this time (the only primarily Christian work published by Lewis before Auden's change is The Pilgrim's Regress; The Problem of Pain came out, in England, on 8 October 1940)—but even a footnote on the positive state of the evidence would be helpful. Actually, a reference to Lewis' The Allegory of Love can be found in the notes to "New Year Letter" (pp. 150-151), where Auden wrote in this period; although it seems doubtful that that book could have had much religious influence, the reference does show that Auden knew Lewis as an author. Nevil Coghill, a twenty-seven-year-old don at Exeter College, was Auden's tutor in English (between pp. 336 and 337) and some of Coghill's experiences with Auden are recounted (pp. 53-54, 74). Auden studied Anglo-Saxon with Charles Wrenn (p. 55), although his great experience of that language was in hearing J.R.R. Tolkien recite it during a lecture (p. 55). Auden's friendship with John Betjeman during his Oxford years is mentioned, but, although Betjeman's sympathy for Anglo-Saxon is noted (p. 65), that Lewis was his tutor is not. Presumably Auden was aware of Lewis to some degree at that time, in 1926-1927. Probably during these years Coghill introduced Auden to John Garrett—with whom, in 1934, Auden co-edited a poetry anthology (p. 168). When Auden took his examinations for his B.A. in 1928, he received a Third Class—Tolkien was one of the three
examiners for that test period (p. 81). One pupil of Coghill at that time suggests that Coghill's youth and failure to become a disciplinarian was partly responsible for Auden's poor showing (p. 81).

But Coghill's friendship with Auden did not end at this point. Coghill, one of his visitors when he was teaching in 1933 (p. 160); Coghill and Auden in 1934 made some suggestions for modernizing the language of a medieval Noah's Flood play when it was presented in London (p. 187n); in 1937, after he left teaching and about six months before he left for America, he put Auden to visit Coghill, possibly to visit John Masefield. Coghill seems likelier, although Carpenter does not say so, for Auden during that July visit was introduced to Charles Williams, who was visiting Oxford (p. 223). Finally, in 1956, Coghill and Lord David Cecil canvassed for election as Professor of Poetry at Oxford University (p. 381). It was during the period when Auden was in Oxford as the Professor of Poetry that John Wain called on him in the Cadenza Cafe where he was available for conversations (p. 384).

Roy Campbell is mentioned only a few times in the book. His (partly inaccurate) account of Auden in Spain during the Spanish Civil War is quoted on p. 213; Campbell, of course, was pro-Franco and anti-Communists and their sympathizers, so he was at this time opposed to Auden's general position. Campbell did receive Tolkien's letter of 1949 before he wrote of it in his New York Times review Auden's Collected Shorter Poems (1950) with mild praise: "of all those who are selling the fort today, Auden keeps the most grace, charm and skill" (p. 366).

Williams' influence on Auden was more significant than Coghill's, as far as his writing is concerned, since it resulted in the first visit to Coghill in July 1937 in Oxford; they discussed the possibility of Auden editing The Oxford Book of Light Verses; they met Williams in July 1937 in Oxford; discussing the Oxford University Press memo by Williams, which first outlined the proposal (pp. 223-224). Later, in 1939, after Auden had moved to America, bothered by hatred for some Poles he saw expressed by Germans and in light of Hitler's actions in Germany, Auden re-thought his liberal creed of man's perfectability—and read some books of Christian theology. He wrote to Williams The Descent of the Dove (pp. 283-284); Auden wrote to Williams two letters praising the book and went on to read Kierkegaard, whom Williams had discussed (p. 285); then he wrote "New Year Letter," with The Descent of the Dove the source of many ideas in it—as a note printed in the first edition indicated (pp. 285-287, 293, 295-296). In 1940 Auden wrote Williams about his beginning attempts to live as a Christian (p. 296). Auden's later view of Eros (in his case, homosexual Eros) as an approach to Agape may have been influenced by Williams (p. 300). Williams reviewed New Year Letter (British title) (p. 310). In 1949 Auden wrote "Memorial for the City," describing the destruction he had seen in Germany after the war, "in memory of Charles Williams" (p. 337); Carpenter does not make clear the significance of the image of the city to Williams by drawing attention to the date of writing. Williams noted. The previous year Auden—almost on a whim, it seems—wrote a pornographic poem, "The Platonic Blow" (how here as in-blow-job, referring to fellatio), in the style of Tolkien's Through Logres (pp. 358-359); Auden never agreed to its publication, but Tolkien did, with the result that the first 1950's view of "Christianity as a universal dance" (p. 301) may be indebted to Williams, although Lewis—or such an earlier work as Sir John Davies' Theology: A Poem of Dancing—may have had some influence here. As mentioned above, in Tolkien's letter to Auden says Tolkien that Auden mentions Williams' influence on his conversion (p. 448).

Auden's relationship to Tolkien did not end with his hearing Tolkien recite Beowulf in his undergraduate days and with Tolkien's judgement of his final examination at Oxford. Carpenter has a chapter on Tolkien and Williams as Theodore Beazley’s private papers according to the note this occurred in the 1980's (plate 18). Auden was enthusiastic about The Lord of the Rings (pp. 377, 379), reviewing the first and third volumes and obtaining galleys proofs of the third volume from Tolkien so he would have more time to do a good job. He gave a broadcast over the B.B.C. on the work (p. 379) and irritated Tolkien by describing his home as "hideous" at a Tolkien Society of America meeting—Auden never explained or apologized for his comment (p. 379n). For a while he judged readers' literary taste by how they reacted to The Lord of the Rings (p. 115). Although Carpenter's statement seems to be a paraphrase of the B.B.C. broadcast, Carpenter quotes a letter from Auden to Tolkien on The Lord of the Rings (p. 379), and mentions Tolkien's Anglo-Saxon poem for Auden and Tolkien's aborted plan to write a booklet on Tolkien (p. 378n) and Tolkien's plan to dedicate "Homage to Clio" to Tolkien (p. 378n) and quotes from a letter to Auden from Tolkien explaining a level of meaning in that poem (p. 379n)—although the poem appeared without the dedication (Carpenter does not say why; possibly Tolkien objected). Landscape (1965), however, has not survived. Tolkien does not mention Auden's "A Short Ode to a Philologist" which celebrates Tolkien in its last stanza. One word is quoted from another Auden letter to Tolkien (pp. 4, 463n); a description of the Mediterranean Catholic culture from another (pp. 360, 475n); a comment on his being elected to an Honorary Studentship at Christ Church College, Oxford, from yet another (pp. 400, 477n). In all, Carpenter quotes certainly from four different letters from Auden to Tolkien, possibly five (the letter on p. 397 is not identified in the notes at the back of the book)—three in 1955, one in 1963.


Cavaliero—the author of at least three essays on Williams, including "The Way of Affirmation" (1956) and "Charles Williams on Taliessin through Logres" (1965)—writes the second biography of Charles Williams, and his book is much more accessible than Hadfield's, better in style and more objective in its presentation. Cavaliero's first chapter is a brief life of Williams; he then has chapters on "The Early Poetry," "Criticism, Biographies and Plays," "The Novels," "The Arthurian Poems," and "Theology." His "conclusion" is a general evaluation; a brief appendix compares Williams' Arthurian images with those of Blake's myths, with a few comparisons to George MacDonald. Indicative of the scale upon which Cavaliero has chosen to write is a comparison of his discussions of the Arthurian poems with those by Lewis in Williams and the Arthuriad. Lewis is generally longer, not just with moral evaluation but in the range of ideas detailed on the specifics.

In "The Life" there are some surprises for the reader of Hadfield's book and Carpenter's The Inklings. Cavaliero downplays Williams' involvement with the Inklings: ...Charles was drawn into the company of friends known to posterity as 'The Inklings,' of whom G.S.
Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien are the most celebrated. Although Williams shared many of their beliefs and interests, he appears to have been peripheral to the group, and the donnish atmosphere was alien to him. [p. 6]

In "Conclusion" another comparison appears, after Cavaliero notes that the method of Williams' novels "is parabolic": it is... appropriate, therefore, to compare Williams' work with Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. However, his approach to myth is essentially different from theirs. Whereas Lewis was primarily a teacher and Tolkien a storyteller, Williams was a poet. In Lewis' romances the didactic element predominates; however fantasia is the vivid element, it is subordinate to a design on the reader's beliefs. Tolkien is innocent of such an intent; for all the Christian symbolism detectable in it, The Lord of the Rings is purest drama, and great energy is the burden of its message. In Williams' work, however, the Christian myth is undisguisedly the theme: all his writing springs from his assent to it. And this assent, being imaginative as well as intellectual, both energises the work (so that with a deeper theological understanding there comes a greater command of literary form) and also prevents it from being directed at the reader. [p. 123]

In "The Early Poetry" Cavaliero associates Williams' poems—The Silver Stair (1912), Poems of Conformity (1917), Divorce (1920), Windows of Night (1924) with the Victorian traditions of Coventry Patmore, Francis Thompson, and Robert Stephen Hawker, whose occasional tones of Chestertonian or Bellow-like. In the chapters on The Silver Chariot and The limitations of his work are self-evident: Williams reveals little interest in his contemporaries, and... is an authoritative writer" [p. 126] —are all of them aspects of the Way of Affirmation. [p. 157]

The final section, "Conclusion," makes it clear that Cavaliero does not consider Williams a major writer, but an important minor one: the limitations of his works are self-evident. Williams reveals little interest in his contemporaries, and his novels are dominated by the "artificiality of the conventions of theatre enabled him to employ embodied abstractions, and to clothe his pictorial, associative method of thought in appropriate forms of character and action." [p. 44]

This Cavaliero being uncharacteristically jargonish; myth is not clearly defined, "an authoritative writer" [p. 126]; they are discussions which assume a shared experience to be elucidated. Some placement of Williams' theological ideas is made: Gerard Manley Hopkins, who followed Dante, claims belief that there would have been an Incarnation without a Fall (p. 132); his treatment of romantic love is parallel to Dante (p. 133); he uses Soren Kierkegaard as an example of religious divided loyalties (p. 140); "his theological manner" are "Dante, Julian of Norwich, William Blake" (p. 148); despite the use of Blake, although Cavaliero does not state it, Williams is "loyal at heart to the traditional Catholic concept of Christendom" (p. 138). Cavaliero says that "The Descent of the Dove" is Williams' masterpiece (p. 137), and he sums up many of the ideas which this chapter traces in this way, which by this point are clear in their references:

Charles Williams' various themes—the Beatrician vision, the alteration in knowledge, the doctrine of substituted love, the quality of disbelief [—] are all of them aspects of the Way of Affirmation. [p. 157]

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A group of generally off-color limericks "issued anonymously" (p. 3) in edition of twenty-five copies (p. 4). One of these limericks not concerned with sexual matters is titled "In Memoriam":

In Erath, outside of the viles,
Lived a rancher whose rifle had skills;
The very last hobbit

on love, discussing "the nature of power" and "the relation between human freedom and divine providence;" and Descent Into Hell (1937) and All Hallows' Eve (1945) as visionary (not metaphysical). The analyses of the individual novels follow, partly in terms of Williams' religious ideas, partly in terms of artistic unity (or lack of it) in such matters as style, theme, and mode of presentation. Plot, themes and literary treatment coalesce in War in Heaven (1919) that makes The Place of the Lion the most technically flawless of the novels, and thus a more satisfyingly integrated fable than its predecessors" (p. 76). Despite this praise the large analysis of Descent into Hell suggests the greater (if not fully integrated) complexity, and greater meaning of The Lion's title.

The chapter on "The Arturian Poems" does not just duplicate Lewis' analyses, in part because Cavaliero takes up the two books of poems separately and provides an elaborate discussion of the organizational unity of Taliessin through his self-propagating personal myth. Besides considering the standard literary matters on these poems and their theological ideas, Cavaliero is interested in defining Williams at least partly in the modern poetic tradition (e.g., pp. 124-125).

Although de Sua lists Williams' The Figure of Beatrice in his bibliography (p. 138), none of his comments on Sayer's translation (pp. 109-110, 114-115, 120 n) indicate her indebtedness to Williams' criticism.

Griffiths, Bede. The Marriage of East and West. (Subtitle ? on title page, not on the cover: A Sequel to "The Marriage of East and West." Griffiths' book is of interest both for its references to Barfield and Lewis and as an associative item, since it seems to be close to Jurg in some matters; for example, in seeing men and women as equal (p. 49-50) but also as typifying reason and intuition respectively (p. 164). In the annotation of Griffiths' Return to the Centre ("Inkling Bibliography 7"), it was noted that Griffiths was distinguished from Lewis (particularly in seeing the Holy Spirit as feminine; here he explains the basis for this view (p. 55), and, indeed, briefly indicates how each Person of the Trinity may be considered feminine (pp. 191). In short, there is much flexibility:

We have always to be vigilant in our mind that the ultimate Truth, the ultimate Mystery, the ultimate Truth, always lies beyond our conception. The great Mysteries of the world reveal different aspects of this mystery according to the imaginative insight of the different peoples of the world. In Jesus the Mysteries took a particular historical form which is recorded in the New Testament and preserved in the Church. But the Mystery is capable of ever new understanding as the human mind reflects upon it. [p. 202]

Wildman has 362 listings in her primary bibliography, and a secondary bibliography of works consulted has an additional fifty-three items. The primary bibliography is an impressive work, with a large number of obscure publications listed among its movies, plays, poems, fiction, musical works, and miscellaneous items. A Checklist—probably only an associational item; she wrote the first full-length book on Williams, yet no evidence has been given that her book borrowes from his Arthurian poems. The major omission in this field of related works is Sanders Anne Laubenthals novel Excalibur (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975).}

In secondary sources, Wildman lists E.M.R. Ditmas' "King Arthur in Literature" (1960), which refers to Williams; T.S. Eliot's "The Significance of Charles Williams" (1948), which is a review of Arthurian Toast; Lewis's Arthurian Toast (1948), with an annotation which identifies Williams' part; and Charles Moorman's Arthurian Triptych (1960). The omissions of the Williams checklist was probably only an associational item; she wrote the first full-length book on Williams, yet no evidence has been given that her book borrowes from his Arthurian poems. The major omission in this field of related works is Sanders Anne Laubenthals novel Excalibur (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975).