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Seeing Williams' Work as a Whole: Church Year and Creed as Structural Principles

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Seeing Williams' Work as a Whole: Church Year and Creed as Structural Principles

Abstract

Believes that Williams frequently used symbols related to the liturgical year of the Anglican Church, and to its creeds, in his fiction, poetry, and drama.

Additional Keywords

Anglican Church—Liturgical year in Charles Williams; Athanasian Creed in Charles Williams; Nicene Creed in Charles Williams

Seeing Williams' Work as a Whole

Church Year and Creed as Structural Principles'

Charles Huttar

At the end of *The Divine Comedy* Dante laments the inadequacy of words to capture what is in his mind of the experience of Paradise, and also how far short that memory falls, in turn, from the experience itself. Then there is still a third remove: how limited was the experience, even at its most intense, in relation to the divine reality which it sought to encompass (*Paradiso* 33.55 ff.). "His actual knowing," writes Charles Williams in the course of commenting on this canto, "is a reflection," by "Way of the Affirmation of Images" (*Figure of Beatrice*, 231), a momentaneous glimpse, but never more than partial. For Williams understood that the human mind's normal means of apprehending truth involves images.¹ Even when it is still only by the mediation of symbol that we can begin to know what we have experienced or to express it. The role played by symbol in this transaction is not that of a merely passive aid; by appealing to the imagination, symbols actively guide the intellect to new understanding.

Among the symbols which worked most powerfully on Williams' imagination were two which as a lifelong Anglican he possessed, or which possessed him, from early days, systematic constructions that the Christian church had developed so as to make accessible the most important of its insights on the nature of the divine and on human destiny. I refer to (1) the liturgical year, the annual rhythm of seasonal changes in the Church's life, and (2) the creeds, with their concise formulas of belief which cut through, sometimes, centuries of wrangling, and yet which do not end once and for all the necessity of thought but rather engage the mind's energies in a task of interpretation that itself leads to understanding. These symbols being important to Williams, we might expect to find him referring to them in his theological writings where such references would seem appropriate. What is striking, however, is the number of times he explicitly refers to them in other writings — his poetry, fiction, and drama. If, taking a cue from this unusual situation, we look more deeply for references that are not explicit, we find Williams' consciousness of the City, Exchange, and the human figure, help to weave together in unity the great variety of his literary output. I do not claim that Williams at any point deliberately undertook to produce a body of work that would exhaustively parallel the various elements of either the church year or the creed; merely that these symbols were so much a part of his mind that he was constantly using them as vehicles for his meaning.

Before any further trying of conclusions, however, we must assemble the data; and we will begin with the pattern of seasonal references found in Williams' writings. One of the in-house jobs that fell to Williams in the course of his career at Oxford University Press was editing *The New Christian Year*, an anthology of brief selections for daily meditation, arranged according to the liturgical calendar. As the title suggests, the Press was updating an older devotional handbook in order to continue meeting the demands of a market that had existed, in England, since the revival of liturgical consciousness in general by the Tractarian

movement a century before. Back then the Rev. John Keble had published a volume of devotional verse entitled *The Christian Year*, echoing in his turn the work of the seventeenth-century bishop Thomas Ken, evoking a concept that had received little stress in the English church during the intervening hundred-odd years. By the time of his new volume, Williams had already made a similar anthology, *The Passion of Christ*, providing material more intensively for reflections on one segment of this calendar.

In these two little works we may note two characteristics that are typical of Williams. The first, of course, is the use of the liturgical calendar as a structural framework. The second is a tendency to go beyond the obvious or surface meaning of a symbol or text and enlarge its meaning for the reader by exploring the relevance of an idea not ordinarily associated with it. By the nature of the books, however, since they consist entirely of quotations, if these arresting juxtapositions reflect any unusual notions of the compiler's own, he is nevertheless solidly supported by traditional Christian thought from "church fathers" to contemporary writers.

The same two characteristics are evident in some of Williams' earliest writing. All four of his pre-Arthurian volumes of poetry contain poems with titles that allude to the Christian year. Some of these, like the four Christmas poems (87-91) and others² in *Poems of Conformity*, are straightforward celebrations of or meditations on the liturgical occasion. Others, however, use the occasion to symbolize what Williams sees as an analogous circumstance in a love relationship.³ This strategy is justified, implicitly, by his Beatrixian doctrine derived from Dante (cf. *Figure of Beatrice*, 7-8, 27-30); and while its thrust is to illumine the relationship of the marriage partners, readers may feel that, for them, it also in the process enlarges the range of meanings the symbol can carry.

Let us walk through the year's cycle and see where else Williams, usually without calling direct attention to it, uses the Christian seasons. We shall find that most of his novels and plays, as well as some other works, enter into this scheme. For nearly every season we will find at least one work closely identified with it, and sometimes others that touch upon its themes.

Advent is the time of waiting; the Church associates it with the anticipation of two distinct events, the birth of Jesus and, still future to us, his second Coming, and finds many essential similarities between them. Its themes are hope, patience, and preparation. Charles Williams' Advent novel is *Shadows of Ecstasy*. This story is set in an apocalyptic near future. Its central character, Nigel Considine, is a Messiah figure who proclaims the coming of a new age in human history, setting himself to succeed at last in the venture where he conceives the Christ of the first century to have failed, the conquest of death. Its other characters include two elderly Jews, masters of an immense fortune but interested only in keeping a faithful vigil for the coming of the Messiah, and a professor of

poetry, Roger Ingram, who sees fulfilled in Considine the imperfectly understood vision which the experience of great art has given him. His efforts to understand what is happening start him reflecting on lines from Yeats's "The Second Coming": "What rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?" (45). Then at the end, when Considine has been shot and his body has disappeared, Ingram dreams wistfully of the hero's return, as an almost-once and future king, from some undefined sea-heaven. His reverie closes with this ellipsis: "If -- beyond, beyond belief! -- but if he returned..." (224). One or two of these Advent themes reappear elsewhere in Williams: for example, the Clerk Simon in *All Hallows' Eve* is another pseudo-Messiah, and both there and in *The Place of the Lion* we encounter an apocalyptic mood, while the title of *War in Heaven* comes from the book of Revelation (12:7). But only in *Shadows of Ecstasy* are the themes of Advent given such full scope. It is a very open-ended novel, and for that reason has failed to satisfy some readers, but if we consider that Advent is by definition expectation, not fulfillment, we may better appreciate the artistic consistency of this work in its avoidance of false closure.

Christmas is represented by *The Greater Trumps*, which I have studied in detail elsewhere as Williams' "Christmas novel." But Christmas implies a preceding Advent, and so the novel includes the Advent themes of watchful waiting, search, and prophecy of things to come. The two old gypsies, Joanna and Aaron, are most actively involved in the quest, but it is a Christian woman named, appropriately enough, Sybil who is most gifted with a prophet's vision. Halfway through the story there begins the specifically Christmas theme of fruition; from this point on, in fact, the action occurs on Christmas day. Through a welter of symbols the novel celebrates the union of divine and human in the Incarnation and the making of peace between God and Man. It closes with a symbolic Nativity scene: bathes in a brilliant and miraculous light shining on all those who had been in darkness.

Christmas is explicitly the theme of three of Williams' plays. *Seed of Adam* (1936) is subtitled "A Nativity Play," and *The House by the Stable* and *The Death of Good Fortune*, both written in the autumn of 1939 shortly after the outbreak of war, both have the subtitle "A Christmas Play." But it is as if, having given us the identification in so many words, Williams now sets out to make it as little obvious as he can. What he wrote of *Seed of Adam* applies equally to the other two: "This Nativity is not so much a presentation of the historic facts as of their spiritual value" (*Collected Plays*, 173). A quick account of *Seed of Adam* will show how Williams plays with time sequences and gives dramatic life to abstract ideas. At the beginning two of the Tree Kings, Tear and Sultan, each with his entourage, arrive before the house of Adam and Eve; they are all seeking for a return to Paradise. The gold-bearing king represents commerce and the incense-bearing king culture, neither of which is the Way of Return. They leave, and by Adam's order Mary and Joseph are betrothed. Then Mary undergoes the Annunciation, and she talks with Joseph. The scene changes to Bethlehem. The questers return. Adam reenters as the Emperor Augustus and begins taking a census. Now the Third King, offspring of Hell, arrives with his gift of myrrh, personified in a cannibalistic woman who attacks Mary to feed her hunger. The attack causes Mary to go into labor, Mary overcomes Myrrh and enters a stable, followed by Myrrh who acts as her midwife. Finally, the opposi-

tions are reconciled and the futile searching is replaced by fulfillment, as all join in a chorus of praise to God and to the newborn God-Man. In this play, by various means that universalize a specific time and place, Williams points to the Incarnation as the pivotal event in history.

That last idea is where *The Death of Good Fortune* begins: "Incipit vita nova," says Mary (*Collected Plays*, 279). But this play works on a smaller scale, dealing with only one aspect of the change wrought by the Incarnation. At the Birth the old gods die, most notably Fortune, who has ruled the ancient world -- but then Mary and her child restore him to life with a new name, Blessed Luck, for now "all luck is good" (179, 192, 194). In *The House by the Stable* a figure named Man has a house -- much like Adam's -- where, despite his servant Gabriel's warnings, he entertains the woman Pride and her brother Hell and is gambling his soul away. Mary and Joseph come that way "seeking shelter" (201). Man half-heartedly admits them to his stable for the night, an uncharacteristic act of tenderness which proves to be his salvation, for the cry of Mary giving birth diverts his attention from the game just as he is about to lose it, and the cheaters are driven off by Gabriel.

Williams' last poem "The Prayers of the Pope" has a Christmas setting, but rather than enact the birth, however symbolically, it portrays a seventh century celebration of the birth. As the world around seems to be disintegrating (epitomized by the collapse of the Round Table), the Pope in Rome struggles by his prayers to reassert the reconciling principle at the heart of the Incarnation.

Epiphany day is associated, in the Prayer Book that Williams knew, with the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem. We have already seen how Williams uses these figures in a Christmas play, *Seed of Adam*, as representatives of all mankind, posing a threat to the Messianic fulfillment by the false nature of their quests, but finally united in homage to the Christ. Both these themes Williams had earlier presented separately in the three "Epiphany" poems, all in a Chattertonian sort of ballad-meter, in *Poems of Conformity* (92-96).

More broadly, however, the theme of the Epiphany season is the manifestation of the divine in the world. One critic maintains that Williams whole *oeuvre* may be interpreted in terms of this theme (Nyenhuis). The word is in fact used to describe an event in *Many Dimensions* -- "the epiphany of the Tetragrammaton" (287) -- but if we wish to designate one work in which the theme is especially concentrated, that work would be *War in Heaven*. The chalice in this novel, the "Grael," is, insistently, a mere physical object; yet through it repeatedly "some non-spatial, non-temporal, non-personal existence" (117) manifests itself so that the cup seems to behave like something alive" (139). It is a vehicle by which the divine presence bursts upon people with "triumphant and blinding power" (244), differing in its effect according to whether they sought it to use or to adore it. Most blessed by the epiphany is the man nearest to an attitude of childlike innocence and trust, the Archdeacon of Castra Parvulorum. Strongly contrasting with this in the novel is a subtheme of the violation of the child: Adrian, reminiscent of the massacre of the Holy Innocents by Herod, which is closely associated with the Epiphany story through their separate feast day is on December 28.

Lent, as a season of penitence and fasting, has by

itself no extended parallels in Williams' work. Only in "The Son of Lancelot" is it glanced at, as a wintry time of contrition, spiritual hunger, and the sense of failure. But in the same moment, as C.S. Lewis has pointed out (161), Galahad is born, and thus the hope of salvation enters in at the lowest point of despair.

As a symbol for the confronting of temptation, after the model of Christ who stayed in the desert for forty days and was tempted, Lent flows into that more intensive season with which it closes, the celebration of Christ's Passion. Here temptation is repeated, in Gethsemane, and victory there followed at once by betrayal, suffering, and death. Lent and Passion combined loom large in Williams' writings.

His earliest work devoted to this theme, *The Rite of the Passion* (1929), approaches it fairly directly -- "conceived [Cavaliere tells us] as part of a three-hour service of Good Friday devotions" (40) -- but with major reshaping of the gospel narrative so as to give the characters a timeless quality. As in his Christmas plays of the following decade, Williams here manages to produce a work strikingly different from the ordinary seasonal chancel drama, though still very much on the seasonal theme. The play is related also to his early variations on the Passion theme in *The Silver Stair*, where the love-quest of a man for his beloved undergoes, in its progress, trials comparable to those of Christ (81-86). *The Rite of the Passion* is about Christ himself, but at the same time, by publishing it along with two plays about human love, Williams makes it part of a scheme that traces in a more general way "the death of love" (Glenn S).

Lent and the Passion are also the theme of Williams' radio play, *The Three Temptations*, in which the treatment of time is still more fluid. A short prologue provides the liturgical setting -- "to-morrow is the Commemoration of All Souls" (*Collected Plays*, 337) -- but in what follows Pilate, Caiaphas, and Herod are the central figures, from whose viewpoint we witness in a single continuous scene the baptism of Christ, his temptation in the desert, his betrayal by Judas and his sentencing. Each of the three rulers is enslaved to one of the temptations that Christ in the desert overcame. Collectively they represent the choice of a false "peace" (the 1942 date is significant) which is damnation, as contrasted with the "peace of God" which "pierces like a sword" (337). The path to victory through following Christ, Williams is saying, includes the Way of the Cross.

In his Passion plays Williams also presents the reverse side of the principle. The thematic point of Satan's role in *The Rite of the Passion* is that in the Cross evil plays a part in its own defeat. A more mature version of this character type is the Skeleton in the 1936 play *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury*. Here we find predominant the Lenten mood of confronting temptation, when the Skeleton -- "Christ's back" as he calls himself (*Collected Plays*, 54) -- presses Cranmer to face himself and his motives honestly as he moves toward an unchosen but unavoidable martyrdom. Though the emphasis may be on Cranmer's falling short of the example of Christ's Passion, still he participates in it to the extent he is able. He too feels forsaken ("where is my God?" [52]), he too suffers at the hands of unjust men, he too accepts the death. That it is not for the same reasons is of minor importance.

In Williams' novels, the character who imitates Christ's Passion is fairly common. The Archdeacon in

War in Heaven, having allowed his enemies to bind and give him over to death, experiences a dereliction of divine help (242). Chloe Burnett in *Many Dimensions* has her Gethsemane-like "agony" (218) and her Cross (260-62; Howard 93). Nancy in *The Greater Trumps*, her hand pierced, is held upside-down like the Tarot Hanged Man (229-31) and then thrown over a table as a "sacrifice" on an "altar" (247). Lester in *All Hallow's Eve* assumes a cruciform position with her own spectral body in order to protect her friend Betty from spiritual assault (159-64).

The last of these includes most clearly the idea of substitution which in theology is closely associated with Christ's death, and which came to the fore especially in Williams' later work. But Williams' novel of Passiontide is above all *Descent into Hell*, though the title also pushes us on toward Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil. For here too substitutionary suffering is a central theme. Pauline Anstruther willingly goes forth into darkness and uncertainty, for only a possibility of being helpful, and risking thus the danger which has most terrified her. In her Christ-like Passion she descends and delivers first a poor victim from aimless wandering and then an ancestor from a fiery torment. This "Hill of skulls" (89), truly a Golgotha transferred to England's green and pleasant land (134r), endures an earthquake (124) and a breaking up of graves (195-196) just as at Calvary. Pauline finds that the fire which tortured her ancestor is to her a comforting warmth (170). Because she has been faithful in imitating the sacrifice of Christ, to the degree she was able, her action participates in the entire pattern, already enacted, of which the sacrifice is only the beginning. Enabling her ancestor to "see... salvation" (170), she discovers that for herself also the Harrowing of Hell has proceeded on to an experience of "resurrection" (172). Once her heart is broken and ground to powder (173, echoing Psalm 51:17), Easter can come. "Dawn was in the air; behold, I make everything new" and, echoing the psalm of the Easter liturgy, "Awake, lute and harp... I myself will awake right early" (173).

Pentecost makes the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. Not until its last few pages does *The Place of the Lion* take shape as a Pentecost novel. The final chapter is "The Naming of the Beasts," and for the task Anthony Durrant receives a gift of tongues: "Hebrew it might have been or something older than Hebrew," perhaps "the language in which our father Adam named the beasts of the garden" (198-99). At the same time a light breeze starts to blow down across the fields a mighty flame can be seen, perpetually burning. The wind swells into "a terrific storm" surrounding Anthony as he carries out his task, and on his shoulder sits an eagle (201). Though Williams is not pedantically exact -- the bird is not a dove hovering -- he has brought together four of the Pentecost images in remarkably short compass. The fire is the most complex of these images, for here it is the manifestation of a lesser spirit, sinister and destructive; thus if the "tongue of fire" (117) and flickers of flame -- later to become an unquenchable blaze (159-65) -- allude to Pentecost, they do so only ironically. Even so, for Richardson these images represent that greater Spirit which will defeat the lesser (194-95). By the gift of that Spirit Anthony, through naming the beasts, accomplishes a larger task, quelling spiritual powers in high places such as can only be explained in the book by reference to ancient schools of thought (80), including the book of Revelation (90). Oppositions are sharply drawn; even so seemingly incidental a matter as the

name of Anthony's journal, *The Two Camps*, increases our sense of the polarization. The mood of the novel suggests that of the first-century Church. Analogies found in apostolic experiences have seemed to Anthony quite appropriate to the situation developing around him (86, 108). And the Spirit comes upon him in empowerment for a spiritual warfare.

More explicitly devoted to Pentecost is the prose play *Terror of Light* (1940), of which Williams did not live to complete a verse revision. The play uses normal time and a continuous action. It begins with some of Jesus' followers on the tenth day after his Ascension and ends, soon after the Spirit has descended, with the death of Mary. In the meantime visitors have come: Saul of Tarsus and Simon Magus, each for his own reasons unable to understand the Holy Spirit, and the ghost of Judas, who by a miracle of substitutionary love is being no longer excluded from the faithful. Mary departs because, she tells the others, her earthly task is done. The Spirit "which first lay on the waters and moved, and there was light; and lay entwined in my body and moved, and there was my son" now has lain "about you, the Companions, and moved and there was the Church" (*Collected Plays*, 373). The theology is more simply elucidated here than in *The Place of the Lion*, but the central theme is the same: the gift of the Spirit begins the conferring on human-kind of the power to carry on such works as Christ had done, and "greater" (John 14:12); or, to use the Old Testament imagery favored in the novel, begins to restore the Edenic domination.

Pentecost concludes that part of the cycle which celebrates the major acts in Christ's redemptive work. There remain such isolated commemorations as the saints' days, which also enter into Williams' writing. Among the early poetry we find verses to Sts. Michael, Mary Magdalene, and Stephen (*Windows of Night*, 135-39) as well as to St. Thomas (*Divorce*, 105-6). To Thomas he gives the title of "Apostle and Skeptic"; the latter is a favorite idea of Williams, who also has Thomas play that important role in the drama *Terror of Light* discussed above. Also, again, there are other verses that bear a liturgical title but are really about the relationship between husband and wife.⁵

Most conspicuous of the saints' days in Williams is the Feast of All Saints, November 1. *All Hallows' Eve* takes its title from the night when the action climaxes, October 31. It is, as Betty says, "a good night... for Lester to come to us here" (229), the dead to the living, for this is the night especially when spirits are abroad. It is also the night when "the Acts of the City [are] in operation" (234); the Church universal, the organism in which all the saints are united, is pursuing its ends. The enemies of good -- members of the other City -- have a last chance to try their powers, but the ceremonies are spoiled by -- well, by many things, including a heavy rain. It drums down on the roof and finally breaks through into the room, cleansing the stale air, baptizing the scene so to speak. With sharpened spiritual perception Lester is able to discern separately the "myriad drops" of the rain (256) as if the rain represented also the army of departed saints, the cloud of witnesses who make up the greater part of the City. The book ends with triumph over evil power as the Feast of All Saints dawns.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to treat the articles of the Creed in the same detail as the Church Year. On many of them I have already hinted at the

directions which Williams' interpretation took. It will suffice now to offer a mere chart of articles of belief and relevant works, with a few comments. Then our task will be complete enough and we must return to the task of considering conclusions. I shall use the Nicene Creed (*Book of Common Prayer*, 289-90), supplemented by others of comparable antiquity.

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible." Without denying the doctrine of the Trinity, *Many Dimensions* places great emphasis on the Unity. A Latinate cognate for "Almighty," "the Omnipotent," was Williams' frequent way of naming God. Another alternate name, regularly used by the Muslim Hajji in *Many Dimensions*, is "the uncreated." The dependence of the invisible spirit world upon God is a major theme in *The Place of the Lion*, as is the role of Man in creation (which would be an elaboration of the Creed's clause). Thus *The Place of the Lion* may be called Williams' novel of creation.

On the doctrine of the nature of the Son we will draw upon the Athanasian Creed (BCP, 57-70), to which Williams referred frequently throughout his writings. *The Greater Trumps* is preeminently Williams' novel of Christology. At its heart are key quotations from the Creed of Athanasius, occurring in their liturgical setting of Matins for Christmas day (124-125). This Creed stresses the union of divine and human in the Incarnation. It is also important in *War in Heaven* (Howard 60-61).

From the Nicene: "Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven." "For us" hints at the idea of the immense worth of human beings in the sight of God, a concept met everywhere in Williams. *He Came Down from Heaven* is the title of one of his works of theology.

"And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man." The figure of Mary appears in several of the plays, and in *Many Dimensions* Chloe resembles Mary in the yielding to God of her body and her will (Howard 81, 88, 93-95).

"And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures." *Descent into Hell*. (See also *The Silver Stair*.)

"And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father." *Terror of Light*.

"And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.... And I look for the Resurrection of the dead." *Shadows of Ecstasy*.

"And I believe in the Holy Ghost...." Williams entitled his history of the Church *The Descent of the Dove*. The Flame symbol in *The House of the Octopus* (*Collected Plays*, 245-324) represents the Holy Spirit. Also relevant are the works discussed above under Pentecost.

"And I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church"; "The Communion of Saints" (Apostles' Creed [BCP, 52]). *All Hallows' Eve*. See also *War in Heaven* (Howard, 58-59), and the opening framework of *The Three Temptations*, mentioned above.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission [Apostles' Creed: "Forgiveness"] of sins." Cf. Williams'

book title, *The Forgiveness of Sins*. For baptism, *All Hallows' Eve* (baptism and the doctrine of the Church being closely related).

"... And the life of the world to come." *All Hallows' Eve*.

Now to conclude with a few simple observations. Williams' interests spread across the whole Church Year and the whole range of theological topics represented in the Creeds; but also they concentrated at a few points -- the Incarnation, with what it implies for the exaltation of humanity, and the Passion. Secondly, however esoteric some of the material of his writing might be, when it came to doctrinal and liturgical matters he kept pretty faithfully to what the Church laid down.

The third observation takes us back to our beginning topic, the role of such symbols in putting us humans in touch with the ineffable. Williams clearly used the Creeds as texts for meditation. He studied them, he chewed on them, trying to taste their goodness and probe their mysteries. He invented contemporary situations in which to put them to work and see how they worked. As for the Church Year, what that teaches us, besides all the themes of the individual commemorations, is how we relate to time.

We speak of "the life everlasting," but find it hard or impossible to imagine because all our images come from experience-in-time. We recognize in our natural habitat the cycles of day and year and also the linear pattern of birth, life, death. We are aware too of longer lines, whole millennia of history; but are they straight lines, having direction? In ancient times, many could see history only in terms of the familiar, "natural" cyclic pattern -- though the wheel might take twenty-seven millennia to come round.

The Church takes that pattern and enlarges it almost to infinity, until the cycle and the line become the same thing. Humanity begins in Paradise, with a destiny of becoming more and more like God; trying to hurry the process and accomplish it in our own way we fall; God proceeds with his purposes anyhow, raising humanity by coming down to us; eventually, Paradise is to be restored. But the Church puts us through the pattern of that story every year, over and over again. It is a cycle -- but not of the old sort: not seedtime, harvest, and death, with nothing beyond itself to point to because its only meaning is in the events themselves, ever recurring. The Church teaches us how to make seedtime, harvest, and death symbols of something beyond themselves: it "baptizes" or "sanctifies" the ancient cycle (I use terms from the Sacraments), makes it something more. And it baptizes the cycle form itself, making it the vehicle of ever-renewed lessons in the deepest truths of human existence. Can we wonder that Williams found in this symbol a most promising vehicle for the outpourings of his creative mind?

NOTES

- 1 Read At the Eighteenth Mythopoeic Conference 27 July 1987. I am grateful for the discussion there, which has contributed to my analysis of *The Place of the Lion and War in Heaven* in the present revised version.
- 2 "All your life," the Skeleton says to Thomas Cranmer, "you have sought Christ/ in images, through deflections; how else can men see?" (*Collected Plays*, 53)

- 3 "Mater Dei" (82-83, "The Assumption" (86), "The Epiphany" I-III (92-96), "Hot Cross Buns" (97-99), "At Easter" (100-1), "Pentecost" (102-5), "Ode for Easter Morning" (118-22). See also, in the later volume *Divorce*, "Advent" (90-94), "Christmas" (95-97), "Office Hymn for the Feast of St. Thomas Didymus, Apostle and Skeptic" (105-6); and in *Window of Night*, pp. 132-39: "Christmas," "Easter," "St. Michael," "Saint Mary Magdalene," and "Saint Stephen."
- 4 *The Silver Stair* (41, 81-86); and in *Poems of Conformity*, "Gratia Plena" (44), "Presentation" (45), "The Christian Year" (72-77) (on which see *Ridley xlii*, and "Ascension" (78-79).
- 5 *The Place of the Lion* also alludes, more obliquely, to the lines quoted above from Yeats. "What new monstrosity, what beast of indescribable might and beauty, was even now perhaps dragging itself down the stairs?" (111).
- 6 "Michaelmas" (*Poems of Conformity*, 62) and "Black-Letter Days" (36-66).

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Continued on page 56

Kindreds, Houses & Populations, from page 38
 ion and Glorfindel make five; while the last two may be the two may be the kindreds of Penlod. So we have five Houses with seven kindreds. Also it is mentioned in *Lays of Beleriand* that Thingol has 33 Champions (LB, 157). If these are the Lords of the Houses, then it must be remembered that the estimate for Doriath is median, or that there could be a greater number of germinal Houses than is shown. Certainly Doriath is described as being the greatest Elven realm of Beleriand and falls out that way on the chart.

In conclusion, it seems plausible that there are some 245,000 to 290,000 Elves in Beleriand in 150 F.A. This number rises to 410,000 to 480,000 in 450 F.A. Throughout Middle-earth and Valinor Elven population can be estimated as 800,000 to 1,000,000 in 450 F.A. After 450 F.A. the Great Battles with Morgoth resulted in drastic changes in Elven population worldwide. It rightfully deserves a study by itself which would set the stage for the Elves of the Second Age.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1980. (hereafter *U*) pp. 232-234. *The Silmarillion* edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977 (hereafter *S*) p. 194. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* edited by Humphrey Carpenter. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981 (hereafter *L*), p. 425.
- ² J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Book of Lost Tales Part II* edited by Christopher Tolkien. London, George Allen and Unwin, 1984 (hereafter *LT-2*) p. 173.
- ³ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lays of Beleriand* edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985 (hereafter *LB*) p. 72

Seeing Williams' Work, from page 18

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Creative Uses of the OED, from page 24

- ³ The Tolkien Collection of the Memorial Library at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin contains all of the original manuscripts holographic, typed, and typeset copy for *The Hobbit* and *The*

Lord of the Rings plus an enormous amount of unpublished material related primarily to these two works. As is indicated in the text of the paper, the marginalia quote comes from Tolkien's personal galleys now in the Library. The quote is used with permission of the Tolkien estate and is copyright for it belongs to the Estate, F.R. Williamson, Executor (Oxford).

- ⁴ See also a rather elaborate (but scholarly) discussion of this and other items in T.A. Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth* (Houghton Mifflin, 1983), pp. 73-76.

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