THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE IMAGE
OF THE CITY IN THE CRITICAL WORKS
OF CHARLES WILLIAMS

APPROVED:

[Signatures]

Major Professor

Minor Professor

Director of the Department of English

Dean of the Graduate School
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE IMAGE
OF THE CITY IN THE CRITICAL WORKS
OF CHARLES WILLIAMS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

William L. Smith, B. A.
Denton, Texas
January, 1965
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In 1912, at the age of twenty-six, Charles Williams began a literary career which spanned the thirty-three years until his death in 1945. During these years he published forty-two major works and over two hundred magazine articles. He was a critic, poet, novelist, dramatist, biographer, and Anglo-Catholic lay theologian. Yet he was scarcely a celebrity: before his death he was little known outside of the English literary circles to which he belonged, and during the first decade after his death critics largely neglected him. Since 1955, however, scholars both in England and abroad have begun to realize his importance not only as a literary artist, but also as a critic. Hadfield explains why she thinks his criticism is important:

The great poets can be almost killed for the reader by the weight of criticism, but C. W.'s touch restores them to us. . . . His value to criticism was not only

---

1The "major works" include seven books of poetry, six biographies, thirteen plays, seven novels, five books on religion, and four books of literary criticism.

2The magazine articles are primarily book reviews and theological writings.

in his revivifying attitude, but in his accuracy. He made certain observations which had not been notably made before and will remain a permanent part of our knowledge.

Critics have also become aware of Williams' importance as an influence on other writers. Williams' most obvious influence was on the group called the Anglican Pleiades, of which he was a member. The group consisted primarily of C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, T. S. Eliot, and W. H. Auden. Eliot and Williams influenced each other, but George Every is convinced that "in the long run, Williams influenced Eliot more . . . ." Heath-Stubbs claims that the influence of Williams' ideas in Eliot's Four Quartets and The Cocktail Party is "at least to be suspected." Concerning Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in 1929 and the resulting change in his philosophy, Winship remarks, "there are those who believe that Williams was the main spring of the change." Winship adds, "Today \[1950\] he is

4Alice M. Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, 1959), p. 98. Williams was known as "C. W." to some of his friends.

5Williams' writings have been very influential, but personal contact and discussion with him probably exerted an even greater influence.


7Heath-Stubbs, p. 11, including footnote. (Heath-Stubbs mentions only one similarity: The dopplegängers theme which exists in Eliot's The Cocktail Party and in Williams' novel Descent into Hell.)
one of the strongest influences on younger poets in Britain."\(^8\)

George Every claims that Williams influenced W. H. Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*, in which a landscape bearing resemblance to a human body is mentioned.

He *Auden* was probably thinking, not only of *Finnegan's Wake*, which he echoes in the poems that follow, but of the map of Europe and western Asia at the beginning of *Taliessin through Logres*. . . . In a note to his *New Year Letter* he acknowledged his debt to the ideas in *The Descent of the Dove*. *The Age of Anxiety* more obviously derives from *All Hallow's Eve*.

Williams' influence on Sayers and Lewis was greater than on Eliot or Auden. He strongly influenced Lewis' novels\(^10\) and Sayers' edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy*;\(^11\) the pervasiveness of his influence was best described by Lewis when Williams died: "No event has so corroborated my faith in the next world as Williams did simply by dying. When the idea of death and the idea of Williams thus met in my mind, it was the idea of death that was

---

\(^8\)George Winship, "This Rough Magic: The Novels of Charles Williams," *Yale Review*, XL(December, 1950), 286.

\(^9\)Every, p. 55. *Taliessin through Logres*, *The Descent of the Dove*, and *All Hallow's Eve* are all works by Charles Williams.

\(^10\)"C. S. Lewis has often credited Williams with suggesting or stimulating his own work, both in literary criticism . . . and in fiction" (Winship, p. 285).

\(^11\)Sayers dedicated the book to Williams and acknowledged her "debt to Charles Williams's study *The Figure of Beatrice* . . ." (Dorothy Sayers, *The Divine Comedy I: Hell* [Baltimore, 1962], p. 66).
changed."12

Every mentions John Heath-Stubbs, Anne Ridler, and Sidney Keyes as others whom Williams influenced. John Heath-Stubbs and Sidney Keyes were at Oxford during the early years of World War II. However, they did not know that Williams, with whose poetry they had recently become familiar, was also there.13 In Keyes' poems in The Iron Laurel, a sense of the macabre, suggested by the Skeleton in Williams' play Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury, haunts the background, and the imagery of Taliessin through Logres was used in The Grail and in A Letter from Tartary.14 Heath-Stubbs, who did discover Williams' presence after Keyes had left, "is more obviously indebted to Williams for the thought and much of the imagery of such poems as Edward the Confessor in Beauty and the Beast (1943), and Tannhauser's End, in the Poetry Quarterly for the autumn of 1947."15

Many others have been influenced as well. Heath-Stubbs mentions George Barker, Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, and Norman Nicholson. These "younger poets became

---


13The Oxford University Press, where Williams worked, was moved from London to Oxford during World War II. While in Oxford Williams was awarded an honorary M. A. and became a lecturer at Oxford University.

14Every, pp. 56-57. 15Ibid., p. 57.
interested in mythological and religious symbolism, as a means of expressing areas of experience inaccessible to the intellect alone.\textsuperscript{16} Williams' poetry became a model for them. Every states that

... critics are failing in their understanding of the younger poets because they are not aware of his later work. His influence operates less often directly, by echo and allusion, that indirectly, as a challenge to the creation of a personal idiom, a particular poetic language that involves a mytho-

The volume of scholarship on Williams' writings and on his use of the "Image of the City"\textsuperscript{18} does not correspond to his importance and influence. Apparently only five books\textsuperscript{19} are devoted solely to Williams; and the "Image of the City" is discussed in but four. The \textit{Theology of Romantic Love} by Shideler is a rather difficult explanation of Williams' concept of romantic love and his use of images. Williams' critical works are little used in the explanation; Shideler relies mainly on the non-critical writings. Nor does Hadfield rely on the critical works in \textit{An Introduction to Charles Williams}. This book is an ambitious

\textsuperscript{16}Heath-Stubbs, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{17}Every, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{18}The "Image of the City" and other important terms will be explained in Chapter II.
\textsuperscript{19}While many magazine articles have been written about Williams, those available are mainly reviews of his writings. The exceptions discuss neither the Image of the City nor his critical writings.
undertaking in which Hadfield attempts to explain Williams' basic concepts while writing a biography. The smallest book, yet perhaps the most useful as an introduction to Williams and his works, is Heath-Stubbs' Charles Williams. In it, nearly all of Williams' works are mentioned; however, the criticism is largely neglected. The first book devoted solely to Williams was Arthurian Torso by C. S. Lewis. This book is "the standard explicationary work on . . . Williams' later Arthurian poems."\(^{20}\) It is divided into two sections: the first is Williams' own prose account of the Arthurian legend, "The Figure of Arthur"; the second is Lewis' "Williams and the Arthuriad," an explanation of Williams' Arthurian poetry.

Six books which contain chapters or sections dealing with Williams mention his use of the concept of the Image of the City. All of these, however, focus almost exclusively upon the poetry or the drama. Arthurian Triptych is an explication of the Arthurian poems, but is almost entirely based on Lewis' Arthurian Torso. Religious Trends in English Poetry, Our Best Poets, and The Poetry of the Invisible explain the poetry of the earlier period (they do not mention the later poetry). Religion in Modern English Drama is the only work which explicates his plays. Poetry and Personal Responsibility is somewhat different

\(^{20}\) Heath-Stubbs, p. 43.
from the other books on Williams. In it, three pages are devoted to his novels and a chapter to his poetic influence.

The primary works\textsuperscript{21} for this study are Williams' three books of criticism: \textit{The English Poetic Mind}, \textit{Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind}, and \textit{The Figure of Beatrice}. Williams also wrote numerous critiques for periodicals, but since only a few of these are available—those collected in \textit{The Image of the City}—these will be used only as background or supplementary material.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II will define the concept of the Image of the City and the concept of love in its relation to the City.

Chapters III and IV will survey Williams' novels and his poetry and drama, respectively, demonstrating the development of the Image of the City. In each chapter, the works will be discussed in chronological order to depict the development of the concept of the Image of the City. The purpose of these chapters is to show that the development of the concept is apparent not just in the critical works but in Williams' other writings as well.

The fifth chapter will explain the development of the concept of the Image of the City in non-critical works since they will be used only to show that, in them, the pattern of development of the concept of the Image of the City is similar to the pattern in the critical works.
concept in the critical works. This chapter, however, is unlike the preceding two in one important aspect: the explanation of the development relies almost completely upon the primary texts, whereas the other chapters rely chiefly upon secondary sources.

The conclusion, by synthesizing all that has been said in each of the preceding chapters about the works, will show that the concept of the Image of the City as it develops in Williams' writings does follow a recognizable pattern.
CHAPTER II

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Williams's concept of the Image of the City must be thoroughly understood by the reader before this discussion of its development in Williams' writings is begun, for Williams uses the words Image and City in a specialized sense. His concept of love must also be examined in relation to the Image of the City.

Williams derives his concept of an image from Coleridge, who "said that a symbol must have three characteristics (i) it must exist in itself, (ii) it must derive from something greater than itself, (iii) it must represent in itself that greatness from which it derives." More simply, "a symbol has its own being, as well as being a part of some greater being, and representing the whole of the greater being in its own part." Williams "preferred the word image to the word symbol, because it seems . . . doubtful if the word symbol nowadays expresses the vivid individual existence of the lesser thing."

---

1Charles Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice* (New York, 1961), p. 7.


3Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*, p. 7. Concerning
Williams defines the "City" as "Union."\(^4\) "... It is the sense of many relationships between men and women woven into a unity."\(^5\) It exists on two planes, the civic or mortal and the divine or spiritual. The civic City is the union, through love, of mortals on earth. This City may be the union of any number of people: a couple, a household, a city, a nation, or all mankind. The second, the spiritual City, is the union, through love, of man with God.

The concept of love as the means to union, the City,


\(^5\)Ibid., p. 92.
is not original with Williams; Plato expresses a similar view of love in his Symposium. Williams' and Plato's concepts are not entirely the same, however. Heath-Stubbs explains the difference:

... The aim of the Platonic lover is to pass from the contemplation of the phenomenal beauty in the person of the beloved to a purely intellectual and abstract ideal. Charles Williams's thought, however, is Christian, and not Platonist. The aim of the Way [to the final union] is not the exaltation of Eros to a transcendent plane, but its transformation into Agape—Christian love. ...

Still, the similarities are striking. Taylor writes, "We can best describe the purpose of the speech [Socrates'] in the Symposium in the language of religion by saying that it is a narrative of the pilgrimage of a soul on the way of salvation, from the initial moment at which it feels the need of salvation to its final 'consummation'!" The purpose which Taylor ascribes to Plato's Symposium is suggestive of Williams' comment in his synopsis of his pageant play Judgement at Chelmsford: "... The complete pageant offers a representation of the movement of the soul in its journey from the things of this world to the heavenly city.

---

6 The Platonic concept became part of the Neoplatonic philosophy and then passed in a Christianized version through St. Augustine to St. Thomas and Dante.

7 Heath-Stubbs, p. 22.

of Almighty God." In The Figure of Beatrice Williams makes a similar comment about the role of Beatrice as the Image of the City in Dante's Divine Comedy: "... The Divine Comedy is the greatest expression in European literature of the way of approach of a soul to its ordained end..." An even closer similarity is apparent in that both Plato and Williams imply that intelligence must exist in love before love can ascend to a higher plane. According to Taylor, Plato thought that "... intelligent delight in the beauty of one 'fair body' will lead to a quickened perception of beauty in others..." Williams writes, "the true romantic... admits and believes that the holy intellect is part of it." In The Figure of Beatrice Williams remarks that love cannot "triumph without Reason" and that every true romantic "insists on the intellect at every step of the Way to the higher plane..."

While Williams' and Plato's concepts of love leading to union have much in common, it is notable that in

---

10 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 8.
11 Taylor, p. 229, footnote.
12 Williams, The Image of the City, p. 60.
13 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 21.
Williams' writings love, instead of ascending to an abstract ideal as Eros does in the writings of Plato, progresses in three stages to the lover's final union with God.

The first stage is the "falling in love"; here the physical attraction of the beloved leads to the union of the minds of the lovers.

The act of 'falling in love' as Charles Williams saw it, was a religious experience. To say this, is not simply to dignify a human emotion by bringing it into a relation with a category expressive of highest values. Williams's interpretation of love as a religious experience was both precise and literal. In the first stage, then, the beloved becomes the Image of the City; that is, she represents the union of the two lovers.

In the second stage the beloved, as the Image of the City, "can comprehend all human social groupings, whether large or small." She is an image of the greater whole, the "groupings," which is the civic City. More simply, she represents all mankind. The lover, through his love for her, loves all that she images, and thus, comes into union with mankind. Williams uses the term "in-othered".

---

14 Heath-Stubbs, pp. 20-21.
15 The word "she" is used for convenience. The beloved, of course, could be the man.
16 Heath-Stubbs, p. 24.
17 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 190. "In-othered" is the second-stage counterpart to the third-stage experience of "inGodding."
to express the idea of this stage.

In the third stage the beloved becomes the image of divine perfection. She is the Image of the spiritual City. As in the second stage, the lover, because he loves the image, loves what is imaged. Through this love for the spiritual City, the lover is InGodded,18 united with God.

Williams did not suppose that this progression through the three stages was limited to the romantic love between a man and woman; instead he predicated it of all relationships in which, as Hadfield puts it, the love is true. To Williams, the true love is of divine origin and has a divine life.19 True love is

the acknowledgement of dependence upon another person, . . . and the motion of acceptance of that link of dependence, and if possible of goodwill towards it . . . ; [this] was what he called the City. It exists everywhere, however dull our perception of it. It is, usually, with us in an elementary and fumbling conception. But outlined through that elementary City, C. W. saw the other [the heavenly] City, wherein the acknowledgement of the link is changed to a positive goodwill and love towards it, a goodwill which is at once the life of Christ in us and an awareness of that life . . . The life of Love is the daily life of this City.20

---

18Williams' term "InGodded" is surprisingly accurate. Williams believed that God is heaven and heaven is God. Thus, when one ascends to heaven and is in heaven, one is in God. The term is usually associated with the third stage.

19Hadfield, p. 142.

20Ibid.
While any true love would lead the lover to the City, Williams, in his works, usually refers to romantic love as the love which leads to the final inGodding of man.
CHAPTER III

THE NOVELS

Between 1930 and 1945 Williams wrote seven novels. In the five earlier novels the concept of the Image of the City does not appear; yet in their imagery one can detect the germination of Williams' concept of the City.

In his first novel, Shadows of Ecstasy, the main character, Considine, is a kind of superman who turns romantic vision to his own service. In this romantic vision there is an embryonic suggestion of the future concept of love as the Way to God. The foreshadowing of what later would be called the "Beatrician moment" is found in

---

1 For the purposes of distinction, 1937 has been chosen as the dividing line between early and later writings. This choice is based on personal findings as well as other critical opinion, which Hadfield exemplifies thus: "But this development of the theme of love leading to the City was to come later, in Descent into Hell (1937) and All Hallow's Eve (1945), Taliesin through Logres (1938), and The Region of the Summer Stars (1944)." (Alice Hadfield, An Introduction to Charles Williams (London, 1959), p. 57).

2 Although this was the first novel which Williams wrote, it failed to find a publisher until the other novels had secured a public. It was published in 1933.


the proclamation, or manifesto, of the Allied Supremacies of Africa, explaining "to the . . . world the doctrine and purpose of the cause in which they . . . were engaged."5

"...To those among the people of Europe who know that their lives have origin and nourishment in the great moments of exalted imagination, . . . to all who owe their devotion to music, to poetry, to painting and sculpture, to the servants of every more than rational energy; greater than those and more numerous, to all who at this moment exist in an exchanged adoration of love . . . ."6

Had this novel been written ten years later, the "adoration of love" would be, more specifically, the love which would lead to the union of the minds of the African and European (here representing all mankind) in a simple, united City.

The "Beatrician moment" is not accepted, however, by Rosamund, a young woman in the story. This requires some explanation, for she is one of Williams' most interesting characters. She is loved by Philip, who sees her exactly as Dante saw Beatrice. But Rosamund is just the opposite of Beatrice. Williams characterizes her as a "greedy gobbling octopus."

She had cheated herself so long, consciously in childhood, with that strange combination of perfect innocence and deliberate sin . . .; less consciously in youth, as innocence faded and the necessity of imposing some kind of image of herself on the world grew

---

6Ibid., p. 45.
stronger, till now in her first womanhood she had forgotten the cheat, until her outraged flesh rebelled and clamoured from starvation for food. And even now she would not admit it; she would neither fight it nor flee from it nor yield to it nor compromise with it. She could hardly deny that it was there, for there was no place for it in her mind. She, she of all people, could never be capable of abominably longing to be near the dark prince of Africa; she couldn't thrill to the trumpets of conversion nor glow to the fires of ecstasy. Nor could she hate herself for refusing them. But she could and inevitably did hate the things that resembled them--Consdine's person and Roger's verse and Philip, all of Philip, for Philip to her agonized sense was at once a detestable parody of what she wanted and a present reminder of what she longed to forget. And now, like all men and all women who are hot masters of life, she swayed to and fro in her intentions and even in her desire. At Kensington she had shrunk away from Inkamasi and fled from him; at Hampstead she thought of him and secretly longed for him. Power was in her and she was terrified of it. She had been self-possessed, but all herself was in the possessing and nothing in the possessed; self controlled, but she had had only a void to control. And now that nothing and that void were moved with fire and darkness; the shadow of ecstasy lay over her life, and denying the possibility of ecstasy she fled through its shadow as far as its edge, and halted irresolute, and was drawn back by a fascination she loved and hated. She was alive and she hated life; not with a free feeling of judgement but with servile fear. She hated life and therefore she would hide in Hampstead; she lived, and therefore she would return to Kensington. But neither in Hampstead nor Kensington, in Europe nor Africa, in her vision of her unsubservient self, nor of her monstrous master was there any place for Philip, much less a Philip aware of the exaltation of love. 

This rather lengthy description of a minor character inversely suggests Beatrice in Dante's Divine Comedy. Beatrice did not reject the love; she affirmed it and returned it. Through her love, Dante discovered the City; through

7Ibid., pp. 156-158.
Rosamund's rejection of love, the City is also rejected.

Two passages in particular show a similarity between Philip's love and Dante's. Philip, thinking about Rosamund, compares her to a circle:

She was a kind of center, and all the others vibrated in peculiar poses on the circumference. She herself had no circumference, Philip thought, ignorant of how closely he was striving after St. Augustine's definition: "God is a circle, whose center is everywhere and His circumference nowhere." 8

Williams later, in The Figure of Beatrice (1945), compared St. Augustine's idea to Love's statement (in one of Dante's sonnets): "I am the center of a circle to which all parts of the circumference are in similar relation." 9 Williams writes: "There was written by St. Bonaventure ... Augustine had said it earlier a sentence which, with a like simile, had a further aim; it was the famous 'God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere.'" 10 But in 1930, Williams was not prepared to pursue the idea. Nor was he ready to elaborate another significant passage: "The eyes of Rosamund might or might not hold the secret origin of day and night ... ." 11

---

8 Ibid., p. 38.
9 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 24.
11 Williams, Shadows of Ecstasy, p. 39.
This imagery of eyes that signify more than their own mortal being strongly suggests Williams' discussion of the eyes of Beatrice in *The Figure of Beatrice*:

Dante... is met by four natural virtues... who say... 'we will bring you to her eyes.'...

'Look,' they say; 'we have set before you the emeralds whence Love first shot his arrows at you...' These are the eyes of the Florentine girl; this is the origin of Amor.  

In both passages, the importance of the eyes in the love relationship between the man and the woman is shown. Philip sees something greater in Rosamund's eyes, but Williams does not elaborate on this idea as he does later on Beatrice's eyes.

The second novel was originally entitled *The Corpse*, but under that title it failed to find a publisher. Williams had all but given up—he had thrown the manuscript in a wastebasket—when a friend persuaded him to submit it once more. He did, under the title of *War in Heaven*, and it was accepted for publication. The theme of this late 1930 novel is simple: The unsuccessful quest for the Holy Grail by an evil man. But while in *Shadows of Ecstasy* love was at least rejected, love hardly exists in *War in Heaven*. Gregory Persimmons, the protagonist, is a necromancer "who desires by the possession of a magical thing, the Holy

---

12 Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*, p. 187. "Emeralds" is, of course, an allusion to Beatrice's green eyes.
13 Hadfield, p. 83.
Grail, to achieve union with the source of all power, and so to be lord over other people, and over death."¹⁴ He has a magic ointment, the application of which allows the wearer to send his spirit directly to the realm of Satan, where he finds the power which he desires. Since this union is to be with Satan, who is the opposite of God, and since Love has already been shown to be Godlike, the union cannot be one with Love. Williams does not specifically mention the City here; but Persimmons, by desiring union, in a sense, desires a "City"—yet this is a union, a "City," which exists without God and without Love. Thus, Williams shows his awareness of the City by having Persimmons desire a perversion of it.

In Many Dimensions (1931) the image used is the Stone from King Suleiman's crown. "There is no doubt but that the Stone is intended as an image; it is less clear what the image is supposed to signify. It communicates different meanings to different readers, and refers simultaneously to several levels of meaning."¹⁵ The Stone is "the Tetragrammaton, the Name of God, and Williams wrote of it that 'the Way to the Stone is in the Stone.'"¹⁶ In essence, he seems to be stating that "the Way to God is

¹⁴Ibid., p. 78.
¹⁵Shideler, p. 19.
¹⁶Ibid., p. 85.
Love." Chloe is the figure of Love in the novel: she may be construed as an image of the "Way to the Stone." She saves mankind because her love is the unselfish love which allows her to submit her will to the Stone—i.e., to an aspect of God. Others who had used the Stone wished only for their own gain—they wanted the Stone to work for them; Chloe gives herself to the Stone. To relate a very complicated story briefly, the "forces of good" realize that the Stones (the original Stone has been split into many Stones, all with the same power) must be re-united with the original to prevent the evil use of the powers. The only way to re-unite the Stones is for someone to submit his will to the Stone. Chloe had already, unknowingly, 17 "put her will at its /the Stone's/ disposal," 18 so it is possible that "between it and her the union may be achieved." 19 Chloe does will the union and it is achieved, but at the cost of her earthly life. Many Dimensions, like Shadows of Ecstasy, suggests the Beatrice of Dante's Comedy, for Chloe's function is similar to that of Beatrice: both are the means to the union.

17 When an assailant attempted to steal Chloe's Stone, she did not call upon the Stone for protection. She refused to use the Stone for her own personal gain in any way.


19 Ibid., p. 259.
While Chloe typifies good, Sir Giles Tumulty typifies evil. Throughout the novel he scoffs at love; it interferes with scientific objectivity. And his refusal of love causes his death and damnation. The vision of Chloe, of Love, appears to him in the Stone. "So clear was the vision that he saw Chloe stir and turn a little in her sleep. In a suddenly renewed rage he felt himself cry out at her, 'Oh go to hell,' and as the words, from within or without, reached his mind, Chloe stirred and woke." His own words are turned on him; he damns himself. "From the spirals of time and place he felt himself falling, and he fell and fell." An opportunity to love was offered to him, but he refused it, and with it he refused all hope of union with God.

Lord Arglay can best be described as intelligence. Not only is he aware of what is happening to the other characters, but he also realizes the significance of the Stone; and it is because of Chloe's implicit trust in him and his judgement, that she sacrifices herself.

"And if I tell you to do it?" he asked. "Then I will do what I may," Chloe said. "And if I tell you not to do it?" he asked again. "Then I will wait till you want to have it done," she said, "for without you I cannot go even by myself."  

---

20Ibid., p. 279.  
21Ibid., p. 281. The picture suggests Satan's fall in Paradise Lost.  
22Ibid., p. 295.
During the course of the novel, Arglay consciously chooses to believe in God. He says, speaking of this emerging belief, "It is giving a new name to old things . . . . Or perhaps an old name to new things." In 1938, Williams expressed this same change more fully:

There was then . . . a new way, the way of return to blissful knowledge of all things. But this was not sufficient; there had to be a new self to go on the new way . . . . There are always three degrees of consciousness . . . : (i) the old self on the old way; (ii) the old self on the new way; (iii) the new self on the new way.  

Arglay is conscious of the change. He realizes that he has passed from the "old self on the old way" to the "old self on the new way," and he knows that he is moving toward the "new self on the new way." This he attains because he realizes the significance of Chloe's death.

Essentially the same theme as in War in Heaven exists in The Place of the Lion (1931). Anthony, Hadfield says, wants to be able to achieve union with the principles of life and their creative origin. The union is never achieved, for Anthony never realizes that love is the Way. In The Place of the Lion Williams does not define the failure in these terms (though the Williams of 1945 would

---

23 Ibid., p. 267.  
24 Charles Williams, He Came Down from Heaven (London, 1938), pp. 118-119.  
25 Hadfield, p. 79.
have made this explicit). However, in this early novel Williams does clearly present an idea which he retains in his later writings: "There is only one sacrifice, and the God of gods makes it not you." Man accepts this sacrifice, receives it and coinheres in it; man cannot by sacrifice make the unholy holy except by accepting God's sacrifice. The "only one sacrifice" does not preclude a sacrifice by man; it refers to Christ's sacrifice by which he took man's sin upon himself. Man's sacrifice is not to remove or absolve sin, but rather to replace evil with good. This sacrifice is part of the Way to the City; Williams termed it "substituted love."

The last novel of the early period, The Greater Trumps (1932), contains more imagery than the earlier novels and a more fully developed account of an unselfish love which saves both flesh and soul of others. Central to the novel are the "original" Tarot cards which Henry Lee desires so that he could have union with the power "which creates and controls the matter of life." This union is never

26 This is not to say that Williams became dogmatic; he just became more explicit as his concepts jelled in his mind.

27 Charles Williams, The Place of the Lion (New York, 1951, p. 164).

28 Shideler, p. 159.

29 The concept of "substituted love" will be discussed in more detail on p. 30 below.

30 Hadfield, p. 79.
consummated because love is not present in Lee; absence of love prohibits the union with God who, Williams certainly believed, is the power which creates and controls the "matter of life."

A semblance of the union of God and man does occur in the novel through Nancy's sacrifice. The sacrifice that a human being may make, as previously discussed in relation to *The Place of the Lion*, is the changing of evil into good through the sacrifice by someone of himself, love being the motivating, guiding force. In *The Greater Trumps* a vast snow storm has been supernaturally created by Lee through the magic of the Tarot cards. The elements become uncontrollable when some of the cards blow away; the world seems doomed. However, Nancy, the heroine of the story, "guided by her will to love . . . places herself where the full brunt of the storm falls directly upon her."\(^{31}\)

She saw the Downs, white and silent, and then there swept up from the turmoil in the house a giant figure, a dimly defined form waving a huge club from which the snow poured in a continuous torrent. It rose, rushing towards her, and she thrust out her hands towards it, and it struck its club against them—they felt the blow, the blast of icy wind, and were numbed, but life tingled in them again at once, and the ghostly shape was turned from its course and sent plunging back into turmoil from which it came. Others rushed up after it; the invoked elements were seeking a larger scope. From the raging about and in the house they were bursting abroad over the

\(^{31}\text{Shideler, p. 63.}\)
Downs, over the world where men kept Christmas . . . and did not know that everlasting destruction was near. Between that threat and its fulfillment stood the girl's slender figure, and the warm hands of humanity in hers met the invasion and turned it. They moved gently over the storm; they moved as if in dancing ritual they answered the dancing monstrosities that opposed them. It was not a struggle but a harmony, yet a harmony that might at any moment have become a chaos. The column of whirling shapes arose and struck, and were beaten abroad under the influence of those extended palms, and fell in other whirling columns; and so the whole of the magical storm was sent pouring back into the place of origin.  

Nancy "returns good for evil; she sacrifices herself. This is the manner in which all salvation from sin is achieved; the sin is not wiped out, but its energy is redirected. . . . Therefore, without sacrifice there can be no salvation."  

The sacrifice is a willed part of the love which is the Way to the City. Although this idea is not expressed in *Trumps*, it can be inferred, especially when in later writings Williams will directly relate the sacrifice to the love which is the Way to the City, for this love is the love necessary to make the sacrifice. The sacrifice is a part of what Williams termed the substitution, which is best exemplified by the crucifixion of Christ; the substitution is part of the process of ingodding. It is a supreme expression of love.

"The first five novels are of one kind. Descent into

---

33 Shideler, p. 160.
Hell and All Hallows' Eve are darker and more complicated."\(^{34}\)

Descent into Hell was not written until 1937—five years after The Greater Trumps, and All Hallows' Eve was not written until 1945. Descent into Hell is the first work of the later writings. It shows the first step in the final development, "built up in book after book,"\(^{35}\) which culminates in The Figure of Beatrice.

Descent into Hell is the first novel in which the Image of the City formally appears.\(^{36}\) The novel also "shows the states of love in action and love in loss without defining them; it shows the facts, not the names . . . . The only reality in the book is love; all else is illusion—self, honours, possession, pleasure, hate, or sexual joy."\(^{37}\) Of particular importance at this crucial stage in the development of Williams' concept of the Image of the City are the divergent "states" of love: one, the true love, leading to the City; the other, the perverted love, leading away from

\(^{34}\)Hadfield, p. 76.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 57.

\(^{36}\)The word city, although seldom used, does appear in the novel, notably when Wentworth rejects the City: " . . . Wentworth would have a world in which no one went to the City, because there was no City unless he—but no, he wouldn't have a City." (Charles Williams, Descent into Hell (New York, 1949), p. 93.); the City appears again on pp. 168-173, where it is affirmed by a workman who had hanged himself.

\(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 134.
It is important also to remember that the love need not, necessarily, be romantic. Pauline follows the love which leads to the City while Wentworth, through his perversion of love, alienates himself from the City.

Wentworth is the victim of his own jealousy. Another historian is awarded a coveted honor which Wentworth fervently desires and the young woman he loves becomes engaged to a man of her own age. The ensuing disappointment and jealousy were natural, but he chose to linger over the sweet taste of resentment and injured pride, and so committed actual sin, the sin of Cain who incarnates "the self-desirous spirit which troubles the divine glory in all lovers."\(^{38}\) The loss of the young woman actually should have had no bearing on the ascension of the lover to the City, for he need not lose his love for the lady. Dante, for example, lost Beatrice—first to another man and then to death—yet his love for her bore him to the ingodding. Wentworth, however, is an example of the misdirection of love, leading to the alienation from the City. He perverted his original love, and the perverted love increased. He refused, mentally, to accept his losses (the woman and the honor) and "clutched at pretense of ownership until nothing remained to him except illusion."\(^{39}\) This new

\(^{38}\) Shideler, p. 117.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 118.
perverted love was passionate, more passionate, than the
original love, but because it was perverted, it grew into
sin, lechery. This lechery was the product of the loss of
intelligent love, "intelligence which does not destroy
passion but which balances it." For the first time in
the novels, Williams clearly presents the possibility of
an intelligent, yet passionate, love which could lead to
the greater love and the ingodding; he shows that the per-
version of this love and the loss of intelligence alienates
the lover from the City.

Pauline's love is the opposite of Wentworth's; it is
intelligent. Stanhope, the poet, introduces Pauline to
"substituted love." "Substituted love" is exactly what the
two words denote. Because of love, someone takes an-
other's burdens. Pauline is possessed by fear, and Stanhope
proposes to release her from this fear by taking the bur-
den of it upon himself. Explaining the concept to her, he
compares it to

"carrying a parcel instead of someone else. To bear
a burden is precisely to carry it instead of. If
you're still carrying yours, I'm not carrying it for
you—however sympathetic I may be. /But/ . . . if
you give a weight to me, you can't be carrying it
yourself . . . ."  

40 Ibid., p. 120.

41 Charles Williams, Descent into Hell, p. 106. This
is a much simpler explanation than that given by Williams
in 1936: "We are to love each other as /Christ/ . . .
loved us, laying down our lives as he /sic/ did, that this
This transferring of the burden is not, cannot be done without conscious knowledge of love. And to know this love, or at least to know of this love, requires the intelligence of the lover. Williams drew an analogy concerning this intelligence in Descent into Hell. Pauline, after she has herself practiced "substituted love," compares it to "the Scilly Islanders taking in each other's washing... If it were tiresome and horrible to wash your own clothes and easy and happy to wash someone else's, the Scilly Islanders might be intelligent enough."\textsuperscript{42} This particular analogy proves that Williams was intentionally showing intelligence in substituted love. Clearly, Williams' ideas of the City and the relationship of love to the City were already becoming fixed in his mind.

Eight years later these ideas were completely integrated in Williams' thought. His last novel, All Hallow's Eve (1945), incorporates the "substituted love" and the relationship of good and evil apparent in the first six novels, and for the first time in the novels the City is explicitly and insistently stressed. The opening sentences--

love may be perfected. We are to love each other, that is, by acts of substitution. We are to be substituted and to bear substitution. All life is to be vicarious..." (He Came Down from Heaven, p. 121.) Williams cites the substitution of adults for infants in the baptism of the infants as an example.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 108.
"She was standing on Westminster Bridge. It was twilight, but the City was no longer dark"—embody the word, and soon the concept becomes clear: As George Every puts it, "The City of God and the City of Hell are here in London..." Lester Furnival, the heroine of the story, has just been killed when an airplane crashed into her automobile; the supernatural is immediately evident. In all of the previous novels, the characters who learned "substituted love" were alive, although the substitution was not necessarily transacted with a living person. In All Hallows' Eve, however, Williams shows the substitution being practiced by a dead woman. The limitations of time and space are suspended, for Lester can and does communicate with the mortal world.

The inGodding of Lester is related to the damning of Evelyn, who was killed in the same accident, and to the evil of Simon the Clerk, who "desires by magical knowledge to make himself lord of the material world with spirits at

45In He Came Down from Heaven Williams explains this superhuman mobility: "The vicarious life of the kingdom is not necessarily confined to sequence even among the human members of the kingdom. The past and the future are subject to interchange, and the present with both, the dead with the living, the living with the dead" (p. 92).
his command."\(^46\) Evelyn is a foil to Lester. She wants "to recover some kind of contact with flesh, and so ... \[^{\underline{\text{betrays}}}\] herself into the hands of \[^{\underline{\text{Simon}}}\] ... who provides her for a time with a clumsy semblance of a body, until the time comes for her to go down into hell."\(^47\)

But Lester learns to live with (or in) her new state, and more important, learns substituted love. She helps not only her husband, but also Betty, Simon's daughter. Lester's helping Betty is a good example of Williams' referring directly to the love which is necessary to the final union. In two instances this can be singled out; the first, forgiveness of sins, prepares Lester for the second, the "substituted love."

Lester, troubled by the memory of her "ignoring Betty, snubbing Betty, despising Betty—in the gardens, in the dormitory, in the street, even in this hall,"\(^48\) begs Betty's forgiveness. Betty, however, doesn't remember the sins and does not see a need to remember: "But I don't remember much about it. Need we?"\(^49\) Williams, in an essay, explained why people must.

\(^46\) Hadfield, p. 79.
\(^47\) Every, p. 20.
\(^48\) Williams, All Hallows' Eve, p. 123.
\(^49\) Ibid., p. 140.
There are two methods of reconciliation: that which remembers the injury in love and that which forgets the injury in love. Either may be desirable here and now, though there can, of course, be no question which is finally desirable and even necessary to the existence of the Blessed City. There all things are to be known. We had better not forget.

He uses this same philosophy in the novel.

Lester realized that this was going to be worse than she had supposed. She had prepared herself to ask for forgiveness, but that, it seemed, was not enough. She must herself bring the truth to Betty's reluctant mind; nothing else than the truth would be any good. She would not be able entirely to escape from those swirling images of the past, if they were indeed images and not the very past itself, by any other means than by Betty's dismissal of them. She did not understand how this different Betty had come to be, but the City in which she moved did not allow her to waste time in common earthly bewilderment. If the Betty of that moment and of this moment were the same, then perhaps Betty would understand. She said, "Try and remember." Betty remembers, the sin is forgiven, and Lester begins to learn more of the love of the City. Later, when Simon attempts to kill Betty by witchcraft, Lester, through "substituted love," takes the curse upon herself and saves Betty. "In this willingly accepted suffering she feels the cross upon her back, and begins to learn the secret of the City, that Heaven is in London as well as Hell."52

The late novels, in essence, mirror the early—with

51 Williams, All Hallows' Eve, p. 130.
52 Every, p. 20. The cross is not a burden; rather it lends support.
one notable difference: the first five novels never explicitly unite the love and the ingodding. The germ of the relationship is there, but it is never explained. In the last two novels, especially in All Hallows' Eve, the City is fully there, and is known to the characters as well as the author. As Hadfield aptly said: "His stories start at power and lead out to freedom and peace and love; they start at personalities and lead out to coinherence and unity; they start at sex and lead out to the full nature of matter and the body in glory."\textsuperscript{53}

The novels were written for Williams' entertainment and for money; although they are the works for which Williams is best known, they are probably the least important of his works.\textsuperscript{54} Nevertheless, the ideas in the novels Williams "held with profound seriousness. These ideas are most fully developed in his other prose writings discussed in Chapter V\textsuperscript{55}... and ... in his poetry and plays."\textsuperscript{55}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[53] Hadfield, p. 80.
\item[54] Heath-Stubbs, p. 28.
\item[55] Ibid., p. 8.
\end{footnotes}
In the poems and plays, as in the novels, the concept of the Image of the City does not formally appear before 1937; it can, however, in light of the later verse, be seen developing in much of the earlier verse.

The first book of poems, The Silver Stair, was published privately in 1912. The book contains eighty-four sonnets which form a sequence; "not merely do they rise, as sonnets should, each to a crescendo and climax, but they do so as a sequence. They follow . . . as the steps of a ladder."¹ In them is traced Williams' falling in love, learning of love, and being in love. Sonnets I - XV are about the lover's days before he ever knew love, his approach to it and uncertainties if it be love, and his final self committal."² In the second section, XVI - LXVI, the poet explores the state in which he finds himself, relating the state more or less directly to the human girl. The last section, LXVII - LXXXII, is concerned with the love rather than the girl.³ The similarity between the

²Hadfield, p. 32.
³Ibid., pp. 32-33.
structure of the sequence and the three states of the in-Godding process is striking. The poet first realizes that he is in love; next he contemplates the beloved and his condition; then the subject for the sonnets becomes love in the abstract. Williams, in 1912, seems to have been aware of the concept of physical, romantic love leading to the greater love in which the presence of God is felt. With Michal, Williams' future wife and the object of the love in the sonnets, "there is direct experience of God in loving her." The "loving her" means more than loving the ideal or the abstraction of the woman; it is a love of the flesh. "His heart and his eyes burn with verse and the presence of his lady, the wondrous head, the neck's smooth bend, the moving hands, the body's grace..." This love "precisely because it honors the body," Fairchild writes, "enables a man and woman to enter God's presence together. ... How can we know Him more surely than by fiercely tender application of that flesh..." The sexual love creates in the lover the feeling that all creation is good in God's sight and should, therefore,

4Ibid., p. 33.
5Ibid., p. 34.
6Hoxie N. Fairchild, Religious Trends in English Poetry Vol. V (New York, 1962), p. 262. Fairchild discusses Williams' early poetry with a full knowledge of the later poetry, and this knowledge influences his discussion. He knows that Williams will later develop the concept of the
be good in everyone's sight.

God must strive with us and win us through the human body:

His ambush in a pebble's heart, His fleet
Passage in the light and shadow of leaves,
O soul,
Hast thou escaped; wilt thou deny thy clay
If thereupon He establish His control
In mortal eyes that snare it, mortal feet,
That tread the windings of salvation's way?

It is in and through the sacred flesh of a beloved woman, "the world's epitome and genesis," that a man most overwhelmingly contemplates divinity. Hence such titles as Of Womanhood—the Citadel of life, That the Love of a Woman Is the Vice-Gerent of God, and That for Every Man a Woman Holds the Secret of Salvation are no mere gestures of pious gallantry: they imply religious truths of deepest import. Bluntly, the Positive Way is holy coitus.

Thus, The Silver Stair sonnets allude to, or rather, hint at a parallel between Christianity and sexual love.8

This parallel is more explicit in Williams' second book of poems, Poems of Conformity, 1917. Maynard notices this parallel:

When he [Williams] wrote his poem, "Orthodoxy," which begins:

City, and therefore, is able to see the early form of the concept.

7Fairchild, p. 262. The poem quoted is from The Silver Stair. This book of poems is apparently not available in the United States; consequently, all quotations are from secondary sources.

8"... A very close analogy is worked out between the experience of the individual lover and the events of the Incarnation, up to the Ascension. The latter represents the inevitable departure of Eros... This departure is necessary in order that Agape, the Holy Spirit, may come" (Heath-Stubbs, p. 23).
Now to thy heart thy hand hath caught
The fingers of mine own,
Thy body's secret doctrines now
Are proved and felt and known:
More wisdom on thy breast I learn
Than else upon my knees:
O hark, thine honor! orthodox,
Destroyer of heresies!

he laid himself open to be misunderstood. He did not mean that a physical passion was more real spiritual good than prayer, but merely that there are many roads to faith, and the road of human love has been the one followed by him. He was "startled to find it" (the poet himself is quoted) "an exact correlation and parallel of Christianity."9

It is unlikely that the full discovery of the religious importance of sexual love actually would have been known to Williams when he wrote The Silver Stair, for he was not married then. But when he wrote Poems of Conformity (at least, when he wrote some of them), he was married, and "there is a great deal about kisses and bodily love"10 in them. This theme of love is sufficiently pervasive to cause Fairchild to cite several examples in the Poems of Conformity of attempts "to get the whole body of Christian doctrine into the marriage bed . . . ."11

Although Williams does concern himself, at great length, with sexual love—the love of the first stage—

9Maynard, p. 36. The quoted lines of poetry are from Poems of Conformity, which is not available. Maynard does not indicate the source of the prose quotation.
10Hadfield, p. 45.
11Fairchild, p. 264, footnote.
he also writes of the beloved, Michal, as an image of something greater than just a human being. "He sees his lady in small human fashion of the Blessed Virgin Mother of Christ because she has produced love, in herself and him, and this love is, in small human fashion, the twin of Christ, the supreme love." 12

A vaster medium—yet therein
No less identity of form.
The titles of her Son and Her
From whom the fairest Love was born
With a like truth but lightlier
Now by thy love and thee are worn
In this our Christendom. 13

In this poem he is seeing his love as Mary, exactly as Dante saw Beatrice as Mary. The quoted passage is parallel to what Williams will say of Beatrice as Mary in The Figure of Beatrice:

This is the topmost salute, salutation /the salutation with the eyes/; the salutation of Salvation to his /Dante's/ work and the salutation of angelhood and of manhood to the approaching Salvation. The eyes of Beatrice are seen no more; the eyes of Mary are seen instead. . . . They are the eyes of the God-bearer, the last of the Images. But Beatrice, for Dante the first of the Images, has also been a God-bearer; only there the God had not, as here, fulfilled himself in the glorious and holy flesh. 14

In his poem Williams does not specifically mention the word image; he does not even actually make Michal an image, but

12 Hadfield, pp. 42-43.
13 Ibid., from Poems of Conformity.
14 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 222.
he does see in Michal a divinity. This is the initial ancestor of the Image of the City.

The first two books of poems could almost be called autobiographical. But Divorce, 1920, is not. This collection of poems shows "Charles Williams' poetic vision and treatment of certain situations, and not the condition of Charles's own home . . . ." The title Divorce "has nothing to do with the dissolution of marriage: it alludes to the cleavage between the modern world and the Kingdom of God." The poems are largely devoted to married life, and for the most part, they show happiness. For example, the first and last stanzas of "Invitation to Early Communion":

Wake, majesty! the night clouds break,
The world becomes alive,
The sleepy priests and servers wake
To hear their clocks ring five:
The motions of your mouth new-kissed
Bestir your mind of sleep:
Up, Fair! last night we pledged a tryst
To-day must see us keep.

One look, one kiss! and then to prayer:
He bids no more delay,
Who in our hearts long since, my Fair,
Himself prepared his way.
Disjoin and come, lest we be missed!
Come, holy and adored!
Day breaks, and Love is at the tryst
Come forth to meet your Lord!

15 Hadfield, p. 50.
16 Fairchild, p. 265, footnote.
17 Williams, Divorce (London, 1920), pp. 73-74.
These stanzas are indicative of the ideas prevalent in the other poems in the collection and, more importantly, of a growing awareness of the stages of love in the Ingodding process. The physical love in the poem is evident; the words "mouth new-kissed" and "disjoin" can refer to nothing else. Certainly the beloved is exalted, "holy and adored." But the most significant phrase is "Love is at the tryst:/ Come forth to meet your Lord," which equates Love and Lord. The same adoration of the flesh, reminiscent of The Silver Stair, is evident in "On Leaving Church":

I rise, I genuflect, I turn
To breakfast, and to you! 16
"The body of Christ and the body of Michal are very nearly interchangeable." 19 Love is Williams' religion, his Way to heaven.

Almost my love for me is enough,

Since I reach heaven by so pure a stair. 20

Love, the "Cosmic Law" 21 and the unifying force between heaven and earth, is described in "House Hunting":

In the high town which is eternity,
The plotted comprehension of all souls,
Through which the all-tributaryied river rolls

16 Ibid., p. 77.
19 Ibid., p. 265.
20 Williams, Divorce, p. 71.
Waters of peace, and spreads communicably
In wells, canals, fountains, and middle sea;
Where Love, in commerce 'twixt his settled poles,
God and the people, mightily controls
And is controlled by spirits just and free . . . .

The "high town which is eternity" is an allusion to the
City, but Williams here merely mentions what he later will
explain. Love, "in commerce 'twixt his settled poles,/ God
and the people," rules and is ruled both in heaven and on
earth. Since the poles are "settled," connoting a station-
ary position, it is evident that Williams in 1920 regards
God as separated from mortals; though he has associated
the two through Love, he has not seen them as united.

Many of the poems in *Divorce* were written during
World War I; the subjects are often his friends who died in
that war.

It was in meditation on war and his friends that he
first began to approach the idea that his life was
involved in the lives of all other people and not only
of people he had chosen to love and live with. He
recognized that he benefited from the effort and
pains endured by others far from him and not at the
time concerned with or for him. He saw that pains
and effort could and would be inflicted within him-
sel which would be part of the life of the effort
and pains of those others.

This is the beginning of coinherence, the main con-
cept of all his thought. . . .

The beginnings are in a group of short poems 'In
Time of War'. The second, 'Lovers to Lovers' says:

Our wills, that dare not break with war's will, thus
Are made the agents of your sole divorce:
To you the rent, the agony; to us

22Williams, *Divorce*, p. 28.
Salvation, hardly tinctured with remorse.

Yet doubt not soon, in some new wrath immersed,
On us our Lord Love shall avenge your pain,
When smitten with disaster, we shall thirst
For consolation,—and shall thirst in vain.23

The fourth, "In Absence," continues the thought:

Think not, although no more you walk
In English roads or with us talk,
That we and English roads are free
From your continual company.

For, since on that last enterprise
Were closed your tired and bloody eyes,
On some new expedition gone,
Though your souls leave our souls alone;

... ...

To walls and window-curtains cling
Your voices at each breakfasting,
As cups pass from hand to hand,
Crying for drink in No Man's Land.24

The last book of poetry in the early period, Windows of Night, was published in 1924. Like Divorce, it is not autobiographical. The poems are the products of Williams' explorations in the nature of darkness.25 Hadfield (the only critic who has written much about Windows of Night) believes that

he went down from waste to waste, to the darkness in religion... in personality... in marriage...
... in humanity and history... and finally,
... the darkness informing every human act.26

She continues, "the river of hell had encircled him ... and like Virgil and Dante climbing down through the very base of hell [he] came unbelievably into a restoration of life.

And beyond the steps to our cellars, when down we steal, A door opens on darkness,—

And lo through a secret chink between time and space We shall come out afar in the Cocytean South."27

In this period of darkness, he wrote of "men whose whole power/ Is drawn to the smallest act of his smallest child;"28

and he now began to wonder whether that very man might come to find this true for good as well as evil, and the whole power of man to be inseparable in Christ from the whole power of God. Charles did not as yet know how to handle the idea.29

He realized that this is the principle of coinherence, the inGodding, but in the poems "he endures the pain of coinherence without being able to find any good in it."30 The poem is considered by Hadfield as the first mention of the inGodding, or indwelling as she refers to it, which will become the basis of the poem "The Founding of the Company"

26Ibid., p. 56.

27Ibid., p. 56. The quoted passage is from Charles Williams, Windows of Night (London, 1924), pp. 24-25.

28Charles Williams, Windows of Night, p. 23.

29Hadfield, p. 62.

30Ibid.

Writing about Williams' early poetry, Imam claims that Love is "the tenor of his thought" and notes the various ways in which Love is presented: "Love typified in the flesh and person of Christ, Love as the crucifixion of the soul's desire; Love in the triumphal robes of its crowning after the fall and flush of the tears; Love as the rhythmic note of creation in the sound of all his singing." Conspicuous by its absence in this list is Love as a means to union with God—a further indication that this concept was not intentionally part of the early poetry. Yet Imam does see that Love is and will be important as a part of Williams' writings: "The critical eye may sense, faintly and feebly, the features of his vision in their shaping."

Between 1912 and 1924, four books of poetry were written, but "after Windows of Night his verse disappeared into caverns measureless to man and he published only prose, with small exceptions, until verse reappeared.

---

31 Imam, p. 192.
32 Ibid., p. 193.
33 Imam, unlike Fairchild, was writing without a knowledge of the later poetry. Consequently, he had no reason to anticipate this concept.
34 Imam, p. 192.
in a totally different form." The "small exceptions" were the seven plays which Williams wrote between 1924 and 1937. Of these plays, two are typical and representative of the early period: The Chaste Wanton (1931) and The Rite of the Passion (1931).

The Chaste Wanton is the second play in a trilogy; "its subject is Love." The heroine, a Duchess, is taught by Vincenzo, an alchemist who has fallen in love with her, that the ability to love is the real meaning of life. However, she realizes that she must marry within her station, and therefore rejects the alchemist for a prince. Vincenzo attacks the prince, and is sentenced to be executed. "The Duchess comes to him in prison and there in the glory of their love Vincenzo bids her sign the death warrant. She had killed the earthly fulfillment of their love already. Both broken, and, both reconciled, they part”:

"Now, Behold life come again, farewell." It is fitting that the Duchess sign the death warrant, for

---

35 Hadfield, p. 48.

36 The other five plays are The Masque of the Manuscript (1927), The Masque of Perusal (1929), A Myth of Shakespeare (1929), The Witch (1931), and Thomas Cramner of Canterbury (1936).


38 Hadfield, pp. 110-111. The quoted passage is from Williams, Three Plays (London, 1963), p. 133.
she is the Beatrician figure who is a step on Vincenzo's way to the final love. She is to him an ideal, but the ideal is more like the Platonic abstraction than the Christian ideal which Williams would favor in the later writings.

The third play of the trilogy is The Rite of the Passion, which was written for a Good Friday service. It presents "the death of Love as Love's own purpose in order to renew the life of love in every human soul, and thereby the restoration of the soul and the end of chaos." This Passion play focuses on three figures: Gabriel ("I am nothing but the annunciation"); Satan ("I am thy shadow only known as hell/ where any linger from thy sweet accord"); and Love ("And I alone am utterly all in all"). Gabriel and Satan are identified at the beginning, "these both are He . . ." and Love comes between them. "But I am still the end and reconciling;/I am all things driven on through hell to heaven." The Love presented here is the same as the Love in the poem "House Hunting," discussed above, but the idea of the Love is expanded. Never before has Williams so boldly spoken of Love as the "end and reconciling" or the "all in all."

Once this step has been taken, Williams never retracts,

39 Beatrice and Dante had a similar relationship. While Beatrice did not sign Dante's death warrant, she did kill the earthly fulfillment of their love by marrying another, and she was a step on Dante's way to the final love.

40 Weales, p. 148.
41 Hadfield, p. 111.
42 Weales, p. 148.
but presses on. Williams also presents for the first time an attempt at the reconciliation of good and evil through love.

During the death of Love the effects or works of love are claimed by both Gabriel for good and Satan for evil. The seven last words on the cross are uttered by both states of knowledge.

'All things are tried and all things are accurst: in a rich land of rivers still I thirst,' says Satan.

'Thou only best, and all things also being worst, except thou give them drink they can but thirst,' answers Gabriel, and Love accepts both states in his reply.

'Nay, lies one heart in desert places curst? Still, while he drinks not, still I thirst, I thirst.'

Neither in The Rite of the Passion nor in The Chaste Wanton nor in the other early plays by Williams does the City or the Image of the City appear. The plays are a continuation, with some expansion, of the thoughts and ideas of the early poetry. But Williams was to become the great protagonist of Christianity as alone among religious revelations, exposing and defining the glory of mortal flesh, in an age which was absorbedly concerned with the flesh, to use or abuse it, but in every method to rob it of its numen. The taunt current among scientists and psychologists, all people professedly not experienced in religion, that religion makes a sin of the body or at best tries to hush it up, became one of his chief targets. He had guessed at the glory of the flesh in experience, and as soon as he

43 Hadfield, p. 129. The interior quotations are from Williams, Three Plays (London, 1963), pp. 172-173.
began to write novels and to imagine two lovers, the outlines of his later vision of the holy and glorious body sprang up in his mind. 44

Or as John Heath-Stubbs tersely said, "with the publication of Taliesin through Logres (1938) Williams emerged, in middle life, as a mature poet." 45

During the period of the later writings, 1937-1945, Williams published two books of poems and six plays. The six plays are all quite similar, so a discussion of two, Judgement at Chelmsford (1939) and The Death of Good Fortune (1939) will suffice for all. 46

In Judgement at Chelmsford Williams explicitly uses the concept of the City. He mentions the City in his synopsis of the play: "... The complete pageant offers a representation not only of the history of the diocese of Chelmsford, but of the movement of a soul in its journey from the things of this world to the heavenly city of Almighty God." 47 In Episode VI Chelmsford asks St. Osyth, who has been martyred by the Danes, what she saw as she died. St. Osyth says:

I saw the City where Love loves and is loved. It was striking out of earth; all the living

44 Ibid., p. 85.
45 Heath-Stubbs, pp. 9-10.
46 The other four are The House by the Stable, Grab and Grace, The House of the Octopus, and Seed of Adam.
47 Charles Williams, Collected Plays, p. 63.
of man for man, woman for woman, man for woman opened outward into the glory; it ran out of the hidden points of the flesh and the soul into the whole pattern of exchange of beauty, and Fate free, and all good luck. 48

This passage embodies many of Williams' ideas. In the City complete love exists, and Love itself is loved. This is the third and final state of man's progression in love. The love here is not restricted merely to the love between a man and a woman, but all love is included. Too, this love can be either of the flesh or the soul or both. From this love comes the exchange or substitution ("substituted love"). The phrase "Fate free, and all good luck" also suggests part of Williams' philosophy of love. He equates fate and luck: "Luck is fate; all luck is love." 49 Both are divine, and both are necessary to the concept of the City. To enter the City, love must be accepted, and "accepted love is fate." 50 This love is divinely willed or fated, just as luck is divine and good: "... all this talk about 'hard luck' and 'bad luck' is, primarily, nonsense. Fortune is one of those first heavenly creatures ... ." 51 This same idea, "all luck is good," appears also in The Death of Good Fortune, which will be discussed later. Thus, within a

48 Ibid., p. 126.
49 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 196.
50 Ibid., p. 197.
51 Ibid., p. 122.
few words, Williams' shows that the entire concept of the City is now clear to him.

In Episode VII, King Cole (Coel of Colchester) and Constantius "discuss the City in a way that seems to indicate that it is Rome and again that it is greater than Rome . . . ." 52

Constantius: . . . Sir, the Empire -- say rather the City, it is the greater name -- is more than all the noisy peoples . . . .
He is a wise nationalist who knows that his nation is only half the truth; the other half he can only find by getting outside his nation. That, sir, is the use of the City; there all the nations can know themselves through others; these must do so; you, sir, know that unless you live in the love of your neighbors you are nothing but a silly noise, however loud. So the peoples -- your British, for example--must learn to obey Europe, Rome, the City.

King Cole: . . . The City is beyond all tribes, and all lives, even our dukedom of Colchester . . . . 53

In the Epilogue, the Accuser, "I who am God's true knowledge of all things made," becomes the "dearest of all lovers" 54 to Chelmsford. He takes her "on to the City, the Love between all lovers." 55 Williams writes of this ascension, "All who are in her Chelmsford past, present, and to come, unite themselves to her in the great exchange of

52 Weales, p. 155.
53 Williams, Collected Plays, p. 132.
54 Ibid., p. 147.
55 Ibid.
mortal and divine love through the Incarnation and Atone-
ment."\textsuperscript{56} This is the "intellectual working-out of the
soul's salvation . . . ."\textsuperscript{57}

The Death of Good Fortune is a Christmas morality
play which illustrates two themes that Williams uses in
his later works: "all substance is love, all luck is good."\textsuperscript{58} Here the love of a man for a woman is acknowledged as part
of a greater love.\textsuperscript{59} Mary opens the play saying,

There is on earth a being called Good Luck;
he has spun much joy; his nature is heavenly,
but when fell, he was half-blinded;
he does not know himself nor do men know him.\textsuperscript{60}

Luck is a god:

". . . no god is stronger than I except Pan,
and Pan and I have divided the world between us."\textsuperscript{61}

Mary causes Good Fortune to die and then resurrects him.
He accepts all luck as good and asks, "... who moves with
me to welcome all chances that may come?"\textsuperscript{62} "The Magician
follows out of knowledge . . . and the Lover and the Girl
out of faith . . . ."\textsuperscript{63} Mary ends the play by saying to

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., pp. 68-69.
\textsuperscript{57}Weales, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{58}Williams, Collected Plays, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{59}Weales, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{60}Williams, Collected Plays, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., p. 182.
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., p. 193.  \textsuperscript{63}Weales, p. 157.
the audience:

"Substance moves in you; my lord your Son loves, you; choose your ways. Go with God."64

The implication is that it does not matter which choice is made, the love of the Lord is not diminished. God goes with each choice. Incidentally, "my lord your Son" is not a misprint; it is Williams' way of stating that Christ is part of every man and every man is part of Christ.

The first of the two books of poems in the later period, Taliessin through Logres (1938), "is a vision of the life of love. It concerns love between man and woman, in mind and body, and it concerns love in the City . . . ."65 Williams used the Arthurian myth because "it had been increasingly apparent . . . that it was impossible for him to translate his major themes into ordinary contemporary circumstances since by their very nature many of these themes were semimystical."66 The Region of the Summer Stars is a continuation of Taliessin through Logres but in a "different geography."67

Since all of the critics who have dealt more than

64 Williams, Collected Plays, p. 194.
65 Hadfield, p. 146.
67 Hadfield, p. 147.
superficially with the two books of later poems depend for their interpretations upon C. S. Lewis’s *Arthurian Torso*, this book alone will be used to show the mature use of the Image of the City in the poems. To describe each poem and indicate each reference to the City would be tedious; therefore, only two typical poems from each book will be presented.

The world in the poems of both books is not the world of everyday life; rather, it is a world of love, a world which is founded on Williams’ concept of the City.

For Williams . . . the phenomenal world—the world studied by the sciences—is primarily a reflection or copy or adaptation of something else. Nimue, the ‘mother of making’, is that energy which reproduces on earth a pattern derived from ‘the third heaven’, i.e. from the sphere of Venus, the sphere of Divine Love.

. . . To say that Nimue is an image of Nature is true, but not very helpful since ‘Nature’ itself is a hard word.

The image of the Empire is the final form of something that had always haunted Williams and which he often referred to simply as ‘the city’. This City was the image of Order. For this reason Williams chose Byzantium rather than Rome as representative of the Empire because, Lewis says, "... we think of it as

---

68 Hadfield, Moorman, Every, and Shideler.


70 Ibid., pp. 104-105. Speaking of the City, Lewis said: "The word is significant. Williams was a Londoner of the Londoners . . . . On many of us the prevailing impression made by London streets is one of chaos; but Williams, looking on the same spectacle, saw chiefly an image . . . of Order" *Arthurian Torso*, p. 105.
something more rigid, more stylized, more scrupulously hierarchical, more stiffly patterned than . . . [Rome]. Its organization suggests something geometrical; and that was what Williams desired.71 Williams insisted that heaven is "accurate" (His famous saying "Hell is inaccurate" implies his outlook on heaven72); thus Byzantium appropriately images the kingdom of heaven. When Taliessin returns from the throne-room of the Emperor of Byzantium,

he is coming back to the "place of images", . . . to the created universe which is an image of the uncreated. . . . He is turning from the vision of God enjoyed in a moment of devotion to that indirect vision of God which a good man and a good poet enjoys in such "images" as poetry, earthly order, and romantic love.73

In "Mount Badon" the Saxons are defeated in what Williams presents as "an 'appearance of Byzantium', a triumph of 'the city'."74 While Taliessin waits the moment to advance he sees far away, with spiritual eye, another poet, the poet par excellence of 'the city', Virgil. Virgil and Taliessin are in a sense doing the same thing; both are about to impose the city [Order] on chaos . . . ."75

Taliessin saw him negligently leaning; he felt the deep breath dragging the depth of all dimension,

71Ibid., p. 106.
72Ibid.
73Ibid., p. 107.
74Ibid., p. 110.
75Ibid., pp. 110-111.
as the Roman sought for the word, sought for the thought, sought for the invention of the City by the phrase.  

The Beatrician moment and the three stages of love in the Godding process are all expressed in the poems. In the clearest example of the Beatrician moment, it goes wrong. "There is no mistake about its Beatrician quality; indeed nowhere ... has the poet expressed so perfectly what he had to say about the human body. It is Iseult's bare arm that sums up all: there Palomides sees in a flash how curves of golden life define the straightness of a perfect line ... where well might Archimedes prove the doctrine of Euclidean love."  

Palomides falls romantically in love with Iseult. But there are only two fortunate sequels to such an experience: either a love consummated in the flesh or the long pilgrimage of Dante to 'intellectual nuptial'. Of the first Palomides has no chance: the queen sits between her husband Mark and her lover Tristram. For the second he is not prepared. He gazes for one dangerous moment too long, gazes while the vision fades into a different kind of vision.  

... Division stretched between the queen's identity and the queen. Relation vanished, though beauty stayed ...  

Iseult, like Beatrice, is a God-bearing image, but Palomides is a Saracen Knight who believes that God has neither

---


77 Lewis, pp. 125-126. The quoted lines of poetry are from Williams, Taliessin through Logres, pp. 34-35.

78 Ibid., p. 126 The quoted lines of poetry are from Williams, Taliessin through Logres, p. 36.

79 Cf. Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 222.
incarnations nor images—God is God. Thus, Palomides cannot accept the image and is unsuccessful in his love.

The Beatrician experience is repeated in "The Sister of Percival." Taliessin is intellectually enamored with Blanchefleur (both are celibate). But before Blanchefleur enters Taliessin has been watching a slave girl . . . drawing water from the castle well. In her also he has seen the celestial light; of her also he has . . . been enamored. The Beatrician quality of the lady does not in the least 'kill' the Beatrician quality of the barbarian slave. Taliessin is living on that rung of the Platonic ladder whence the soul sees beauty in all beautiful bodies to be one (the second stage). Hence, as Williams says in one of the manuscript notes, he sees the slave and the lady as twins; 'Blanchefleur cannot be perfect without the slave'.

This poem contains one other significant thought:

Proportion of circle to diameter, and the near asymptote Blanchefleur's smile . . . .

The first part recalls the discussion above (page 19) on St. Augustine's saying: "'God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere.'" The asymptote to Williams was an image of apparent division but ultimate union. He wrote in a letter about Positive and Negative Ways: "'They are an example of my momentary pet

---

80 Lewis, pp. 124-127.
81 Ibid., p. 138.
82 Williams, Taliessin through Lornres, p. 53.
83 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, pp. 24 and 206.
obsession of asymptotes, and the point at which they do
meet would be the Spiritual Marriage, after which . . . is
the Beatific Vision."  
Blanchefleur's smile is, then, the image of union, the City.

The poem "Bors to Elayne; the Fish of Broceliande"
offers this paradox: "Love leads to pleasure and to sac-
rifice."  
The fish of the poem seems to go in "double
tracks," two different directions, "one leading to 'the
smooth plane of the happy flesh' . . . [while] the other
ends where the Fish as an anagram of Christ stands over
some martyr's grave in the catacombs."  
"But the poet
also means that when the two lovers become a 'twy nature'
. . . they are a living symbol of the grand Twy Nature,
Christ (the union of God and Man in one person) . . . ."  
This same idea, the Twy Nature, appears in Dante's "Paradiso"
and is explained fully by Williams in The Figure of Beatrice.

Two poems from The Region of the Summer Stars evidence
a fully mature concept of the City. In "The Departure of

84 Charles Williams, The Image of the City, edited by
85 Lewis, p. 115.
86 "Ἰχθύς (fish) was so used because the initial letters
of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Ἑρων Υἱὸς Σωτῆρ (Iesus Christos Theou
Uios Soter—Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior) make up Ἰχθύς
(ichthus)" Lewis, Arthurian Torso, p. 73, footnote.
87 Lewis, p. 115.
88 Ibid., pp. 115-116.
Dindrane," Dindrane and Taliessin, who are spiritually wedded, are saying good-bye forever; she is going to a convent, and he will return to Camelot.

The coinherence of their opposite vocations is expressed in their parting words. Dindrance, on the way of rejection, says to the poet 'I will affirm, my beloved, all that I should.' Ho, on the way of affirmation, replies 'I will reject all that I should.'

... There may have been conflict in the soul of each at some earlier stage; we are not shown that stage.

But their human love does survive spiritualizing of the love.

In "The Founding of the Company" the three stages to union are presented as the "three degrees of membership" in the household of Taliessin. This is the most complete explanation of the stages in the poetry. The first stage, while not of physical love, is one of mutual love which has created a union of wills and thus of minds:

servitude itself

was sweetly foe'd or freed by the willing proffer
of itself to another, the taking of another to itself in degree, the making of a mutual beauty in exchange, 

... taking and giving being the living of largesse

To gain the second stage required a greater willing substitution which is essentially loving all of mankind and willing to be in union with mankind:

exchanged the proper self

and wherever need was drew breath daily
in another's place, according to the grace of the

---

89Ibid., pp. 151-152.

90Williams, The Region of the Summer Stars, in Taliessin through Lorres and The Region of the Summer Stars, pp. 37-38.
'dying each other's life, living each other's death'.

Neither ashamed of taking nor chary of giving

The third stage is the final union with God; the poem itself best explains this:

Few—and that hardly—entered on the third station, where the full salvation of all souls is seen, and their co-inhering, as when the Trinity first made man in their image, and now restored by the one adored substitution.92

That Williams did employ the concept of the Image of the City in his non-critical writings cannot be doubted. Any exact date when he began to employ the concept can be doubted, but the evidence given in this chapter allows the general statement that he realized the full implications of the concept in his writings only after 1937.

91Ibid., p. 38.
92Ibid., p. 39.
CHAPTER V

THE CRITICISM

Between the years 1932 and 1945 Williams wrote three books of literary criticism and innumerable articles. Since the main body of his ideas is evident in the three books, *The English Poetic Mind* (1932), *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind* (1933), and *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943), these three works are crucial to this thesis. The development of Williams' concept of the Image of the City follows the same pattern in the criticism as it does in the non-critical writings: the first two books only allude to it or at most refer to it vaguely, but *The Figure of Beatrice* is a close study of the Image of the City as it appears in Dante's *Comedy*.

While Williams did publish one critical book before 1932 (*Poetry at Present*, 1930), in it he makes no allusion or reference to the City or to images of the City; consequently, it will not be considered in this study. The second major attempt at literary criticism, *The English Poetic Mind*, was published in 1932. Williams' reason for writing the book was based on "two convictions (1) that *Troilus and
Cressida is of a great deal more importance in the study of Shakespeare than has generally been allowed, (2) that the central crisis of Troilus is in direct poetic relation to the culminating crisis in Wordsworth's account of his own history in the Prelude." (Milton is also discussed in this book.)

By the time Williams was writing The English Poetic Mind, he had written all of the earlier novels, but had not begun the mature, later writings. In the novels of the earlier period, most of the references to the Image of the City or the ingodding process were to the first stage and were related to the issue of the rejection or affirmation of love. In the early criticism, however, all of the references save one are to the second stage. The concept of the City as a union of one with the whole is approached when Williams writes of Wordsworth's Prelude, explaining that

the Babe gathering 'passion from his Mother's eye', is eager to combine 'in one appearance' all the apparently detached elements and parts of the 'same object'. The Baby, . . . having vaguely realized that his mother is unity, is anxious to recognize unity in every object. This conjecture . . . remains of interest for it

---


3 While any explanation of this difference is apt to seem conjectural, the most logical reason is that the first stage had already been sufficiently explored in the poetry and novels, so that now Williams was prepared to progress to a contemplation of the second stage.
suggests how the sensational apprehension of completeness in one being excites the poetic mind to see such a completeness in separate objects. Each one, is separate, yet each is complete. Each is a whole.\(^4\)

This is precisely what Williams later referred to as the "affirmation of the image" and the relating of the image to the greater whole. "The baby derives 'a virtue which irradiates and exalts' all other objects"\(^5\) just as later, in The Figure of Beatrice, "Beatrice's whole being reveals to her lover Dante a greater whole."\(^6\)

In this discussion of Shakespeare, Williams points out that in three plays identification exists between a character and a city:

> Egypt is taken up into Cleopatra; ... Caesar is taken up into Rome.\(^7\)

> ... Both plays Timon of Athens and Coriolanus contain an identical theme: in both a general leads a hostile force against his native city. ... Coriolanus is melted and turned aside by his mother; Timon has not a mother. Volumnia is Rome; Athens is given no such incarnation.

As written, these passages do not state that the character is an image of the city, nor is it stated that love necessarily exists. This, it may be argued, disqualifies them.

---

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 11.
\(^6\) Shideler, p. 37.
\(^7\) Williams, The English Poetic Mind, p. 91.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 100.
from the discussion. But it must be remembered that this critique was written during the early, the formative period, and too, that the City as defined in the Introduction is the union of minds as well as the union with God.

The second stage is the union of the mind of a man with mankind. Caesar, for example, represented Rome to Cleopatra just as Cleopatra represented Egypt to Caesar. Each is the Image of the greater whole, the City. This is perhaps more logical than theological, for Caesar's and Cleopatra's minds were united with their cities (or rather, their cities were united with their minds) because both Caesar and Cleopatra were absolute monarchs, dictators.

The principle of the second stage is applied by Williams to Wordsworth's poetry when he writes that the greatness of the poetry is that it arouses "a sense of unity of individual life with universal life." Wordsworth's poetry, then, is the means of unifying a man with mankind.

Thus an embryonic concept of the Image of the City cannot be denied Williams even in 1932. It appears to be developing in his thoughts although he does not use the terminology which he will use in the later period.

One year after The English Poetic Mind was published, Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind appeared. It is, for the most part, an expansion of the ideas in The English

---

9 Ibid., p. 154.
Poetic Mind. Again Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth are discussed and explained. But the discussion, in relation to the Image of the City, is fuller and deeper. The concept of romantic love as a way to the image of the Goddess is presented and explained. In The English Poetic Mind the second stage was pictured; in Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind the first and final stages also are acknowledged.

Williams comes very close to paraphrasing what he later will write of the first stage, when he states that the "union of aliens is in its romantic love's very essence." The birth and first knowledge of the love of the first stage are more specifically mentioned. Just as Dante felt love's arrows when he looked into Beatrice's eyes, so "Berowne's allocution in Love's Labour's Lost is about a love which his friends and we understand very well—it is 'love first learned in a lady's eyes'," or "it is from the eyes of the ladies in the comedies and Romeo that love is born, and it is in the light of their eyes that for long he Shakespeare happily plays."

One passage in particular, however, foreshadows The Figure of Beatrice.

11 Ibid., p. 82.
12 Ibid., p. 83.
One of the greatest examples of identity in all poetry is Dante's Beatrice. It seems extraordinary that learned men should have discussed whether Beatrice was Theology, and thought that their affirmative answer meant that Beatrice was not a woman. She is, of course, Theology because she is a woman; she is a given fact which has in two categories of experience two different names. But the fact itself is identical everywhere. Dante may have been merely insane when he believed this; as any other lover may who believes this; as any other lover may who believes that the wrists of his lady are moral goodness, or her forehead aboriginal light, or her hands executive intelligence.  

Williams speaks of Beatrice as an image, yet he does not, or is not able to, construe her as the Image of the City. In 1933 the concept still is not within his grasp.

In the chapter on Milton, Williams discusses the acceptance and the rejection of heaven in terms of love. He defines heaven as

a state where the exquisite paradox of human love at its finest is true of the very nature of life itself; where what we know but for a moment or two is the very definition of existence. It is the state in which the blessed recognition of generous love is at once the complete corresponding reply to that love:

a grateful mind

By owing owes not but still pays, at once

Indebted and discharged.  

He claims that this is the Miltonic heaven: "We shall never begin to apprehend Milton unless we understand that when he said 'heaven' he really meant something like 'heaven'--a place of joyous interchange of free and willing love."  

13Ibid., pp. 54-55.  
14Ibid., pp. 110-111.  
15Ibid., p. 113.
Heaven, then, is a place of love freely given and accepted. This is the distinction Williams was attempting to make in the novels. For example, Chloe in *Many Dimensions* freely gives her love and "her inner being had been caught with the Stone into the Unity." Giles, on the other hand, refuses a chance to love and, therefore, an opportunity to redeem himself. Neither Chloe's love nor the love which Giles refuses is physical. Rather, both are sublime.

Williams defines this sublime love as "a state in which passion is reason; in which we see into the life of things." The "reason" governs the choice to be a Chloe or a Giles, or more dramatically, to be in heaven or hell. To Williams (and to Milton, according to Williams) "love is a matter of the intellect and the will; sensation of beatitude is . . . a result of this." The intellect, which is important to Williams' philosophy, determines the choice. "Reason then is the chief faculty of the soul . . . ." The love begins as a physical, romantic love but becomes, because of intellect, the Reason which "is the chief faculty of the soul," a spiritual love. Later, Williams adds that the physical, romantic love remains also, but in 1933

---

17 Williams, *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind*, p. 20.
18 Ibid., p. 117.
19 Ibid., p. 116.
he does not.

Giles is surprisingly like the Satan in Milton. Both refuse love, or rather, the chance to love. Satan, or Giles, hates "the free love . . . because it follows its own nature and not his. He has rebelled, in the name of freedom, against the central nature of freedom. He is to be free but God is not to be free, because if God is free heaven will be heaven."20 Satan rebels because he thinks that love is exacted in heaven.21 The beatitude which is the result of free, willed love Satan cannot and does not know, for there is in him "a growing incapacity to understand what the word 'love' means."22 Williams, by showing Satan rejecting love—a rejection which causes his downfall—shows that the willed acceptance of love, the affirmation of love, is the Way to the kingdom.

After Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind Williams published no critical work until 1937, and not until 1938 did the first specific mention of the City appear in his writings. In that year Williams published a religious treatise, He Came Down from Heaven, in which he explained his religious concepts of Substituted Love and the City. The City appears in 1938 also in a critique entitled

20Ibid., p. 112.
21Ibid., p. 114.
22Ibid., p. 113.
"Anthropotokos": "What is the highest level of Christian dogma? Exchange between men and God, by virtue of the union of Man and God in a single Person, who is, by virtue of that Mankind, itself the City, the foundation and the enclosure."23

Between 1938 and 1943 when The Figure of Beatrice appeared, Williams wrote many critiques for magazines. Two of these in particular are important in relation to The Figure of Beatrice, for both clearly show that Williams was thinking about Dante's Comedy in relation to his concepts of love, the Image of the City, and inGodding. The first article, "Sensuality and Substance," was published in 1939. The reference to Dante is brief, but significant. Dante asserts that when he first saw Beatrice the spirits of his sensations, of his emotions, and of his intellect were all stirred at once. The first exclaimed: 'Ah wretch! how often I shall be hampered henceforth!'; the second: 'Behold a god mightier than I who is come to rule over me!'; the third: 'Now your beatitude has appeared.'24

The three "spirits" are roughly akin to the three stages. The "sensation" is parallel to the first stage, the physical desire. Although Dante is only eight years old when he first sees Beatrice, his physical sensations are aroused by the sight of her; he is sexually attracted to her.25

23 Williams, The Image of the City, p. 112.
24 Ibid., p. 72.
25 In The Figure of Beatrice Williams elaborates
The second spirit, "of his emotions, is the spirit of love, through which Beatrice will be elevated to the second stage, the Image of the civic City. The third spirit is the intellect necessary for love to become the Way of Salvation, the Way to the City. As Williams said in *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind*, "Reason is the chief faculty of the soul, and Reason is choice." The intellect is Reason, and because of his intellect Dante is able to find God, or heaven, in his love for Beatrice. The emotion, love, ascends because of intellect. As the third spirit says, "Now your beatitude has appeared!" Williams writes: "... Love is a matter of the intellect and the will; sensation of beatitude is ... a result of this."  

In "The Chances of Myth" (1942) Williams affirms the celestial significance of Beatrice by one of his favorite methods, litotes. "It is to be remarked that Lancelot and Guinevere were not of the kind of Dante and Beatrice. There is no celestial significance about Guinevere, or at least not visibly." This statement clearly implies that

somewhat on the "hampered spirit of sensation. He states that the "likely potentiality" of Dante's physical desire for Beatrice is "'impeded in its operations', so that he [Dante] became weak and frail, and his acquaintances grew curious and even spiteful ..." (Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*, p. 20).  

29 Williams, *The Image of the City*, p. 185.
Beatrice does have a celestial significance. The phrase "celestial significance" refers to Beatrice's role as the Image of the divine City for Dante. Since "The Chances of Myth" is not primarily about Dante and Beatrice, the fact that Williams refers there to the relationship between them proves that he was vigorously contemplating the ideas he would present in The Figure of Beatrice.

In 1943 Williams' The Figure of Beatrice was published. This book contains his most fully developed statement of the concept of the Image of the City. It is, therefore, the main consideration of this chapter. In The Figure of Beatrice Williams presents his complete doctrine of love as the Way to the final ingodding of man, tracing the love through all three stages. Here he explicitly relates his concepts of love and the Image of the City to literature—focusing, of course, upon the writings of Dante. The work is important also because many of the ideas used in his previous writings reappear in a clearer, more complete discussion.

In his introduction to The Figure of Beatrice, Williams remarks that part of his purpose in writing the book is to describe the process of the ingodding of a man, Dante, by

---

30 Ibid., p. xlii.
31 It must be remembered that love alone is not sufficient in the ingodding process. The love must be accompanied by Reason, that is, intellect. Dante "insists on the intellect at every step of the Way—no element was ever false
Dante's affirmation of an Image of the City. There is no doubt that Beatrice does symbolize the City. "... The Paradiso is an account of the perfected universe. Dante is shown it by Beatrice, that is, by the means of his own particular Image..." "Beatrice is the Image and the foretaste of salvation." In Beatrice, Dante envisions the City, and by loving Beatrice he discovers it.

The record of the Dantean Way begins with three things—an experience, the environment of that experience, and the means of understanding and expressing that experience; say—a woman, a city, and intellect or poetry; say again—Beatrice, Florence, and Virgil. These images are never quite separated, even in the beginning; towards the end they mingle and become a great complex image. They end with the ingodding of man.

The process begins when Dante falls in love with Beatrice in Florence. "He has met a young woman; he is attracted to her; his emotions are moved, his sensitiveness increased, his intellect excited, and that dim state of being which to the others" p. 21). Love triumphs only with Reason; for Reason, intellect, governs rational choice. Those in hell are "the people who have lost the good of intellect..." (p. 163). See also pp. 164-165.

32 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 16.
33 Ibid., p. 191.
34 Ibid., p. 28.
35 Ibid., p. 11. The divine City is imaged by the human city and by Virgil, just as the Empire on earth is an Image of the City. Although Williams does not pursue each of these images, they should be noted, for they show that Williams realized that the concept of the Image of the City could not be limited just to a mortal who is loved.
we call his soul purged and cleared. He is 'in love!' In two sentences, Williams refers to all that is necessary for the inGodding process. First, a love exists.

It is not, I think, too much to say that his sex, like his intellect, was awakened. That he had, there and thereafter, no direct desire of Beatrice physically is likely enough; first love often happens so. But that the potentiality of it was there is also likely. When later, he says that his 'natural' spirit was 'impeded in its operations', so that he became frail and weak, and his acquaintances grew curious and spiteful, he must mean at least that this potentiality was present. Long afterwards, he was to cry out: 'The embers burn, Virgil, the embers burn; and the fire was general through him.'

The potentiality of sexual attraction recalls another remark by Dante which Williams explains: "The 'natural spirit' which dwelled . . . in the liver . . . begins to weep and says: 'O miserable wretch! how often now I shall be hampered!'" The liver is the organ of the passions of the body—the sexual passions. Williams had experienced this also when he met Michal; it is the subject, it will be remembered, of The Silver Stair sonnet sequence. Dante never married Beatrice, Williams notes, but then, the consummation of love in marriage is not always necessary;

---

36 Ibid., p. 34.
37 Ibid., p. 20.
38 Ibid., p. 19.
39 The similarity between this remark and the passage previously quoted (p. 70) from The Irao of the City will be discussed later.
for "adoration, and it is adoration of its own proper kind which in involved, may exist between all kinds of people; it is that kind of secondary worship which one is permitted to offer . . . to saints and angels and other express vehicles of the Glory." Beatrice is one of the "other express vehicles."

The second necessity for the process of the inGodding, intellect or Reason, is also present: "his intellect excited." The meeting, the "Beatrician moment," presents "the lover with a way of effort toward nobility and sanctity salvation . . . . But he need not follow it; Beatrice is therefore a moment of choice."^41

Dante falls into a "stupor," "an astonishment of the mind . . . at the awareness of great and wonderful things."^42 He will fall again when he sees Beatrice for the first time in heaven. "This is what . . . happens to him at the sight of the Florentine girl, and all his work consists . . . in the increase of that worship and the knowledge."^43 She becomes "the ladder of his mind and soul."^44 Since the love in the first stage, the physical love, is not mentioned

^40 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 15.
^41 Ibid., p. 123.
^42 Ibid., p. 7.
^43 Ibid.
^44 Ibid., p. 213.
by Dante, Williams does not pursue the discussion on that
dstage, but discusses that ascension of the love to the
second stage where Beatrice becomes the Image of the civic
City.

The civic, the earthly City, Florence "has four
meanings—Dante's own particular city, and any city, and
the universal Empire, and the Divine City."^45 The first
three are earthly, the last celestial. They all are
united, however, by love and each of the first three may
be, using Williams' definition of "image," the Image of the
greater. "Dante's city" may be the Image of the other
three; for they are greater; "any city" may be the Image
of the "Empire" or the "Divine City"; the "Empire," which
to Dante was the Roman Empire under the Emperor or the
Pope, can image the "Divine City." Beatrice is similar.
Each of the three earthly cities is "as much greater than
the earthly Beatrice as the Divine City /is / ... greater
than the divine Beatrice. Beatrice /Images/ ... the il-
minated union of the earth and heaven" to Dante, just as
"the Pope and the Emperor were the declared and decreed
union of earth and heaven to all mankind."^46 The purpose
of the City, civic or divine, is union through love.

Florence is the City because Dante met Beatrice there;

^45 Ibid., p. 138. Williams regarded the "Universal
Empire" as a "City": it is, for him, earthly community
par excellence.

^46 Ibid., p. 88.
London, New York, or Rome would have served as well.\(^47\) Beatrice becomes the Image of Florence; Dante through her loves Florence, and through Florence he loves mankind. Williams explains: "The sight of Beatrice . . . filled him with the fire of charity and clothed him in humility; he became—and for a moment he knew it—an entire goodwill."\(^48\) "Because of her, other ladies were praised and honoured more . . . . It seems almost as if a Saturian age of love lived in Florence, where a glory lay on the city because of a princely young miracle that wafted it.\(^49\) Dante is "seeing in a certain image of youth and love, the Florentine type of the divine City."\(^50\) The "other ladies" are not forgotten or unnoticed; indeed, they are loved more, just as the rest of the people of the city (or rather, the City, the entire community of men of earth) are loved the more.

The image of the City of Florence had existed all this time until Beatrice's death in the background of Beatrice and as a background to Beatrice. There were a great many other young women, of whom the young Dante obviously had a very clear awareness. . . . They are a part of the massed background; part, that is, of the general and still undefined mass which is . . . to be defined into the City—first the Italian, . . . then divine.\(^51\)

\(^{47}\)Ibid., p. 14.  
\(^{48}\)Ibid., p. 22.  
\(^{49}\)Ibid., p. 32.  
\(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 33.  
\(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 39.
Prior to discussing Beatrice as the Image of the divine City, it is interesting, if not necessary, to note that she is also Purgatory for Dante. She "is herself the mountain. She is . . . the means by which purification takes place."52 Dante must, Williams explains, go through Purgatory because "the re-establishment of her full supernatural validity is to be kept for Dante's purified mind. It is when he can see the Images clearly that he is to see her again . . . She is to be again what she was before—the first of the eternal images."53 But then she will image the final union, the inGodding: all in the City coinhere; those in Purgatory are learning to coinhere. While in Purgatory, Dante has a dream.

He sees a golden eagle, and he himself on Mount Ida where Ganymede was . . . Troy . . . is recalled. . . . Ganymede was the son of Tros, from whom Aeneas sprang. It is the eagle of Jove and Troy who now catches up Dante and bears him to a place of fire, and they both burn together, though those golden plumes are renewed in the heat but Dante is scorched by the visionary flame. The actual place of fire is at the height of the mountain /Purgatory/; beyond it is Paradise and Beatrice . . . . The dream, in this sense, is a premonition of the union of those two great Images—Beatrice and the City, for the eagle is the City—Troy or Rome, Florence or London or New York, but all renewed in Zion—the shape of which bears him in vision to her, as she is to expound Zion to him . . . . The eagle . . . is an image of its greater Type in the fifth heaven of the Paradiso, the eagle of Jupiter, who speaks there of the Divine Justice: there the City is aware of its unity and can in its own speech say 'I' and 'My',

52 Ibid., p. 147.
53 Ibid., pp. 146-147.
though as men understand it, it is 'We' and 'Our'.\textsuperscript{54}
The eagle represents heavenly knowledge as well as earthly justice. It is a symbol of the intellect necessary in the ingodding process. On earth, true justice exists only in love and only among men who love their fellow men. In heaven the singular, I or My, becomes the plural, We or Our,\textsuperscript{55} or rather, the singular and plural are in union. Those who are in heaven, because they are in heaven, are united with God, are ingodded.\textsuperscript{56}

Dante completes his Purgation and enters into Paradise. Virgil, however, who had led him through Hell and Purgatory, cannot enter. To Williams, this is an important point, for the image of a woman was not new in him \textsuperscript{Dante7}, nor even the mode in which he treated it. What was new was the intensity of his treatment and the extreme to which he carried it. In his master's great poem—\textsuperscript{Virgil's Aeneid}—the image of the woman and the image of the city had both existed, but opposed. Dido had been the enemy of Rome, and morality had carried the hero away from Dido to Rome. But in Dante they are reconciled . . . Virgil could not enter the paradise of that union, for his poem had refused it.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., pp. 155-156.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 165.
\textsuperscript{56}Williams remarks on the relationship between God and heaven: "... Heaven, as such, only exists because of the nature of God, and to his existence alone all bliss is related. In a Jewish tradition God was called 'the Place' because all places were referred to him, but not he to any place. With this in mind, it might be well . . . to vary the original clause \textsuperscript{of the Lord's Prayer} by 'Our Father in whom is heaven!' (\textit{He Came Down from Heaven}, p. 2).
\textsuperscript{57}Williams, \textit{The Figure of Beatrice}, p. 16.
In a lengthy discussion, Williams reasons further:

Virgil is poetry, and the greatest of European poets/ Dante/ knew the limitations of poetry. Poetry may be 'spiritual' . . . but it cannot possess charity; it cannot be humble. It is therefore justly represented in Virgil, who precisely lacked baptism; that is, . . . the capacity for infinite charity and humility.

. . . . It is a part of the poem that Virgil should lack grace; did he not, he would be too like Beatrice herself. The Aeneid has pietas and not caritas; so must its author have here.

Beatrice re-enters and Dante again falls into a stupor, remembering the first meeting on earth. "Here at last are the voice and the eyes for which he had looked, and he is alone with them except for that strange new City which surrounds and contemplates the meeting." Beatrice is celestial; she is no longer just the Image of the City, for she is in union with it. But Williams wonders, "The important poetic for us, with the Paradiso in view, is whether Beatrice can still remain human"; then he answers that in her first speech, with its "touch of human emotion, almost human anger," Dante made "the Celestial Beatrice Florentine as well as the Florentine Celestial." The dual nature is important in the symbolic relationship of Beatrice

---

58 Ibid., pp. 111-112. Pietas and caritas are difficult to translate. Pietas means piety, kindness, pity, and reverence and dutifulness in one's relation to superior beings; caritas means love, dearness, and charity.

59 Ibid., p. 197.

60 Ibid., p. 180.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p. 181.
to Christ, for both maintain this duality. In an essay in 1944, Williams writes, "In Dante, no doubt, Beatrice is an illustration of Christ."

This too is not without significance when we consider the way in which, in the Paradiso, the body is spoken of, 'the glorious and holy flesh'; there the light, beauty, and love of the holy souls will grow greater through their bodies, and they will see more deeply into God. It is an image of this state which he [Dante] sees in Beatrice [at the time of their first meeting], as for a moment its actuality—humility and charity—is, so far as he can bear it, communicated to his soul.

But more, Williams refers to the growth of her beauty.

Not only is the original power and nature of the Image recognized, but its original power [in the first and second stages] is recognized as now developed into a state of greater knowledge. It is in itself or in relation to every thing else or in relation to God. Beatrice is not only a type of the love relationship; she is a type of every relationship.

Through Beatrice, Dante learned the meaning of love while on earth; in Paradise, she again is his knowing.

This again, as Williams remarked, is the function of the Image of the City: the greater is known through the lesser.

"Dante himself is the Knower, and God is the Known, and

---

64 Hadfield explains Williams' concept of the duality of Christ: "He seems ... to fix his thought on the primal figure of love, Christ, as the divine nature of love inhabiting a human body and living a human life subjected to human conditions, rather than as a complete man united to complete love" (Hadfield, p. 136).

65 Williams, The Image of the City, p. 39.

66 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 23.

67 Ibid., p. 190.
Beatrice is the Knowing."  

As on earth when the emerald eyes set Dante aflame with love, so in heaven the eyes again give him knowledge. The final inGodding arrives; Dante has ascended to the uppermost heaven where he sees Beatrice completely for the first time.

The perfect Image reaches its perfect height. She stands, alert and intelligential, beautiful and passionate, poised in the heaven from which her Maker has withdrawn for her sake his visibility.

The eyes of Beatrice are seen no more; the eyes of Mary are seen instead. They are the eyes of the God-bearer Mary, the last of the Images. But Beatrice, for Dante, the first of the Images, had also been a God-bearer; only there the God had not, as here, fulfilled himself in the glorious and holy flesh.

Dante looks beyond Mary. He sees the figure of Man contained in and unseparated from God. He sees three circles. At the depth of hell Satan chews men; but at the end of Paradise the great mathematical symbol shows man distinct yet in-Godded.

There is a parallel between the "Distinct yet in-Godded" man and the stages in the inGodding. Each stage is distinct and each is separate, yet not to the exclusion of the previous stage. When Dante is finally inGodded, he does not relinquish the original love of the first stage, and certainly he does not lose his love for mankind.

(Williams often remarks on this; quotations have been cited previously to show it. But the principle is sufficiently

---

68 Ibid., p. 231.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 218.
71 Ibid., pp. 222-223.
important to deserve restatement.)

The most lasting impression of Beatrice, to Dante, was her eyes. He saw them on earth when he loved Beatrice in earthly form; he saw them again in heaven and was taught the meaning of love. The eyes become the God-Bearer's, Mary's--the eyes of the Mother of Love. The validity of the rest of Beatrice is affirmed, strengthened by an increase or deepening of her beauty and her meaning.72 Dante remembers her beauty and the physical love it evoked. Beatrice began as a Florentine and became celestial when she died; in the final image she is both. "Her derivation as a Florentine was not to obscure her identity as a celestial any more than her identity was to obscure her derivation."73 "Beatrice was always Beatrice."74

A secondary importance of The Figure of Beatrice in relation to this thesis is the fact that nearly all of Williams' previous writings are in some way reflected in it. While the concept of the Image of the City is not, of course, the only aspect of this reflection, it is a tremendously important part of it. Ideas related to this concept recur often enough to show that this book is the culmination of a lifetime of intensive thought.

72 Ibid., p. 195.
73 Ibid., p. 8.
74 Ibid., p. 213.
The first stage in the inGodding process, the physical love, can be seen in almost all of Williams' poetry of the earlier period. In *The Silver Stair* sonnet sequence the subject is physical love; the poems honor the body. In the other poetry of the earlier period, the first stage, though not as pervasive, is just as important:

Thy body's secret doctrines now
Are proved and felt and known:
More wisdom on thy breast I learn
Than else upon my knees.

The motions of your mouth new-kissed...
One look, one kiss...
Disjoin and come...

I rise, I genuflect, I turn
To breakfast, and to you.

In the article "Sensuality and Substance" (1939) and later in *The Figure of Beatrice*, the first stage, as Williams perceived it in Dante's *Comedy*, reappears. Williams explains Dante's attraction to Beatrice as partially

---

75 See above, p. 37.
77 Williams, *Divorce*, pp. 73-73.
78 Ibid., p. 77.
79 See page 70 above, and Williams, *The Image of the City*, p. 72.
80 See page 74 above, and Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*, p. 19.
the result of an aroused physical passion. The physical passion as defined for his own life in the early poetry, especially *The Silver Stair*, is closely parallel to his explanation of Dante's passion: both combine the spiritual and the physical.

Williams notably wrote of the second stage twice before he wrote *The Figure of Beatrice*. In *The English Poetic Mind* he mentions Caesar and Antony as imaging Rome and Cleopatra imaging Egypt. In a 1940 critique he again refers to Shakespeare for the image of the civic City:

Both directly and indirectly this image of the City recurs constantly in Shakespeare, especially from *Henry IV* onwards. The direct image is presented only occasionally, as in the speech from *Henry V* /the Archbishop's speech on the similitude of bees and the ideal earthly community, particularly the line, "The singing masons building roofs of gold", or in the fantasy of Gonzalo in *The Tempest*. A more definite personal symbol of it is in the figure of Caesar in *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is in no detriment to the great figures of the lovers and all they stand for to say that there is, among their conceptions, nothing of the particular quality of Caesar's lines:

The time of universal peace is near.
Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nooked world

Shall wear the olive freely.
... It is the peace and union of men which he represents and sustains.

The same quotation from Shakespeare is repeated in *The Figure of Beatrice*, and Williams remarks, "The olive was

---

82 Williams, *The Image of the City*, p. 95.
peace; the world was, in that phrase, promised freedom and peace ....

Williams' explanation of the third and final stage in The Figure of Beatrice cannot be so explicitly compared to passages from earlier writings. Rather, the explanation is the sum of his previous writings, beginning as early as Many Dimensions (1931), in which an early form of the inGodding is evident in Chloe's death. In Taliessin through Logres the concept of the City is fully engrained in Williams' poetry as it is in the novel Descent into Hell. All of these works gave him the knowledge which enabled him to write The Figure of Beatrice. It is perhaps fitting that he should in this book express most completely his concept of the Image of the City, for

literary criticism was an intensely serious matter to him. He was anxious to free it from the chains of thought-fashions and to restore it to the service of the poetry itself. By service of poetry he meant a work of the same seriousness as the pursuit of the beautiful unheard-of kind of love. Both were to be known in their divine origin and its strict and exalting implications. For this reason he laboured in lectures and in books at his conception of The Prelude, of Paradise Lost, of Troilus and Cressida and Henry V, to name only four works of which one can say that since Charles Williams wrote of them serious people will read them differently. He was not afraid, as those four titles show, to chose the most hackneyed and enshrined because he had something new and valid to say.

83 Williams, The Figure of Beatrice, p. 94.
84 Hadfield, p. 60.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In Charles Williams' writings, his concepts of the Image of the City and of love as the Way to the City germinate, develop, and reach a final maturation. The works, as the preceding chapters have shown, may be divided roughly into two periods: the earlier, 1912-1937, and the later, 1937-1945. In the earlier period, the concept of the Image of the City per se never appears as it does in the later writings, but it does begin to develop in a definite pattern in his writings.

In his first published work, The Silver Stair (1912), Williams expresses a physical desire for a woman. At this early date he establishes what will remain as a basis of the love necessary for the ingoeding process. The physical desire, which is the first stage of the ingoeding process, is confined to the first stage because the desire is not yet supplemented by the intellect, Reason, which is necessary for further progression. Nor is the intellect evident in the other books of poetry of this period. They are, rather, an enlargement and elaboration of the same theme. While The Silver Stair is almost entirely based on Williams' personal love for his future wife, in the other books she
does not appear as often, for the love of which Williams writes is universalized there.

The novels of the earlier period continue the exploration of the first stage. They are, however, concerned mainly with the rejection or perversion of love rather than the affirmation of it. In the first novel, *Shadows of Elysium*, Considine attempts to exploit love in order to conquer the world. Gregory Persimmons in *War in Heaven* wants to possess the Holy Grail in order to have complete power over other people. Sir Giles Tumulty in *Many Dimensions* uses the Stone from King Suleiman’s crown to gain mastery over natural laws, but he rejects the Way of love that is offered to him. This novel contains the first appearance of a totally unselfish love. Chloe gives of herself completely; she reunites the Stone and saves mankind. Although Chloe cannot be considered an Image of the City, Williams’ portrayal of her does show that the concept of love as the means to the City is maturing. The unselfish love reappears in the last of the early novels, *The Greater Trumps*, when Nancy saves mankind by taking upon herself the brunt of a seemingly uncontrollable storm.

Thus, by 1932, the concept of love as the Way to union and the first stage of the inGoddng process had been firmly established in Williams’ writings. The second stage appears for the first time in the criticism of the earlier period.
In *The English Poetic Mind* Williams discusses characters in literature in relation to the second stage, the union of mortals. He cites Caesar and Cleopatra in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as Images of Rome and Egypt, and Volumnia in *Coriolanus* as an Image of Rome. As images, they represent the greater whole. In *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind* the ingodding process is discussed even more fully. The first stage is recalled in the chapter on Shakespeare and the acceptance or rejection of love in the chapter on Milton. Williams also, for the first time, discusses Reason, or intellect, in love.

Thus the pattern of the maturation of the concept of the Image of the City in the earlier period writings is quite definite. The physical love of the first stage and the first signs of the universalization of the love appear in the poetry (1912-1924). In the novels (1929-1932), the rejection or perversion of love and the unselfish love necessary for the ascension to the City are presented. The criticisms (1932-1933) contain appearances of the first and second stage, and of Reason as necessary to love. By the end of the earlier period, the concept of the Image of the City was definitely maturing; the final stage, however, was yet to be realized.

From 1938 on, Williams' writings indicate that he had the entire concept well in mind. This final maturation,
however, is not as abrupt as it may seem. The third stage is notably foreshadowed twice during the earlier period. The most obvious foreshadowing occurs in *Many Dimensions* when Chloe freely and intelligently submits her will to the Stone. Although Williams does not specifically state that she is ingodded, it may be inferred from the events of her death: first, her act is the supreme sacrifice—the sacrifice of one's self; second, she does not die until nine months after she unites the Stone. In other words, her sacrifice is Christ-like, and she enters a period of gestation from which, with her physical death, she is apparently reborn into the spiritual world.

Although less obviously, the third stage is foreshadowed again in *Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind* in the chapter on Milton. In this chapter Williams discusses the affirmation and rejection of Heaven in terms of love.

The Image of the City, although used in all of the major works of the later period, occurs more and more frequently and significantly. In *Descent into Hell* (1937) and *Taliessin through Logres* (1938), the City appears but is not fully explained. In the numerous critiques written between 1938 and 1943, Williams elaborates on the Image of the City. *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943) contains his most complete explanation of the Image; and in his last two major works—*The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944) and
All Hallows' Eve (1945)—it is central to the meaning.

The concept of the Image of the City is significant in all of Williams' major writings, for inextricably woven into the concept are his ideas of love as the Way to union, fate as love, the holiness of physical love, and the divinity of substituted love. An understanding of the concept is prerequisite to the comprehension of Williams' writings.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Williams, Charles, All Hallows' Eve, New York, Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1948.


———, The Figure of Beatrice, New York, Noonday Press, 1961.


———, The Place of the Lion, New York, Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1951.


Articles
