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PROLEGOMENON TO PIERS PLOWMAN: LATIN VISIONS OF THE OTHERWORLD FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The Ohio State University

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PROLEGOMENON TO PIERS PLOWMAN:
LATIN VISIONS OF THE OTHERWORLD
FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

Kim Dian Gainer, B.A., M.A.

* * * *

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To Charlie
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FIELD OF STUDY

Medieval English Literature
Such scholars as Howard Patch have traced certain elements that recur for over a millennium in visionary journeys to the otherworld. The evidence he and other scholars have amassed is testimony to the remarkable resiliency of the topoi of such accounts, but such scholarly studies by their very nature have two unfortunate effects. First, they divide the visions into small segments, in effect disguising their value as coherent literary texts by breaking down the boundaries between one vision and another in order to extract elements of interest. Rarely do we gain a sense of how the writer of a vision intends it to work as a coherent whole. Secondly, by focusing on the persistence of certain topoi such studies emphasize the resiliency of the tradition only in a conservative sense. The visions of the otherworld in fact exhibited a second type of resiliency, a protean ability to adapt themselves to new currents in medieval culture. This study will explore this hitherto neglected feature of the otherworld visions. It will neither methodically document the presence or absence of any given topos nor will it attempt to elucidate changes in people's beliefs about the otherworld by delineating changes in the details of torments or geographical
features. Instead, each vision addressed will be treated as a literary document in its own right, one informed by a unifying authorial intention. Simultaneously this study will demonstrate how innovation co-existed with tradition by tracing the process through which each author manipulated inherited elements to suit the purposes suggested to him by contemporary conditions and needs.

The visions deserve this kind of treatment if only because of their extraordinary popularity in their own day. Even if not to our taste, they successfully responded for over a millennium to their audiences's changing beliefs, desires and needs. And this success was not, I hope to show, merely the result of a morbid interest in gory scenes of torment or a fascination with the bizarre or exotic—for the otherworld is, of course, the ultimate in the exotic. Instead, an examination of two Christian innovations in particular will demonstrate that the otherworld visions were effective vehicles for exploring the here and now. First, the source of the otherworld visions, the Jewish apocalypse, frequently contained surveys of Israelite history in the guise of prophecy, but the Christian apocalypse, understandably enough, dropped this content. The loss of these historical surveys was sometimes accompanied by the abandonment of the convention of pseudonymity, which had provided the visions with authority by permitting ex eventu prophecy that had of course proved correct, written as it was after the fact. No
longer constrained by a conventional past setting, the otherworld journey could be used to explore the spiritual crises experienced by contemporary men and women. But the elimination of pseudonymity created anew the problem of authority—the visionary has always been suspect. Writers began to surround these first-person narratives with details of the visionary's life before and after rapture. The vision itself became one part of the story of an individual's salvation, and the visionary's successful struggle with a spiritual crisis that brings on a vision—and not the otherworld itself—was the subject of the account.

Secondly, the visions always contained the seeds of allegorical interpretations, and such seeds came into full bloom as a result of the growing awareness that the nature of visionary experience implied that language could only imperfectly convey what the visionary had apprehended. Some medieval authorities believed that a soul consigned to purgatory or hell, immaterial as it was and lacking a body whose senses were in communication with its soul, could not experience the torments in any material sense. Similarly, some argued that a rapt soul, immaterial and torn away from its material body, could not physically "see" or experience the otherworld. To a reader accepting these arguments, all visionary accounts were therefore of necessity metaphorical and doomed to only partial success because words could create only approximate material analogies to the spiritual world "visited" by the rapt soul. The soul could not have seen
the material objects mentioned in the accounts of the returned visionaries: words referring to physical objects, places, and people must represent the visionary's best effort to find material equivalents for his spiritual experience. As Hans Robert Jauss has said about the medieval depiction of the invisible, "that sphere cannot be represented mimetically, but only allegorically..." Some, though not all, of those medieval writers who recorded visions took advantage of this peculiar restriction on the language of visionary experience to compose narratives in which the otherworld as it was concretely depicted—with its walls and bridges and mountains and rivers—was not truly the subject at all but a metaphor for conveying a theological truth or portraying a spiritual journey.

Furthermore, even if the events, characters, and places of the otherworld were treated as in some way "real" in the modern sense, i.e., as possessing material or physical qualities, the recorder of an otherworld vision might still imbue it with spiritual meaning through the application of figuralism. The difference between the allegorical method and the figural is concisely summarized by Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall:

> in terms of biblical study... the allegorical method uses the literal, historical narrative merely as point of departure for various kinds of spiritual interpretations—the figural method maintains the historical truth of Biblical events, while seeing in them, simultaneously, a 'foreshadowing of greater things'. So the Old Testament is 'real', but is also a 'figure' of the New Testament: in its turn, the New Testament, fulfilling the Old, is an incarnation not quite complete. It is itself a promise or augury of
the ultimate truth which will be revealed after the Last Judgment. It was an attitude which had far-reaching consequences, in art and literature. According to Erich Auerbach, figuralism not only provided a "general foundation" for the "medieval interpretation of history," it also frequently colored the "medieval view of everyday reality." The literary possibilities of this world-view can be illustrated by examining such a text as the Vision of Piers Plowman, a Middle English poem which, while not an account of an otherworld journey, has certain affinities to such narratives. Salter and Pearsall directly apply Auerbach's formulation of figuralism to this fourteenth-century alliterative poem, which, they suggest, bases itself firmly on a figural interpretation of reality, upon the 'idea that earthly life is thoroughly real, with the reality of flesh into which the Logos entered, but that with all its reality it is only umbra and figura of the authentic, future, ultimate truth, the real reality that will unveil and preserve the figura'. (Salter and Pearsall 24)

This approach populates a text not with the Spirit of Greed but with greedy people and constructs not Castles of Faith but the houses of faithful men. However, a narrative understood figurally means more than a summary of the doings of its gluttonous and faithful inhabitants, for their experiences have spiritual implications, perhaps in the same way that an exemplum, even if purported to be about a "certain man," is in fact not about that man at all.
Whether an otherworld vision is imbued with the spirit of allegory or of figuralism—and the presence of one does not rule out the presence of the other—either habit of mind brings an "otherness" to the narrative, a sense that one must search beyond the plot, characters, and setting for a larger signification. In a sense both figuralism and allegory are subsumed by the definition of an Allegory broader than that addressed by Salter and Pearsall, one which is represented by what Jauss describes as the "old basic definition of the allegorical modus dicendi... as making possible 'the presentation of invisible, past, and future things'." Such a definition, he points out, "opens up a formal relationship between such heterogenous literary genres and traditions as allegoresis, personification, allegorical fiction, typological visionary literature, psychomachia, bestiaries, and love-allegory" (Jauss 202).

It is not my intention to contribute to attempts to delineate the "formal relationship" between these genres and traditions. This study neither will offer an innovative definition of Allegory nor will untangle the myriad connections between such terms as "allegory," "analogy," "metaphor," and "symbol." Instead, I will demonstrate that, in the broadest sense, that of Jauss, Allegory grows into these visions. In addition, I will preserve the distinction between allegory and figura. But my intent will be not to broaden our understanding of all these modes, but to apply them as already understood to
the otherworld visions in order to demonstrate how these narratives were transformed into a medium suitable for exploring not only the actual conditions of the otherworld but also church doctrine and the road to salvation.

The starting point of this study will be the Judeo-Christian apocalypses that gave birth to the literary tradition of the otherworld journey. The following chapter will survey the features that are recognized as defining the "genre" of the apocalypse. The third chapter will illustrate the adoption of this tradition by the early Christians, a development which was first a conservative one but which contained the seeds of later medieval innovations. In the fourth chapter the first great shift in the tradition is described, the replacement of a national eschatology with a personal one that made it possible for authors of visions to dispense with pseudonymity and to come forward in their own persons. The fifth chapter illustrates the effect of this innovation in the Shepherd of Hermas and in the Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas. The sixth chapter demonstrates both how the use of non-pseudonymous narrators mandated certain additions to the narratives and how theories of the nature of the otherworld permitted certain interpretations of otherworld journeys. The seventh chapter demonstrates the effect on vision narratives of the crystallization of the idea of purgatory in the twelfth century and the codification of confession in that same century. This chapter also demonstrates
the effect of the figural view of the world on the construction of otherworld journeys, suggesting that the highly developed concrete quality of the twelfth-century otherworld visions in no way contradicted metaphorical interpretations of otherworld visions but rather reinforced them.

This study has its own purpose and stands on its own as an examination of texts that in and of themselves are worth studying. Nevertheless, it may also be viewed as a prolegomenon to a further study. While tracing the evolution in the tradition of the otherworld vision I have kept in mind the fact that the changes make the tradition a suitable model for certain visions other than those of the otherworld. In fact, this study was sparked by the realization that, just as Dante was influenced by the otherworld visions in his Divine Comedy, so too may have William Langland have been influenced in the composition of the Vision of Piers Plowman. My examination of the apocalypse and its descendants was thus provoked by an interest in Piers Plowman. For this reason, after reviewing the seminal texts, I have selected for examination those visions that have some connection with the British Isles and that could reasonably have been expected to have directly or indirectly influenced a writer of English. Given the wealth of material, it was imperative to choose some kind of selective principle, and this geographical yardstick seemed as sensible a guide as any. In addition, such a grouping would be logical even in the absence of an interest in
the antecedents of Piers. Visions truly flourished in the British Isles, and any study of the longer, more developed visions becomes virtually a study of this insular tradition.  

From among these insular visions I have selected those originally composed in Latin, though some were later translated into English. In addition all fall into one or more of these categories: each was composed by an Englishman, or recorded the experience of an Englishman, or demonstrably circulated in England. The visions of Drihthelm, Furseus, the Monk of Wenlock, Tundale, Eynsham, and Thurkill all fall into one or more of these categories. The Vision of Adamnan, however, is excluded from this dissertation because there is no evidence that it was ever translated from Irish into Latin. It may have exerted an indirect influence on Latin visions written in the British Isles, but, given the wealth of examples, it seemed unnecessary to include a discussion of this vision when others had a more demonstrable and obvious influence. The Purgatory of St. Patrick is also excluded because, while it contains the traditional elements of the otherworld journey, it is not a vision, and the author does not, therefore, have to grapple with the peculiar problem of putting the incorporeal into the words used to describe the material world. Whatever the spiritual meaning of the tale of Owain Miles, he journeys through a physical realm and what he witnesses he sees through material, not spiritual, eyes. Finally, no attempt has been made to
follow the career of elements and ideas that were derived from the otherworld visions but that were incorporated into sermons or collections of exempla or other non-visionary texts. The history of such disconnected otherworld elements in England has been exhaustively documented by Arnold Barel von Os⁹; and, to reiterate my opening comments, I am not concerned with such topoi for their own sakes. In short, this study will be devoted not so much to tracing the given content of otherworld visions, but to how, and to what end, that content was handled in any one vision.
CHAPTER II

JEWISH APOCALYPSE

In the last two centuries before the Christian era, a form of literature, the apocalyptic, developed as a vehicle for eschatological revelation. Originally Jewish compositions, these first-person, pseudepigraphical narratives were quickly adopted by early Christian writers, who incorporated Christian material into Jewish apocalypses and also composed new ones modeled on the old. In eastern Christendom, apocalypses survive in Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Slavic and Armenian and were being composed perhaps as late as the fourteenth century.1 In western Christendom, the tradition was embodied in Latin translations of the Vision of Ezra, the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Apocalypse of Thomas, the pseudo-apocalyptic Shepherd of Hermas, and the Apocalypse of Paul, the latter becoming widely known in varying recensions as the Visio Sancti Pauli.2

Many apocalypses survive in Greek, Coptic, and Armenian, and fragmentary evidence exists that many were translated into Latin, but this study will explore the influence of only those which arrived as complete texts in Latin Christendom. I am not so much concerned with the history of those elements or ideas, which,
divorced from the structure of the apocalypse, came to permeate other genres such as the debate or the exemplum or the homily. Rather I wish to trace the formal history of this literary tradition as it was altered to suit the changing needs and motives of successive generations of writers. In some later study I hope to determine which complete accounts could have had a direct or near-direct influence on English writers, for the effort may help us solve certain generic questions about such late medieval English poems as William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, which has defied efforts at easy categorization. Given the popularity of visionary eschatological narratives in England, could there not have been influence on a poet who likewise composed a visionary narrative, albeit one centered around content that—superficially at least—seems different from that of otherworld visions or visions of the last things? It would seem odd for a poet recording a vision in fourteenth-century England to have been untouched by the popular eschatological visions. The *Visio Sancti Pauli*, for example, which on the continent enjoyed profound popularity and an influence that culminated in Dante's *Commedia*, was also well-known in the British Isles. Twenty-two of the forty-six texts classified by Silverstein are found in British libraries, and most, if not all, of these are found in manuscripts that circulated in Britain during the Middle Ages. The influence of this apocalypse, as well as others, can be traced in Britain through the years until
the great twelfth-century resurgence of visionary writing that gave birth to the Vision of Thurkill, the Vision of Tundale, and the Vision of the Monk of Eynsham, each of which had a British connection.

Morton W. Bloomfield, in a discussion of the possible influence of "apocalypse" on fourteenth-century British poetry, in particular the Vision of Piers Plowman, suggests that there is no such genre,7 and certainly there has been much controversy about both the status of the term "genre" and that of "apocalypse." Nevertheless, with many caveats, students of Jewish and Christian apocrypha do use the term "apocalypse" to identify a genre or a literary tradition. In his introduction to "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," a survey of contemporary scholarship, P. Vielhauer observes that before the Christian era no "common title" was applied to the texts now labeled apocalypses.8 The writer of the Ethiopic Enoch, for example, characterized his narrative in several different ways: as "Symbolic utterances," as a "Vision," as "Blessings," as "Wisdom sayings," and as "Sacred sayings" (Vielhauer 1965a 586). It is true that, early in the Christian era, the author of the Muratori Canon perceived the similarities between the Revelation of John, the Revelation of Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas and labeled them all as "revelations" (Vielhauer 1965a 586); but as John J. Collins has observed, ancient use of the term "apocalypse" is today "not a reliable guide to the genre."9 A text labeled in
ancient times as an apocalypse may today be classed as something else, while some texts not tagged with that term may be placed with the apocalypses (Collins 1979a 2). Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of consistent terminology in the pre-Christian period, Vielhauer points out that the Jewish Apocalypses share "definite formal peculiarities," which students ought to "regard as fixed features, as elements in the style of this literary genre" (Vielhauer 1965a 582). Similarly, Collins, writing about both Jewish and Christian documents, identifies apocalypse as a "literary genre" in the sense that the term identifies "a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing" (Collins 1979a 1).

Let us accept, then, the contention of Vielhauer and Collins that there is indeed a literary genre and let us adopt, as they do, the term apocalypse as an appropriate label. There is still a possible source of confusion. The adjective derived from "apocalypse" has been used not only to identify a distinctive set of texts but also to label a distinctive concatenation of ideas. By differentiating between these two uses of the term "Apocalyptic," Vielhauer tries to avoid confusion between apocalyptic and eschatological ideas and the medium in which such ideas are found. The term designate[s] first of all the literary genre of the Apocalypses, i.e. revelatory writings which disclose the secrets of the beyond and especially of the end of time, and then secondly, the realm of ideas from which
His practice will be followed in this study. "Apocalypse" and "apocalyptic" will be reserved for discussions of the features of the literary tradition. "Eschatological" will be reserved for the complex of ideas that, originally at least, provided the subject matter of the apocalypses.

Vielhauer delineates four main features in Jewish writings that are designated as apocalypses, and, with some variations, his formulation, which was meant to serve as a summary of scholarship, reflects the findings of other students of this literary tradition. (I will generally refer to this genre as a literary tradition in order to emphasize the historical connections within this set of texts.) First, such writings are pseudepigraphical. The author provides his narrative with authority by setting it in the past and attributing it to some great man (Vielhauer 1965a 583). Second, such writings present accounts of revelations that, unlike prophecy, are seen rather than heard:

The Apocalyptist receives his revelations mostly in visions, whereas they were granted to the prophets mostly through auditions... the visions predominate so strongly that the Apocalypses are generally presented in the form of an account of a vision. The apocalyptic takes place in various ways; first, through a dream... and then through visionary ecstasy... (Vielhauer 1965a 583).

Eventually visionary ecstasy, in which a person falls into a trance, comes to predominate over the dream-vision. In particular, apocalypses are increasingly cast in the form of
visionary raptures, in which the soul of a wide-awake person is depicted as having been seized and drawn out of his body. The narrator recounts "changes of location" and wanderings in "strange and mysterious regions on earth and in heaven" (Vielhauer 1965a 583). In time the account of the journey takes over the apocalypse: "The idea of the journey to heaven, originally only a means to an end, becomes the theme of a special literature in which cosmological, astrological and other-worldly secrets in general are disclosed . . ." (Vielhauer 1965a 583). It is this branch of apocalypse that will become extremely popular in the West.11

A feature concurrent with the visionary nature of this genre is the presence of supernatural mediators. An apocalyptic vision is a picture, whether one "which represents the occurrences themselves directly, or a picture which portrays them indirectly, in the form of symbols and allegories" (Vielhauer 1965a 583-84). In the case of symbolic or allegorical pictures an explanation is essential. This is given by a mediator of the revelation. Thus Daniel explains the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Generally an interpreting angel, an angelus interpres, takes over this role, as, for example, in Dan. 7 where the seer experiences the vision and its interpretation in a dream. In eth. Enoch there is quite a number of these angeli interpretes. (Vielhauer 1965a 584)

Only in a few apocalypses is the visionary directly addressed by God or is the reader left to reach his own interpretation (Vielhauer 1965a 584). So pervasive are these angeli interpretes that, to Collins, the presence of supernatural mediators whose
task is to elucidate the symbolic or allegorical scenes is a key feature which allows us to distinguish the apocalypse from other revelatory traditions:

While oracles, testaments and revelatory dialogues all frequently contain eschatological material analogous to that found in apocalypses, they all lack some aspect of the apocalyptic manner of revelation. Oracles are not mediated at all, but are uttered directly, testaments are mediated by a human figure, and revelatory dialogues lack the narrative framework which describes the process of revelation. (Collins 1979a 10)

In neither Vielhauer's nor Collin's analysis does eschatological content alone determine whether a document should be classed as an apocalypse: the method of revelation must also be considered.

The third feature identified by Vielhauer is the presence of "Surveys of History in Future-Form":

Related to the fiction of antiquity is the fact that the apocalyptic writers frequently present the history of the past right up to their own present time in the form of prophesies. This is always followed by a prediction of the End, and on this the emphasis lies: the present of the actual (not the fictional) author is always the last time. (Vielhauer 1965a 584-85)

This feature is, it must be emphasized, a distinctively Jewish one.

Finally, Vielhauer points to the fact that apocalyptic texts frequently survive in co-existence with other literary traditions. Frequently the apocalypse was incorporated into a larger structure. For example, some apocalypses are combined with farewell discourses, in which children gather around the death-bed of a great man, who includes in his farewell speech or testament a narrative of a vision or rapture that he had earlier
experienced (Vielhauer 1965a: 586-87). Yet such subordinate apocalypses can be, as Collins points out, "intelligible as independent units":

This does not necessarily mean that they have ever existed as independent works. In many cases recognizable units are embedded in larger works and we cannot be sure whether they ever circulated independently. If they constitute coherent wholes which are intelligible without reference to their present context, they can qualify as members of a genre. (Collins 1979a: 1)

On the other hand, an apocalypse itself could incorporate other literary forms. As Collins observes, "every apocalypse contains a number of smaller recognizable forms—such as visions, prayers or exhortations," but "the larger frameworks, within which these elements are held together, are also marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute an equally recognizable type of writing" (Collins 1979a: 3). Apocalypses also frequently include prayers, which are often placed between visions and their interpretations, and which may be requests for an explication of the vision (Vielhauer 1965a: 587). Lastly, ethical exhortations are, according to Vielhauer, always present:

... all Apocalypses include paraenesis, both exhortations to repentance and conversion in view of the imminent end and of judgment, and also paraenesis in the form-critical sense of the word, i.e. traditional ethical exhortations in the form of maxims and series of aphorisms which are sometimes arranged thematically. (Vielhauer 1965a: 587)

This last feature is not, however, included among the "defining characteristics" of apocalypse by Collins, who classes it among the "less significant elements" that nevertheless "recur with
Paraenesis by the mediator to the recipient occurs very rarely. It is noted in the paradigm, however, because it is a significant element. There is little doubt that all apocalypses seek to influence the lives of their readers and many imply exhortation to a specific course of action. The hortatory purpose is usually implicit in the work as a whole, but is expressed explicitly in the few works which contain paraenesis. (Collins 1979a 9)

Whether one considers Vielhauer’s or Collins’ paradigm, however, the apocalypse is a supremely ethical medium.12

The Jewish apocalypse, then, is a pseudepigraphical dream- or ecstatic vision, sometimes incorporated in a testament and often incorporating prayers and exhortations, that reveals the secrets of the last days, frequently as a culmination of a survey of history through purported prophecy, but also sometimes through the medium of a journey. Consistent with its visionary, as opposed to auditory nature, it is a genre which relies heavily on symbol and allegory, a feature which necessitates the presence of supernatural mediators. Dialogue is at least latent in apocalypse.

Many of these features can be illustrated by an examination of the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, a document which incorporates short apocalypses into several of the farewell narratives of the twelve sons of Jacob. Rediscovered in the West in the thirteenth century and translated into Latin by Robert Grosseteste, who believed in its authenticity, the collection was written or at least gathered together in the second century B.C.
and is essentially Jewish, though its contains later Christian interpolations. R. H. Charles includes the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs* under the heading of apocalypse in his collection of translations of apocryphal texts, but not all the testaments contain apocalyptic or even visionary matter. However, the testaments that do incorporate vision and apocalypse—those of Reuben, Levi, Naphtali, and Joseph—are illustrative both of the range and potential of vision. All are allegorical in the most essential way because the fortunes of Judah and Levi and the other sons of Jacob represent not only the fortunes of those individuals as recounted in Genesis but also the fortunes of the twelve tribes throughout Old Testament times, indeed, even through the period of the last days to come.

The eighth testament, that of Naphtali, incorporates not one but two symbolic and prophetic dreams, a fairly common state of affairs—witness the series of visions in the canonical book of *Daniel*, the archetypal apocalypse. In the guise of these dreams, Naphtali both recounts the history of Israel and predicts its ultimate deliverance. The past history of the twelve sons of Jacob that Naphtali purports to recount simultaneously represents the future of Israel, including the events of the last days. For example, in his second dream, Naphtali sees Jacob and his twelve sons standing by the sea when a ship without a crew sails by. The ship is rather conveniently labeled "The Ship of Jacob" (<em>Navis Jacob</em>), and Jacob and his sons board it. The fortunes
of the ship then become an allegory of the fortunes of Israel. A storm blows up, and Jacob, who had been holding the boat to its course, is swept away. The boat founders, but Joseph "escape[s] in a light boat" while his brothers take refuge on ten planks, Levi and Judah sharing one (TNaph 6: 6; PG II: 1111: Joseph . . . cymba fuquit). The brothers are then "all dispersed, even to the outer limits" (TNaph 6: 7; PG II: 1111: Dispergimur igitur omnes, usque in terminos). But Levi puts on sack cloth and prays. The ship is somehow reconstituted and reaches land, Jacob reappears, and all rejoice together.

This narrative, as well as the other apocalyptic vision contained in the testament, is introduced into the farewell discourse with a formulaic "I saw" that signals the start of a vision. In addition, after both visions have been recited they are clearly identified as dream-visions, for Naphtali tells his children that, "These two dreams I recounted to my father . . ." (TNaph 7: 1; PG II: 1111: Haec duo somnia dicebam patri meo).

But in addition to illustrating that minor feature, the vision summarized above exemplifies most of the criteria identified by Vielhauer and Collins as defining the tradition of the apocalypse. The content is of course, eschatological, dealing as it does with the last days: Naphtali tells his children that he has shown them "the last times, all things that will happen in Israel" (TNaph 8: 1; PG II: 1111: tempora extrema, quoniam omnia fient in Israel). He orders his children to command their own
offspring

. . . to be in unity with Levi, and Judah, for through Judah will salvation arise for Israel, and in him will Jacob be blessed. Through his kingly power God will appear [dwelling among men on the earth], to save the race of Israel, and to assemble the righteous from among the nations. (T Naph 8: 2-3)

[.. uniantur Levi et Judae. Per Judam enim orietur salus Isrrel [sic], et in ipso benedicetur Jacob. Per sceptrum enim ejus apparebit Deus, habitans inter homines in terra, ut salvet genus Israel; et congregabit justos ex gentibus. (PG II: 1111])

In addition to conveying eschatological content, like a typical apocalypse, the Testament of Naphtali is pseudonymous, put as it is into the mouth of one of the sons of Jacob. Through vaticinium ex eventu, prophecy after the fact, the pseudonymous narrator is able to survey the history of Israel. The revelation is conveyed in the somnia through sight, not through hearing: Naphtali is not told what will happen to Israel; instead, he sees Israel’s future. Furthermore, this envisioned future is enveloped in symbol and acted out in allegory. The ship of state, so to speak, passes through turbulent times, loses direction, and is destroyed, its crew scattered into exile. Within the vision the translocation of the narrator’s soul is at least implied even if no elaborate journey is recounted. In his first dream Naphtali sees the vision taking place on the Mount of Olives, a location which, according to Kee, "is in keeping with the late prophetic tradition which expects God’s eschatological activity there both in judgment . . . and in revelation"
In his second dream Naphtali sees the vision taking place on the shores of and in the sea of Jamnia. Finally, no human mediator is present during the revelations themselves. The revelations proper, the dreams as experienced by Naphtali, represent examples of a visionary left to his own devices, though the meaning of what he sees is hardly difficult to construe. Naphtali does explain the dream-visions to his own children, and in doing so embeds them in a context of ethical exhortation, for he urges his children to "achieve the good," promising them that "there will be a virtuous recollection on the part of God for your good work" (TNaph 8: 4, 5; PG II: 1111: ita et in bono opere memoria est apud Deus bona). An ecstatic vision contained in the third testament, that of Levi, approaches even more closely to the paradigms of Vielhauer and Collins. Like Naphtali's somnia, it is pseudonymous and allegorical. Furthermore, and again as in Naphtali's dreams, the vision simultaneously recounts history in the guise of prophecy and reveals the events of the last days. The composer of this testament "obviously thinks that he is standing near the day of judgment" (Kee 788 n 1), and this apocalyptic testament is therefore filled with warnings to society that judgment is imminent. The vision is in addition a clear illustration of the apocalyptic journey and of the role of the angeli interpretari—the visionary's spirit, accompanied by an interpreting angel, travels through the heavens.
The writer begins his apocalypse by utilizing allegory to convey, through the actions of personifications, the lamentable state of affairs in his own time. When Levi was tending the flocks as a young man of about twenty, "a spirit of understanding from the Lord came upon" him, and he "observed all human beings making their way in life deceitfully. Sin was erecting walls and injustice was ensconced in towers" (TL evi 2: 2-3; PG II: 1051, 1054: . . . Spiritus intellectus Domini venit super me, et videbam omnes homines occultantes viam suam, et quod muros aedificavit sibi ipsi injustitia, et super turres iniquitas sedit). The youth grieves over mankind and prays that he will be delivered. As will often be the case in later medieval visions, Levi receives his revelation during a period of mental turmoil or mourning:

Then sleep fell upon me, and I beheld a high mountain, and I was on it.
And behold, the heavens were opened, and an angel of the Lord spoke to me: 'Levi, Levi, enter!' (TL evi 2: 5-6)


In the company of the angel, who explains the significance of the scenes that he observes, Levi visits the seven heavens (septem coelis).\(^1\) Levi briefly describes the first, which contains "much water suspended," and the second, which is "much brighter and more lustrous, for there was a measureless height in it" (TL evi 2: 7, 8). Levi asks the angel to explain these sights.
The angel replies with a promise that Levi will see an even greater heaven and with a prophecy of the role the tribe of Levi would play in the advent of a messiah.

Do not be amazed concerning this, for you shall see another heaven more lustrous and beyond compare. And when you have mounted there, you shall stand near the Lord. You shall be his priest and you shall tell forth his mysteries to men. You shall announce the one who is about to redeem Israel. Through you and Judah the Lord will be seen by men, [by himself saving every race of humankind]. (TLevi 2: 9-11)

"Ne mireris in his; alios enim quatuor coelos videbis clariores et incomparabiles, cum ascenderis illic; quoniam tu prope Dominum stabis, et minister ejus annuntiabis hominibus, et de venturo liberare Israel praedicabus; et per te et Judam apparebit Dominus inter homines, salvans in ipsis omne genus hominum. . . . (PG 11:1054)"

The angel then explains the features of all six inferior heavens. The first or lowest, the one closest to the earth, is dark because "It sees all the injustices of humankind" (TLevi 3: 2). The second "heaven," in preparation for the day of judgment, contains fire, snow, and ice, features that will reappear as torments in later visions. Furthermore, in this place dwell the "spirits of those dispatched to achieve the punishment of mankind" (TLevi 3: 2). Similarly, in the third heaven, waiting to play their part in the last days, are "armies arrayed for the day of judgment to work vengeance on the spirits of error and of Beliar" (TLevi 3: 3). In the fourth heaven are the saints and angels who serve God by offering him spiritual sacrifices—a "rational and bloodless oblation"—to compensate for the sins
committed out of ignorance by the "righteous ones" (TLevi 3:6). Dwelling in the fifth heaven are angelic messengers (TLevi 3:7). Finally, in the sixth heaven, the one closest to the seventh heaven in which the Lord dwells, are thrones and authorities praising God (TLevi 3:8).

This description of the heavens contains the seeds of a later development. As Levi is guided through the heavens, he learns many things, but there is no indication that he progresses; that is, his soul cannot be said to have been transformed to some higher level. But later visions take advantage of the fact that the discrete levels of the heavens can be made to correspond to stages in the education of the visionary. Dialogues will develop in which the angel interpretes verify that the visionary is ready to move on to the next stage. The journey through the heavens was thus peculiarly suited to being transformed into an allegorical journey.

After explaining the sights in the two lowermost heavens and describing the highest heaven, the angel launches into warnings about the consequences of the behavior of thoughtless (insensibles) men whose continuing sinfulness provokes God's anger. The angel describes some of the signs of the coming last days, that, incredibly, these sinful, obdurate men will nevertheless ignore: the earth will tremble, stones will shatter, the sun will be extinguished, the waters will dry up. Levi's prayer for deliverance will, however, be heeded, and the angel
prophesies about his priestly role and that of his descendants. The angel's words are confirmed when the gates of the uppermost heaven are opened and Levi sees the enthroned Lord, who gives him his priestly commission, which will last until God himself comes down to earth to "dwell in the midst of Israel" (TLevi 5:2). Having been commissioned, Levi is led back to earth and awakes. Levi, like many later visionaries, has a role to perform back on earth and cannot remain in heaven.

Another vision incorporated into the Testaments is that of Reuben, who recounts the things that he "saw" (vidi) during the seven years he spent in penance for committing fornication with Bilhah, his father's wife. This vision is not in fact an apocalypse—Reuben is not describing the last days—but it will be described here because it contains the kind of quasi-allegorical figures that are encountered in such a Christian apocalypse as the Visio Sancti Pauli. Reuben describes for his children seven spirits that according to H. C. Kee "seem to be human qualities, or at least each exploits some basic human quality" and that are set up as the adversaries of a man at his birth (Kee 782 n 2). They are the spirits of life, of seeing, hearing, of smell, speech, taste, and of procreation. He then describes an eighth spirit, that of "sleep, with which is created the ecstasy of nature and the image of death" (TReub 3:1; PG II: somni . . . cum quo creata est exstasis naturae, et imago mortis). This eighth spirit "forms an alliance, which results in
error and fantasy" (TReub 3: 7), with a second set of spirits, the "spirits of error," each of which exploits the opportunity provided by the frailty built into mankind through the spirits that possessed him at birth.

On the one hand, the author of the Testament of Reuben is formulating a psychology of sinning, an explanation of events in a world inhabited by supernatural beings whose influence accounts for the misbehavior of men under their control. On that level the account is literal. But like the Jewish descriptions of heaven, it is an account susceptible to allegorization. The spirits can be viewed as literal agents, but they can also be viewed, as Kee implies, as personifications of human qualities. This vision, if detached from the specific beliefs underlying it, could very easily be transformed into an allegory. And ultimately, after reappearing in later visions, such figures become fully allegorical, personifications of human qualities instead of agents that have a real effect in the world.

At least initially, many of the features illustrated in the above summaries are adopted by early Christian writers. Like the Jewish apocalypses, those of the early Christians portray visions and raptures as the media of revelation (Vielhauer 1965a 600). The Christian apocalypses are also pseudepigraphical more often than not, but among the exceptions to this rule are the Revelation of John and the Shepherd of Hermas. The latter is called a special case by Vielhauer because it is not "a real
Apocalypse\textsuperscript{a} (Vielhauer 1965a 599); but in fact, as my fifth chapter will demonstrate, its special nature provides an illustration of the direction the tradition of the apocalypse will take once it substitutes Christian content for Jewish surveys of history. For the surveys of history drop out as the Christian apocalyptists concentrate on the theme of the parousia (Vielhauer 1965a 600). Then, as that prospect becomes more remote, a further shift occurs:

The themes of Christian Apocalyptic became more limited the longer it continued. At first, the imminent expectation of the Parousia was the organizing principle, but as time passed the apocalypses more and more centered on revelations concerning the Anti-Christ and the afterlife and its divisions. In the New Testament Anti-Christ and the afterlife are only two subsidiary themes in apocalyptic passages, but from the middle of the second century these become the central themes of Christian apocalypses. (Vielhauer 1965a 600).

This shift in content can be illustrated by comparing the Apocalypse of John with the Apocalypse of Peter, which Christian Maurer describes as "an outstanding and ancient example of that type of writing by means of which the pictorial ideas of Heaven and Hell were taken over into the Christian Church."\textsuperscript{22} The Apocalypse of John reveals the last days, "the final struggle and triumph of Jesus Christ." The Apocalypse of Peter, on the other hand, centers "on the situation in the after-life, on the description of different classes of sinner, on the punishment of the evil and the salvation of the righteous." There is no evidence that the Apocalypse of Peter was ever translated into
Latin, but the book exerted an influence in the west through the Apocalypse of Thomas and through the Visio Sancti Pauli, an influence which can be traced "right up to the full tide of description in Dante's Divina Commedia" (Mauer 667).

This study will demonstrate however that even these new "central themes" will give way to other themes as the apocalypses extend their influence into the Middle Ages. The use of vision, particularly ecstatic vision, survives, and some writers continue to convey traditional content, but other writers find new uses for the tradition beyond conveying information about the Second Coming, and even beyond conveying information about the afterlife. The accounts also come to be more individualized as they cease to be pseudonymous and are instead attributed to contemporary clergy and laymen, sometimes even sinful ones. New means are found to provide authority to a set of literary conventions that had become detached from the environment in which they originated.

The medieval writer thus found at hand a literary tradition with the following features: Its visions frequently take the form of raptures in which the soul of the visionary, like that of Levi, travels through the otherworld on a journey that could easily be divided into stages. With a shift of focus to the visionary, when the visionary assumed more importance than as a mere vehicle for the visions and became the subject of his own visions, the stages become less reflections of physical movement
than mental pilgrimage. The content of the visions, which, with their emphasis on either direct or indirect ethical exhortation, had never been entirely devoted to eschatology, would become not so much the landmarks of the otherworld as the spiritual progress of visionary and other human characters. The nascent dialogue would also prove to be well-suited to a shift from physical to mental pilgrimage. Early "dialogue," the questions and prayers of a rather "cardboard" narrator, provided the justification for the explanations of the angeli interpretes. Early apocalyptic writers were concerned not with what dialogue revealed about the progress of the narrator but with what it revealed about the last days or the otherworld. Using the otherworld as a psychological landscape, later visionary writers were able to concentrate on the progress of the individual.

Finally, an allegorical level was already present in the apocalypses, a feature that, like the mediators and dialogues and journeys divided into stages, "pre-adapted" the genre as a vehicle for exploring the interior world rather than the otherworld. As he reviews the scholarship, Vielhauer summarizes with approval the belief of W. Bousset that

it is the small allegorical vision which is the germ-cell of the Apocalypse; in it either a number of individual features are woven into an allegorical pattern or a number of small and separate images are set side by side. (Vielhauer 1965a 584)

The process can be illustrated in the apocalypses that contain surveys of history through prophecy, through vaticinium ex
eventu. Such accounts do not forthrightly identify the people and countries being described, but employ "a code with images, symbols and allegories," a code which usually requires a "comprehensive interpretation" (Vielhauer 1965a 585).

The importance of allegory increases as literal accounts are sometimes transformed into symbolic ones when Christians adopt and adapt Jewish eschatological ideas. Cut loose from Jewish doctrine of the afterlife, descriptions of heaven are spiritualized. G. H. Box, surveying eschatological passages in the New Testament, observes how the earlier literal accounts were transformed into spiritual ones. He acknowledges that a "detailed doctrine is implied, and that in its fully developed form it had secured a firm place in first-century Judaism."

Nevertheless

It is a striking fact that nowhere in the New Testament do we find a detailed or materialistic description of the heavenly sphere such as we meet with in some of the earlier apocalyptic writings. There is a marked absence of painful literalism. The dominant ideas behind the language are essentially spiritual. It is, no doubt, largely symbolical. Nor must it be forgotten that the tendency to spiritualize the old conception is marked in the late Jewish Apocalypse of Ezra (4 Ezra), the composition of which may be dated about 100 A.D.23

The identification by biblical scholars of "allegorical vision" as the "germ-cell" of Jewish apocalypses—and Box's assertion that the heavens were "spiritualized" in both Christian and late Jewish apocalypses—casts some doubt on Bloomfield's almost cavalier dismissal of the possible influence of apocalypse in fourteenth-century England, for his evaluation is based, in part,
on the grounds that apocalypse was not allegorical. The remainder of this study will attempt to demonstrate that the allegorical germ-cell of apocalypse continued to be a feature of apocalypse past the patristic period, and, in conjunction with the features mentioned above--dialogue, the journey divided into stages, the end of pseudonymity and the growth of emphasis on the visionary--allowed for subtle and flexible depictions of the soul-pilgrimage of the individual in crisis.
Apocalypse, both as a set of ideas and as a literary tradition, was embraced by early Christianity. W. Schneemelcher observes that "Jewish Apocalyptic lived on vigorously in Christianity and... the literary form of Apocalypse continued into the period of the Church." Many Christian apocalypses rework Jewish sources or traditions (Vielhauer 1965a 581). But Christians did not confine themselves to revising Jewish texts; they also composed their own apocalypses, borrowing the conventions of the literary tradition but substituting Christian doctrine for Jewish history and prophecy. According to Vielhauer,

The thought-world and temper of Jewish Apocalyptic were shared, to a large extent, by the early Christian movement as well, especially the Palestinian and Hellenistic-Jewish Christian wing. In fact... it took over the literary documents of the former, the Apocalypses, and "christianized" them by means of a rewriting of varying kinds and intensity. It took over also the literary form and produced numerous works of its own in this genre. (Vielhauer 1965a 598)

This "christianizing" led to a different emphasis in content. As time passed, Schneemelcher observes, more and more "this literary form was limited in its themes to descriptions of the other world, Anti-Christ and judgement. Insistence on repentance was
necessarily also a constituent of these works" (Schneemelcher 751). Eventually, the changes in content will bring about a reshaping of the literary tradition. The conventions that were appropriate for expressing the messages of Jewish prophets cease to be appropriate for Christian writers who are no longer addressing the nation of Israel.

Of the many apocalypses composed by Christians, this study will confine itself to exploring only those that meet two tests. First, they must fall into the class of the journey apocalypse, a tradition which leads directly to the otherworld journey, one of those medieval "twin offspring" referred to by Bernard McGinn. This dissertation suggests that apocalypse be considered as an influence on the tradition of allegorical dream narrative, but the second progeny of apocalypse—non-narrative prophecies and collections of prophecies, some placed within the framework of vision—can at best have played only a peripheral role. True, such prophecies, expressed in symbolism, reflect a metaphorical habit of mind. But they do not contain a cast of characters acting through time and space. Secondly, the apocalypses explored in this study must have been indisputably composed in or translated into Latin, and the whole Latin text must have survived past the patristic period. Numerous early Latin Fathers briefly quote, in Latin, lines that appear in extant or reconstructed Greek or Aramaic apocalypses, but it is not always clear that the quotations were actually taken from a Latin
translation of the entire apocalypse. For example, some Latin quotations have been traced back to early Latin translations of Greek Fathers such as Origen, and there is no reason to believe that the Latin writers incorporating such fragments into their own writing ever saw the complete apocalypse in either Greek or Latin. In any event, any hypothetical early translations have not survived to influence, in their entirety, later writers.

After the field has been winnowed in this fashion, three apocalypses are left: the Vision of Isaiah, the Visio Sancti Pauli, and the Vision of Ezra. There is also an account of a journey to the otherworld in the Acts of Thomas, narrated by a young murdered woman brought back to life by the saint. Finally, there is a "pseudo-apocalypse," The Shepherd of Hermas, which will be examined in chapter five as a decisive illustration both of the shift from Jewish to Christian content and the beginning of the corresponding changes in apocalyptic conventions. To convey the typical features of early Christian apocalypse, and to suggest how these features adumbrate allegorical narrative, this chapter will explore the oldest, the Vision of Isaiah, and the most influential, the Apocalypse of Paul, or, as it was known in Latin, the Visio Sancti Pauli.

The Vision of Isaiah is an account of the rapture of Isaiah, who describes his soul's ascent through the seven heavens, a journey which culminates with a vision of both the incarnation and the ascension of Christ. Composed in Greek during the first
or the second century A.D., it was incorporated in the second century into a Greek apocalypse known as The Ascension of Isaiah, which, as analysed by R. H. Charles, is a composite of three books: the Jewish Martyrology of Isaiah (chapters 1-3: 12 and 5: 1b-14 of the Ascension), the Christian Testament of Hezekiah (chapters 3: 13-51a), and the Christian Vision (chapters 6-11.1). Apparently the entire composite Ascension was translated into Latin, but only small fragments survive. But even as part of a composite Ascension the integrity of the Vision was partly preserved: its beginning is marked by a heading in the Ethiopic and Slavic translations of the Greek original. Translating into English, Charles renders the Ethiopic heading as "The Vision Which Isaiah the Son of Amos Saw"; translating into Latin, he renders the Slavic as "Quam Vidit Ysaias Propheta Filius Amos." At some point the Vision regained its independent existence. With an ending grafted on from the Ascension, the Vision circulated separately in a Latin translation that was based on a different Greek rescension than the source lying behind the older Latin fragments.

The Ascension of Isaiah illustrates several of the possibilities that are utilized by later writers of visions. Although this journey apocalypse is primarily a vehicle for the recording of Christian salvation history, it contains features that made it well-suited, "pre-adapted" as I expressed it earlier, for allegorical narratives, particularly those that
trace the spiritual growth of the protagonist. First, the ascension depicts the journey of a man who has much to learn, who must prepare himself, and who does prepare himself for a vision within a vision. He must go through stages, which are neatly marked off by the stages of the heavens. As he goes through these stages he is transformed both physically and spiritually. The physical stages stand ready to serve as the literal level of an allegory. Secondly, the spiritualizing of the journey is reinforced by the spiritual treatment of other aspects of the vision. For example, Isaiah will see garments that come out of a tradition in which writers, recognizing that a soul’s vestments could not logically be literal, use references to clothing as metaphors for the spiritual condition of a soul. Finally, the ascension contains the seed of the idea that the characters and events in the otherworld are the analogues of characters and events in the material world, a feature that would permit the accretion of a metaphorical layer upon a literal one.

Isaiah is enraptured while prophesying at the court of Hezekiah, King of Judah. He is in the presence of the King, his councillors, the princes of Israel, and forty prophets who have travelled to the court to hear him prophesy and perchance, through the laying on of hands, to gain the gift of prophecy themselves:

In truth, while he was speaking in the Holy Spirit in the hearing of all, he suddenly became silent, and from that point they saw a certain one standing still before him.
His eyes indeed were open, his mouth however closed, 
But the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was with him.

[Loquente vero eo in Spiritu Sancto in auditu omnium 
statim tacuit, et exinde videbant stantem quendam 
ante eum.
Oculi autem eius erant aperti, os vero clausum, 
Sed inspiratio Sancti Spiritus erat cum illo.
(6: 10-12)]

In the company of an angel Isaiah will see a vision not of this 
world but of a world hidden from all earthly beings (6: 15: Visio 
... non erat de seculo hoc, sed de abscondito omni carni).

When his soul returns from its journey, Isaiah reports that 
an angel took him by the hand while he was prophesying. Isaiah 
asks him to explain what he is, what his name is, and why he is 
carrying him into the heights (7:3: Quis es? quo modo tibi nomen 
est? et quo [modo] ave superferas?). The angel's reply contains 
the first suggestion that the visionary is about to set out on a 
journey of intellectual and spiritual growth. Isaiah has to go 
through a period of preparation before he will be able to grasp 
the identity of his guide or the purpose of his errand. Isaiah, 
the angel explains, will come to realize who his guide is after 
he has been carried into heaven:

When I have carried you into heaven, I will reveal to 
you a vision—for which I was sent—and then you will 
know who I am.

[Quando te feram in altum, ostendam tibi visionem, pro 
qua missus sum ego, et tunc scies, quis sum ego. 
(7:4)]

But, as is so often the case in later visions, the mortal Isaiah 
will be denied the highest knowledge because, as a physical
being, he is burdened with his body. He will learn what his guide is, but

... you do not know my name, because you will return again into your body.

[.. nomen meum nescis, 
Ideo quia vis iterum reverti in corpus tuum. (7: 4-5)]

Isaiah and his guide first ascend to the firmament, where Isaiah sees supernatural characters whose actions, while literal, are analogous to those of human beings. A host of demonic angels, each envious of the other, is engaged in a great struggle:

I saw there a great battle of Satan and his host opposing the honored of God, and the one who was more eminent was envied by the other; Because as it is on earth so it is in the firmament, namely the forms of the firmament here are also on the earth. And I said to the angel: What is this war and envy and battle? And answering he said to me: that is the battle of the devil, and it will not cease until He comes, whom you will see, and destroys him by the spirit of his strength.

[vidi ibi proelium magnum sathanae et virtutem ejus resistentem honorantiae dei, et unus erat praestantior alio invidendo; 
Quia sicut est in terra tanto est in firmamento, formae enim firmamenti hic sunt in terra. 
Et dixi angelo: Quid est hoc bellum et invidia et proelium? 
Et respondens dixit mihi: istud bellum diaboli, et non quiescet donec veniet, quem vis videre, et interficet eum spiritu virtutis ejus. (7: 9-12)]

The author of Isaiah is here incorporating an ancient idea, that there is a correspondence between heavenly beings and their actions and earthly beings and their actions. The idea can be
traced back to Deuteronomy 32, in which the number of nations corresponds to the number of the sons of God. It can also be found in Daniel 10, which contains references to the angels of Greece and Persia:

Here the nations and their angels are not identical but stand in direct correspondence. A similar correspondence between humans on earth and the angelic host in heaven can be seen in Jgs 5:19-20. "The kings came and fought; then they fought, those kings of Chanaan, at Thaanach by the waters of Megiddo... From the heavens the stars too fought; from their courses they fought against Sisera." Again in Isa 24:21 we read that Yahweh will punish "the host of heaven in the heavens and the kings of the earth on the earth." In all these passages we are dealing with a two-storey universe, where events happen on one level on earth but also on another level in the heavens.12

At an early stage, therefore, Jewish literature contained the idea that, as it is in heaven so is it on earth, and this idea was incorporated into early Christian apocalypse. Christian apocalypse is thus imbued with the idea of analogy. In the Vision of Isaiah, such analogies are not exploited, but the fact remains that by describing the inhabitants and events of the heavens, an author could simultaneously draw a moral applicable to the world of men.

Isaiah next ascends to the first heaven, where he sees an empty throne flanked by angels singing praises. The angels on the right are of greater glory than the angels on the left, who offer their praises after those on the right and whose song was not like that of the angels on the right (7: 15: post illos cum eis canticum orum non erat sicut dextrorum). Isaiah's guide
explains that the angels, both those on the left and those on the right, are praising God and his Son, who are in the seventh heaven.

In the second heaven, Isaiah and his guide once again find a throne and angels to the left and right of it singing praises. This heaven and these angels are more glorious than the first heaven and its angels, but seated in the throne is a being more glorious than even the angels of the second heaven. Isaiah, in a display of his naivete, begins to worship this being but is stopped by his guide, who explains that he was sent to lead him for this very reason—to prevent him from mistakenly worshipping the angels or Thrones of any of the inferior heavens:

Do not worship the angel, nor the Throne of this heaven; on account of this I was sent to instruct you, but only worship he whom I will point out to you.

[Noli adorare angelum, neque thronum istius coeli; propter hoc missus sum instrumere te, sed tantum, quem ego dixero tibi. (7: 21)]

The guide promises Isaiah that in the seventh heaven he will find a throne for himself, and garments, and a crown. These heavenly "garments" are the "spiritual bodies" with which the righteous will be invested.13

Isaiah and his guide continue to ascend, and each heaven represents a higher stage of being, one less tainted by the earth. As in the Testament of Levi, the earth's proximity is a corrupting influence. In the third heaven Isaiah again sees a throne flanked by angels, but once again the angels are more
glorious than those in the preceding heaven. Isaiah also observes that the memory of this world is not mentioned there (7: 24: Memoria . . . istius mundi illic non nominabatur). Isaiah, too, is changing as he advances through the heavens; the glory of his spirit is transfigured as he ascends (7: 25: transformabatur gloria mei spiritus, cum ascendebam in coelum).

In reply to Isaiah's observation that nothing of the world is mentioned in the third heaven, (7: 25: de illo mundo nihil nominatur hic), the angel explains that some things are left unnamed because of their "weakness" (infirmatem) but that nevertheless nothing is hidden from the angelic inhabitants of the heavens (7: 25, 26). Isaiah, however, must still undergo preparation before he can share in their knowledge. In response to his entreaty, the angel reiterates that he must wait until he reaches the seventh heaven to be more fully answered.

In short order the angel leads Isaiah through the fourth and fifth heavens. In each Isaiah again sees a throne flanked by angels, the angels on the right are more glorious than the angels on the left, but the being on the throne is most glorious of all. And again the superior heaven is more glorious than the inferior. The pattern is only broken with the sixth heaven, where Isaiah observes that there the angels are no longer divided into two groups. His first attempt to ascertain why leads to a mild rebuke from his guide. He addresses his guide as "lord" when he asks him what he is seeing (8: 4: Quid est quod video, domine...
mi?). The angel replies that he is not Isaiah's lord but his counselor (8: 5: Non sum tibi dominus, sed consiliator). Isaiah rephrases his question and his guide explains that, because of their proximity to the seventh heaven, the dwelling place of the Lord and his Elect, the angels no longer need be arranged into two groups flanking a throne. They are under the direct influence of the power of the seventh heaven.

Now Isaiah's guide goes into greater detail about his mission. He explains to Isaiah that he was sent to him so that the prophet might see the Lord of all the heavens and his angels and hosts (8: 9). Isaiah's guide also promises that when Isaiah dies and, by the will of the Father, returns to the sixth heaven, he will receive his vestment, and will be the equal of the angels in that heaven (8: 14: quando reversus fueris per voluntatem patris, tunc vestem tuam recipies. / Et tunc eris aequalis angelis qui sunt in sexto coelo). But even here and now in the sixth heaven Isaiah has advanced far enough so that the power is given to him to sing praises, and his praises, and those of his guide, are like those of the inhabitants of the sixth heaven.

At last the guide leads Isaiah into the seventh heaven after receiving permission from the son of God, whose name Isaiah will not be permitted to hear until he has left behind his body (9: 5: praecipiens est filius Dei, et nomen ejus non potes audire, donec de carne exibis). In the seventh heaven Isaiah sees Adam, Abel, Enoch, and other righteous men stripped of the garment of the
body and dwelling in garments of glory (9: 9: Exutos stolis carnalibus et existentes in stolis excelsis). There too Isaiah is given a book to read in which is recorded the history of Israel and the deeds of other people that Isaiah does not know of. After Isaiah has read in the book and after his guide has further expounded upon the significance of the garments, thrones, and crowns that Isaiah sees stored up in heaven, Isaiah at last is granted a vision of Christ. He sees a being of surpassing glory who is being worshipped and praised by Adam, Abel, Seth, and all the other righteous. The angels, too, draw near to worship and praise this being, and Isaiah likewise sings his praises and finds once again that his voice resembles that of the angels (9: 28: vox erat sicut illorum). Indeed, his whole being has been transformed, and he has become like the angels of the seventh heaven (9: 30: transfiguravi me iterum et fui sicut angelii). His guide at last instructs him that it is time to worship and sing and that he is seeing the lord of all glory (9: 31, 32: Hunc adora et canta; Iste est dominus omnium gloriarum, quas vidisti).

But while Isaiah has been transfigured and is like one of the angels, he has not been transformed to resemble one of the righteous, the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets who are more honored than even the angels. After seeing the Lord Christ, Isaiah has a vision of the Holy Spirit, who comes to stand on the left hand of Christ. The righteous draw near to worship and
praise the Holy Spirit, and Isaiah likewise praises Him.

Finally, Isaiah becomes aware of the presence of God the Father. However, his imperfections prevent him from a sustained vision of the deity. His sight wavers, and, unlike the righteous, he cannot keep God steadily in view:

And after this indeed another indescribable and ineffable glory was revealed, but even as much as the eyes of my spirit [were] uncovered, I was not able to see, neither [could] the angel who was leading me, nor all the angels whom I had seen worshipping the Lord.

But I saw only the righteous in great honor beholding the glory.

[Et post haec alia quidem inenarrabilis et ineffabilis revelabatur gloria, quam ego apertis oculis mei spiritus non poteram videre, nec qui me ducebat angelus, neque omnes angelii, quos videram adorantes dominum. Nisi tantummodo justos vidi in gloria magna aspicientes gloriam. (9: 37-38)]

However, even though Isaiah is incapable of beholding the glory of God the Father (10: 12, ego gloriarn non poteram videre), he is able to hear his words. The Father commands Christ to descend to the world and as he does so to successively take on the form of the angels in the five lower heavens, the angels in the firmament, and the angels in the infernal region (10: 8-9). No one will recognize him, neither the angels nor the princes of the world. Once he reaches the world, he will judge its Prince and his angels and the earth controlled by him, for they have denied God and said, "We are and there is no one without us" (10: 13: Ideo quia negaverunt me et dixerunt: Nos sumus et sine nobis nemo est). 15 After the judgment, Christ will ascend in great glory to
sit at the right hand of God, but he will not be transformed to prevent the angels in each heaven along the way from recognizing him (10: 12, 14: judicabis principem illius seculi et angelos ejus et mundi rectores; Postea vero non transfigurabis te per coelos in magna gloria ascendens et sedebis a dextris mei).

Having heard the words of God, Isaiah now observes the Incarnation acted out as Christ descends. In the sixth heaven he is recognized and praised, for he has not yet begun the transformation which will hide his divinity, but as he passes successively through the next five heavens he takes the form of the angels in each. Indeed, he takes the form of the lesser angels in each heaven, those to the left of the throne.\(^\text{16}\) His transformation is so complete that the gate-keepers of the third, second, and first heavens and the guardians of the firmament demand pass-words from him before they will let him enter their respective domains. Only when he at last transforms himself into the likeness of one of the angels of the turbulent—and presumably more lawless—earthly atmosphere (10: 30: angelos, qui erant in hoc aëre) is he asked to give no pass-word.

The Vision of Isaiah originally ended with the first line of the eleventh chapter of the Ascension of Isaiah: dixit mihi angelus: Intellige, Ysaias fili Amos: in hoc missus sum a deo omnia tibi ostendere. But the Latin translation of the Vision incorporates Isaiah's account of Jesus's triumphant ascension that is found in eighteen verses (11: 23-40) of the Ascension.
Having resumed his glorious shape, Jesus ascends to the
firmament, where he is recognized and worshipped by angels
chagrined at their failure to recognize him earlier. With the
praise increasing as he ascends, Jesus progresses through the
first, second, third, fourth, and fifth heavens. The inhabitants
of each heaven express the same chagrin as the angels of the
firmament. At last he ascends to the seventh heaven, where
"cantaverunt ei omnes justi et omnes angelli et omnes virtutes,
guas non potui videre" (11:32). However, sitting to the left of
Jesus is an angelus mirabilis who tells Isaiah that he has
seen all that is appropriate at this time:

... It is sufficient for you, Isaiah, for you have
seen what no one else born of flesh has seen, what no
eye has seen, nor ear heard, what has not entered
into the heart of man: how much God has prepared
Himself for all the faithful ones.
... Return into your garment, until the time of your
days [is fulfilled] and then you will come here.

... Sufficit tibi Ysaia; vidisti enim, quod nemo
alius vidit carnis filius, quod nec oculus vidit, nec
auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quanta
praeparavit deus omnibus diligentibus se.
... Revertere in stolam tuam, donec tempus dierum
tuorum adimpleatur et tunc venies huc. (11:34-35)

The visionary, venerated prophet though he is, has
imperfections; and, even though he reaches the seventh heaven, he
is held back by these shortcomings. He sees Christ and the Holy
Spirit but cannot keep God the Father within his vision. And,
still burdened with the garment of the body, he must be sent back
because his days are not yet at an end. He has not and cannot
reach perfection in his present state.
But these flaws are integral to the organization of the narrative. First of all, Isaiah's ignorance prompts him to ask questions that provide an excuse for the writer to place doctrine in the mouth of the guide. Secondly, the narrator's imperfections are a useful strategy for explaining why the prophet comes back to share the revelation. In a sense, then, the imperfections of the narrator are mere hooks upon which to hang a vision. But Isaiah's imperfections provide a glimpse at the future of apocalypse. Isaiah is not a static character. He progresses in the course of the vision, both literally and figuratively, in the face of the guide's answers, rebukes, and corrections. His imperfections are not the subject of his own vision, which is, of course, mainly an explication of the mystery of the Incarnation. But he provides a model for the type of narrator a writer would need to create for an allegorical narrative devoted to tracing spiritual growth in the guise of a visionary journey.

Like the putative visionary of the Vision of Isaiah, the narrator of the Apocalypse of Paul glimpses the celestial regions, but, in addition, he sees the realms of torment. The best known of the apocalypses, this vision was originally composed in Greek at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D. But the Greek version survives only in a summary. The fullest, and oldest, witness to the Apocalypse of Paul is the Long Latin translation, the Visio Sancti Pauli.
The widespread circulation of this apocalypse is demonstrated by the number of manuscripts of several different Latin rescensions, both long and short.\textsuperscript{21}

The apocalypse was inspired by II Corinthians 12: 1-4,\textsuperscript{22} for it purports to be an account of the revelations \textit{visiones et revelaciones}\textsuperscript{23} experienced by Paul when "he was caught up unto the third heaven . . . he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words which it is not lawful for men to utter" (ANT 526; AA 11: \textit{raptum huiusmodi usque ad tercium caelum . . . quoniam raptus est in paradisum et auduit archana uerba que non licet hominibus loqui . . .}).

This elaborate tour of the otherworld, like Isaiah’s tour of the seven heavens, contains numerous elements that would be useful to a writer composing an internal journey or psychological allegory. The very act of making visible that which is not normally visible required an allegorical attitude, a fact which will later be articulated in the \textit{Dialogues} of Gregory the Great, who realizes that he is only suggesting, as nearly as possible, what the otherworld is like by comparison or analogy with earthly objects and sensations (see below, Chapter VI). In addition to the allegory that is integral to the description of the otherworld, this vision contains allegory in the form of symbolic pictures, and personification, if not intended by the author, was at least read into the vision by later readers.

Allegory is a slippery term which encompasses many literary
techniques. As Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall have observed
with reference to medieval literature:

A vast number of medieval works are usually described
as 'allegorical': 'allegory' has to serve as a
portmanteau word for a range of compositions which
require some degree of interpretation from the reader,
and invite, through their fictions, an inner commentary
on the events narrated. Often those are the only
common factors. . . . (Salter and Pearsall 9)

Attempting to identify the allegorical modes present in Piers
Plowman, whose multiplicity of form challenges classification,
Salter and Pearsall delineate five allegorical "modes":
personification, dramatic, diagrammatic, non-visual allegory, and
allegory through exempla (Salter and Pearsall 9-19). Of these,
diagrammatic allegory and a kind of proto-personification
allegory are present in the Visio Sancti Pauli.

In diagrammatic allegory objects such as buildings and trees
are presented as if they were the "stiffly constructed and
carefully labeled" drawings in manuscripts (Salter and Pearsall
14). Such "didactic illustrations" were "static" and
"formalized," but also "precise" (Salter and Pearsall 15). Such
a definition fits the description of the third heaven, where Paul
sees trees filled with fruit growing on the banks of a river that
flows with milk and honey:

And trees full of fruit were planted on the bank of
that river; twelve times a year each tree bore various
and diverse fruits. . . . From root to top, the ten
thousand layers of boughs were full of fruit upon the
branches. And the vineyards had ten thousand bushes;
and on each vine were ten thousand tendrils, and on all
the tendrils were ten thousand clusters. And each tree
bore thousands of fruit. (translation mine)
Paul asks his guide why each tree bears fruit in such abundance, and the angel gives a reply that transforms the tree into a diagrammatic representation of goodness and its reward. The trees produce abundant fruit because "the Lord God of his bounty giveth his gifts in abundance unto the worthy; for they also of their own will afflicted themselves when they were in the world, doing all things for his holy name's sake" (ANT 537; AA 23: dominus deus ab<un>dans fluenter prestat dona condignis, quia et il<1> proprio uoto adflicx<erunt> semetipsos cons<titu>ti in mundo omnia (fa)cientes propter nomen sanctum (elus)). The author of the vision is now simultaneously working on the anagogical level—the trees and vines represent the blessings awaiting righteous in heaven—and on a spiritual level—good deeds bear abundant fruit.

Such diagrammatic allegory is present only rarely in the Visio. Proto-personifications, however, play a major role. In personification allegory, "abstract qualities or faculties are given human form, and display their natures or re-enact some experience by means of a typical human activity—a debate, a fight, a feast, a trial, a journey" (Salter and Pearsall 9). As described in the previous chapter, the Testament of Reuben was
populated by demons who, while literal powers, represented various impulses and faculties. The *Visio Sancti Pauli* is also populated by such demons. As Paul stands in heaven, he sees "beneath the firmament of the heaven" (ANT 529; AA 15: sub firmamento caeli) figures which later visionaries divided into two categories: personifications and demons. He sees the

forgetfulness which deceiveth and draweth unto itself the hearts of men, and the spirit of slander and the spirit of fornication and the spirit of wrath and the spirit of insolence, and there were the princes of wickedness. (ANT 529)

[Coblium que fallit et deducit ad se corda hominum, et spiritus detraccionis et spiritus fornicationis et spiritus furoris et spiritus audacie, et ibi erant principes maliciarum. (AA 15)]

Proto-personifications such as these challenge the sinful soul when he is escorted to judgment by his guardian angel:

When . . . they were come unto the principalities, and it would now go to enter into heaven, one burden (labour, suffering) was laid upon it after another: error and forgetfulness and whispering met it, and the spirit of fornication and the rest of the powers, and said unto it: Whither goest thou, wretched soul, and darest to run forward into heaven? Stay, that we may see whether we have property of ours in thee, for we see not with thee an holy helper. (ANT 533)

[Cum . . . peruenissent ad potestatem, cum iam ingredi celum abiret, labor impositus est ei super alium laborem; <error et> obliuio et susurracio obulauerunt eam, et spiritus fornicacionis et relique potestates, et dicebant ei: Vbi perges, misera anima, et audes praecurrere in celo? sustine, ut videamus si abeamus in te peculiaria nostra, quia non videamus tibi sanctum adiutorem. (AA 18)]

The sinful soul is found to belong to the evil powers and spirits, and the Lord orders him handed over for punishment.
Just as the sinful qualities take the form of proto-
personifications, so too the deeds of a man take the shape of
witnesses for or against him. When Paul asks "to see the souls
of the righteous and of the sinners as they depart out of the
world" (ANT 530; AA uiderpe animas iustorum et peccatorum exeuntes
de mundo), the angel instructs him to look down from heaven.
Below he sees the world enveloped by a fire which the angel
describes as "the unrighteousness that is mingled by the princes
of sinners" (ANT 530; AA 16: inujusticia obmixta a principibus
peccatorum). Glancing downward once again, Paul reports,

... I looked and saw a certain man about to die; and
the angel said to me: He whom thou seest is righteous.
And again I looked and saw all his works that he had
done for the name of God, and all his desires which he
remembered and which he remembered not, all of them
stood before his face in the hour of necessity. (ANT
530-31)

[inspexi et vidi quen dam hominem moriturum, et
dixit mihi angelus: Huunc quem uides iustus est. Et
ite rum aspexi et uidi omnia opera eius quecumque
fecerat propter nomen dei, et omnia studia eius quorum
memini et quorum non memini, omnia steterunt in
conspectum eius in hora necessitatis. ... (AA 15-
16)]

Similarly, an ungodly sinner who had embraced the things of this
world is confronted by personifications of his sinfulness and his
wicked deeds:

the soul of a wicked man ... hath provoked the Lord
day and night, saying: I know nought else in this
world, I will eat and drink and enjoy the things that
are in the world. For who is he that hath gone down
into hell and come up and told us that there is a
judgment there? And again I looked and saw all
the despising of the sinner, and all that he did, and they stood together before him in the hour of necessity. (ANT 532)

[animam impii . . . inritavit dominum die hac [sic] nocte dicens: Nichil aliut noui in hoc mundo, manduco et bibo et fruor que sunt in mundo. Quis enim est qui descendit ad inferos et ascendens denunciait nobis quia est iudicium illic? Et iterum respexi et uidi ommem contemptum peccatoris et omnia que egit, et in unum asteterunt ante eum in hora necessitatis. . . . (AA 17-18)]

Perhaps when the Apocalypse of Paul was composed all of these figures were viewed as demons like those in the Testament of Reuben. But by the eighth century some of these figures had been recast into non-demonic personifications in the Vision of a Monk at Wenlock, a revelation clearly indebted to the Visio Sancti Pauli that was recorded by St. Boniface in 716 shortly after he heard the vision narrated at first-hand by the visionary himself. As in the Visio Sancti, the visionary, once the "veil of the flesh" has been removed from his eyes, is able to see the entire world in a glance, for the "whole universe seemed to be brought together before his eyes so that he saw in one view all parts of the earth and all seas and peoples" (Kylie 25). In the Visio Sancti Pauli, Paul, from his vantage point in the third heaven, "looked down from heaven upon the earth and beheld the whole world, and it was as nothing in my sight; and I saw the children of men as though they were nought . . . (ANT 530). In addition, the earth in the Visio Sancti Pauli was surrounded by flames. So, too, the monk of Wenlock, from high above the earth, sees the world enveloped and threatened by a ball of fire, which
is only checked when an angel makes the sign of the cross.

Finally, just as in the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, after the visionary
is granted this all-encompassing view of the world, he witnesses
the arrival of souls that had recently left their bodies. As in
the *Visio*, the arrival of these souls precipitates a struggle
between good and evil spirits: "He said also that there was a
crowd of evil spirits and a glorious choir of the higher angels.
And he said that the wretched spirits and the holy angels had a
violent dispute concerning the souls that had come forth from
their bodies, the demons bringing charges against them and
aggravating the burden of their sins, the angels lightening the
burden and making excuses for them" (Kylie 26).

But, in addition to witnessing the arraignments of others,
the visionary monk, unlike Paul, is himself arraigned. And the
soul's offenses are handled at much greater length in a scene
that clearly goes beyond the literal. The witnesses against the
visionary are in fact personifications, for the visionary is
confronted both by sinful actions and by vicious qualities, each
of which accuses the visionary "as if in person":

He heard all his own sins, which he had committed from
his youth on and had failed to confess or had forgotten
or had not recognized as sins, crying out against him,
each in its own voice, and accusing him grievously.
Each vice came forward as if in person, one saying: "I
am your greed, by which you have most often desired
things unlawful and contrary to the commands of God."
Another said: "I am vainglory, by which you have
boastfully put yourself forward among men." Another:
"I am falsehood, whereby you have lied and sinned."
Another: "I am the idle word you spoke in vain."
Another: "I am sight, by which you have sinned by
looking upon forbidden things." Another: I am stubbornness and disobedience, whereby you have failed to obey your spiritual superiors." Another: "I am sluggishness and neglect in sacred studies." Another: "I am the wandering thoughts and useless notions in which you have indulged too much both in church and elsewhere." Another: "I am drowsiness, by which you were overcome so that you were late to make your confession to God." Another: "I am the idle errand." Another: "I am negligence and carelessness, which have made you indifferent to the study of theology," and so forth. (Kylie 26-27)

The monk is thus confronted with personifications that represent "[e]verything he had done in all the days of his life and had neglected to confess and many which he had not known to be sinful" and these personifications, which "now shouted at him in terrifying words" are not to be confused with evil spirits or malevolent angels. Such evil spirits are there, but they are clearly distinct from the personifications of sin and viciousness. Instead, they can be likened to prosecutors who marshall evidence against the accused: "In the same way the evil spirits, chiming in with the vices, accusing and bearing witness, naming the very times and places, brought proofs of his evil deeds" (Kylie 27). Also present to give evidence are the souls of those wronged by the visionary. In particular the monk is confronted by a man whom he had once struck: "The bloody and open wound and even the blood itself cried out against him, charging him with the crime of bloodshed" (Kylie 27). The case of the prosecution appears conclusive: "And so, with all his sins all piled up and reckoned out, those ancient enemies declared him guilty and unquestionably subject to their jurisdiction" (Kylie
The defense, however, has not yet presented its case. Again personification is used, as the monk's virtues and good deeds testify on his behalf:

"On the other hand," he said, "the poor little virtues which I had displayed unworthily and imperfectly spoke out in my defense." One said: 'I am obedience, which he has shown to his spiritual superiors.' And one: 'I am fasting, whereby he has chastened his body against carnal desire.' Another: 'I am true prayer, which he has uttered in the sight of God.' Another: 'I am the service of the weak, which he has shown by kindness to the sick.' Another: 'I am the psalm, which he chanted before God to atone for an idle word.' And so each virtue cried out for me in excuse for the corresponding sin" [sic quotation marks]. (Kylie 27)

Just as the personifications of the vices are not to be confused with the evil spirits, so too the personifications of virtues must be distinguished from angelic spirits. Such spirits are present, but, just as the evil spirits lead the prosecution, so the angelic spirits lead the defense: "And those angelic spirits in their boundless love defended and supported me, while the virtues, greatly magnified as they were, seemed to me far greater and more excellent than could ever have been practiced by my own strength" (Kylie 27).

The writer of the *Visio Sancti Pauli* reflected a belief in literal spirits which were responsible for provoking misbehavior. But, whatever the intention of the author of the *Visio*, these spirits could be, and were, interpreted as figurative representations. Thus, in the *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* a bad soul is confronted by the personifications of his wicked
qualities and deeds, which are marshalled by a second—and
literal--set of characters, the evil angels. The problem of
portraying a spirit world leads to the mingling of characters of
different existential status, and the first hint of this mix is
present in the Visio Sancti Pauli.

Both diagrammatic and personification allegory suit our
traditional sense of the allegorical and are easily recognized as
such. However, there is another way in which this vision, indeed
all otherworld visions, is suited for the depiction of
allegorical journeys. The world of the vision writers was a
world of analogy. Events on earth had their counterparts in
heaven. Earth was in many ways but a model of heaven. In the
Vision of Isaiah, the discord in the heavens was reflected in
turmoil on the earth. Similarly, in the Visio Sancti Pauli, the
worship of God in the seventh heaven is conducted in a fashion
analogous to the worship of God on earth:

David shall sing praises before him in the seventh
heaven: and as it is done in the heavens, so likewise
is it below: for without David it is not lawful to
offer a sacrifice unto God: but it must needs be that
David sing praises at the hour of the offering of the
body and blood of Christ: as it is performed in heaven,
so also is it upon earth. (ANT 541)

[David psallet ante eum in viimo celo, et sicut fiunt
in celis, ita et inferius similiter, quia non licet
sine David ostiam offerre deo set necesse est ut
psallet David in hora oblationis corporis et sanguinis
Christi: quemadmodum in celis proficitur, ita et in
terra. (AA 27)]

But there is a second way in which the analogical habit of
mind is given rein in the Visio. The desire for justice in the
visions manifests itself in attempts to establish a fitting correspondence between punishment for crimes and rewards for good deeds. Sometimes such a principle leads to the depiction of souls re-enacting in the spirit world the equivalent of crimes committed in the material world. And sometimes—frequently simultaneously—when the offense is an interior one, such as indulging in pride, the punishment in the otherworld is designed to make visible the interior state of the sinner. Thus the punishments frequently reify the falseness of outward piety and permit the reader to read the spiritual state of the sinner through the outward sign of an appropriate punishment. The principle of justice made visible thus sometimes takes the form of punishments that are physical metaphors for spiritual offenses. As the subject matter of the visions, justice encourages metaphor.28

This justice made visible is present in much of the Visio Sancti Pauli, where frequently, though not always, the author depicts punishments or rewards that correspond fittingly to the behavior of the soul before it was separated from the body. Witness the fate of a sinful soul who "was brought by two angels, weeping and saying: Have mercy on me, thou righteous God, O God the judge" (ANT 534: AA 19: iterum uidi, et ecce anima quae adducebatur a duobus angelis flens et dicens: 'Miserere mei, deus iustus, deus iudex'). But the Lord replies, "thou hast never wrought mercy; therefore wast thou delivered unto such angels,
which have no mercy, and because thou hast not done right, therefore neither have they dealt pitifully with thee in the hour of thy necessity" (ANT 534; AA 19: tu enim misericordiam nunquam fecisti, propterea tradita es talibus angelis qui non abent misericordiam, et quia non fecisti rectum, ideo negue tecum pie gesserunt in hora necessitatis tuae). The soul is to receive an appropriate punishment. Similarly, the reception received by a soul entering the celestial city is predicated upon the way he treated guests in the material world. A soul arriving at the city is told that "[b]ecause thou hast kept kindliness and the entertainment of strangers, come thou and have an inheritance in the city of our Lord God. Every one of the righteous shall receive the good things of God in the city according to his deeds" (ANT 540; AA 26: Quoniam seruasti humanitatem et susceptionem peregrinorum, ueni aereditatem abe in ciuitatem domini dei nostri; unusquisque justus secundum proprium hactum recipiet in ciuitate bona dei). In each case an action—or failure to act—on earth is mirrored by action in the spirit world. So too do attitudes find corresponding punishments. One region of hell contains deep pits, an "abyss [that] hath no measure," a fit repository for the despairing souls who in life "trusted not in the Lord that they could have him for their helper" (ANT 543; AA 29: Aby<s>us mensuram non habet; non sperauerunt in domino quod possunt abere eum adiutorem). A soul thrown into the abyss will not cease falling even after five
hundred years.

Those who must pay their "due penalty" or their "own penalty" (ANT 544, 545, 546; AA 30, 31, 32: penam istam; propriam penam) for their particular crime include the impious, magicians, fornicators and adulterers, promiscuous girls, fastbreakers, heathens, those who commit infanticide, and false ascetics. The impious, those who "mocked at the word of God in the church, not attending thereto, but as it were making nought of God and of his angels," are, fittingly enough, condemned to gnaw their tongues. (ANT 544; AA 31: Hii sunt qui detraunt in aecclcsia verbo dei, non indendentes eo, sed quasi nihil facientes dominum et agelos eius; ideo nunc (si)militer persolvunt propriam penam). Sorcerers, who "gave unto men and women magical enchantments, and they found no rest (i.e. did not cease?) until they died" are, perhaps because they have committed a sin of speech, submerged to their lips in a pit of blood (ANT 544; AA 31: Hii sunt malefici qui prestiterunt viris ac mulieribus maleficia magica et non invenerunt requiescere eos usque dum morirentur). Fornicators and adulterers, who used their appearance as lures, are described in one place as having a "very black countenance" and in another place as hanging from their eyebrows and hair (ANT 544; AA 31: velu nigro vade). 29 Promiscuous girls are dressed in black clothing and led away with red-hot chains wrapped around their heads or necks. Fastbreakers with parched tongues are suspended over water in sight of fruit
which they are not permitted to eat. Heathens "that gave alms and knew not the Lord God" are, on the one hand, "clad in white (bright) apparel" but are blind and dwell in a pit (ANT 545; AA 32: *indutos vesture clara . . . qui fecerunt elemosinas, et dominum deum non cognoverunt*). Those who committed infanticide by throwing aside their children to be "food unto dogs and to be trampled by swine" are themselves placed on a "spit of fire," where they are torn to pieces by wild animals and are not permitted to beg the Lord for mercy (ANT 545; AA 32, 33: *oboliscum ignem . . . in escam canibus et in conculationem porcis*). The false ascetics, who had counterfeited renunciation of the world by adopting the dress of holy men, are here "clad in rags full of pitch and brimstone of fire." Furthermore, there are "dragons twined" around the necks, shoulders, and feet of these men and women who in life had been trapped by the "snares of the world" (ANT 546; AA 33: *indutos pennis picem plenis et sulforem ignis, et erant drachones circumuoluti collis eorum et umeris et pedibus . . . inpedimenta mundi*).

Even when sinners are assigned to the same general type of punishment, the visionary tries to divide the sinners into different groups and vary the torment in some appropriate way. At one point the visionary sees a "river of fire burning with heat, and in it was a multitude of men and women sunk up to the knees, and other men up to the navel; others also up to the lips and others up to the hair" (ANT 542; AA 28: *fluuium ignis*).
feruentem, et ingressus multitudo uirorum et mulierum dimersus
usque ad ienua et alios viros usque ad umbicum [sic], alios
enim usque ad labia, alios autem usque ad capillos). Paul wishes
to know who these men and women are, and the guide first replies
that those beside the fire

are neither hot nor cold, for they were not found
either in the number of the righteous or in the number
of the wicked; for they passed the time of their life
upon earth, spending some days in prayer, but other
days in sins and fornications, until their death. (ANT
542)

Neque calidi neque frigidi sunt, quia neque in numero
iustorum inuenti sunt neque in numero impiorum. Isti
enim inpenderunt tempus vitae suae in terris dies
aliquos facientes in oracionibus, alios uero dies in
peccatis et fornicacionibus usque ad mortem. (AA 28)

Then the souls within the fiery river are further divided. In
response to a question from Paul, the guide explains that the
souls mired up to their knees in the fiery river "are they which
when they are come out of the church occupy themselves in
disputing with idle (alien) talk" (ANT 542). "[T]hese that are
sunk up to the navel," the angel continues, "have received the
body and blood of Christ" but afterwards have fornicated and
persisted in sin until their dying day (ANT 542). The souls
immersed up to the lips engaged in slander even in church (ANT
542). Finally, the souls "sunk up to the eyebrows are they that
beckon one to another, and privily devise evil against their
neighbours" (AA 542).

Et interrogaui et dixi: Qui sunt hii, domine, dimersi
usque ad ienua in igne: Respondens dixit mihi: Hi sunt
qui cum exierint de aecclesia inmitunt se in sermonibus
Thus, like Dante who later imitated him, the writer of the Apocalypse of Paul was keenly interested in correspondences—
between deeds and clothing and physical condition and punishment.
And sometimes the correspondences are pushed to the point where
clothing or physical condition or punishment become the signs of
the spiritual state of the soul.

In addition to the metaphorical possibilities provided in
the attempt to convey the idea of justice, this vision again
depicts a journey divided into stages which can be used to depict
both literal as well as spiritual progress. The otherworld is
divided into distinct realms, and Paul's passage from one region
to the next is more than a physical one. As in the Vision of
Isaiah, the narrator plays the role of an ignorant visionary
whose questions motivate the progress of the vision by providing
hooks upon which the author can hang his message, which is
articulated by the angelic guide. Paul peppers his guide with
questions, asking him to identify angels and explain their roles,
to explain the fate of souls after death, to explain features of
the heavenly city and the status of its inhabitants. The
visionary's searching ignorance is even at one point mildly
rebuked by the guide. When the visionary, after posing a series
of questions, asks what "Alleluia" is, the angel declares, "Thou
dost examine and inquire of all things" (ANT 541; AA 27:
Scutaris et queris in homnibus). Clearly the dialogue is not an
exchange between equals, but this unequal dialogue helps mark
Paul's spiritual progress. For as part of this exchange between
angelic teacher and visionary pupil, the guide is careful to test
Paul to see whether he is ready for the next stage by asking him
a question before introducing the next lesson. For example,
after the visionary witnesses the judging of a righteous man, his
guide asks him whether he has "believed and known that whatsoever
every one of you hath done, he beholdeth it at the hour of his
necessity?" (ANT 532; AA 17: Credidisti et cognouisti quoniam
(que)cunque fecerit unusquisque vestrum uidet ad pram
necessitatis suae?). After Paul replies that he has, the guide
allows him to witness judgment being passed on an evil soul,
after which the angel again asks the visionary whether he has
graped what has occurred. Only after Paul replies yes does the
angel lead him on to the third heaven (ANT 535). Similarly,
after the visionary and guide have toured the city of Christ, the
guide ascertains that the visionary is ready for the next stage.
He asks the visionary if he understands that he is moving on to a
new realm (AA 28: Intelligis quod hinc eas?). When the visionary
answers that he does, the guide explains what they will see next.
Again, before Paul can pass from the regions of torment to
Paradise, his guide asks him if he has "seen all things" (ANT
Such exchanges, brief as they are, seem to suggest that the visionary must pass through stages of understanding. This element is developed in later visions through the motif of repeated visions. The earlier visions prepare the visionary to receive the ultimate vision.

The second way in which the impression is conveyed that an individual may pass through stages depends on the depiction of the inhabitants of the otherworld, who, as we have seen, are assigned to particular punishments or rewards according to the nature and degree of their sinfulness or goodness. Now in later visions the souls are likewise divided. Some are damned without hope, but for others there is a clear indication that, after enduring a sequence of punishment, they will be purified. In the Visio, too, some men are irrevocably damned. Slanderers, for example, are permanently confined to their peculiar punishment, fornicators to theirs. But the idea of a final reckoning permitted an interim period during which, even in such an early work as the Visio, the idea was beginning to develop that some souls could undergo purgation. Some souls are merely biding time until the day of judgment when they will receive their eternal reward or punishment. The narrator describes a "land of promise" wherein the "souls . . . of the righteous" must wait for a time (ANT 536; AA 22: terra repromissionis . . . Anime . . . iustorum). But others must be undergo a process of purification. Paul's guide explains that not every soul can immediately enter
the city of God:

if any be a fornicator or ungodly, and turn and repent and bear fruits meet for repentance, first when he cometh out of the body he is brought and worshippeth God, and then by the commandment of the Lord he is delivered unto Michael the angel, and he washeth him in the lake Acherusa and so bringeth him in to the city of Christ with them that have done no sin. (ANT 538)

Another passage that suggests a dynamic otherworld, one in which souls learn and change, is that of a description of the grove before the "city of Christ" (ANT 539; AA 24: ciuitatem Christi). Among these trees, which were "great and high" and leafy but which bear no fruit, await men doing penance for their pride who, at the final reckoning, will be permitted to enter the city because of God's goodness and because the righteous will pray on their behalf (ANT 538; AA 24: magnas et altas).

Even some descriptions of the otherworld that were clearly not intended to imply change and growth are adapted for that function in later visions. For example, the heavenly city is constructed of a series of concentric walls. The nearer one approaches to the center of the city, the more righteous the inhabitants:

The second [wall] is better than the first, and likewise the third than the second; for one excelleth the other even unto the twelfth wall. And I said: Wherefore, Lord, doth one excel another in glory? show me. And the angel answered and said unto me: All they
that have in them even a little slandering or envy or pride, somewhat is taken away from his glory, even if he be in the city of Christ. (ANT 540)

[Est secundus melior primo et similiter tercius secundo, quia unus unum praecedit usque ad XIX.mum murum. Et dixi: Obquare, domine, unus alium praecedit in gloriem, significa mihi. Et respondens angelus dixit mihi: Omnes qui abent in seuel modicam detractionem aut zelum aut superbiam, evacuat aliquid de gloria ipsius etiam etiam si in ciuitate Christi esset. . . (AA 26)]

There is no hint in this passage that inhabitants of the outer regions of the city will ever progress to the center or even closer to it. Yet later writers seemed to view the series of walls as an invitation to portray stages of growth and purification. After spending an appropriate time within a given circle, a soul would progress to the next stage.

Even though the *Visio Sancti Pauli* contains much allegory or near-allegory, such spiritualizing of the otherworld journey did not prevent the author from simultaneously engaging in social criticism. The two do not seem to be incompatible. After detailing the punishments of various laymen immersed in the river of fire, the visionary looks back at the fiery flood and describes the punishments of four officials of the church, thus inaugurating in the West a practice that would become more and more important in later visions: the use of the visions not to reveal apocalyptic wisdom but as vehicles for criticism of corruption in the church. The visionary sees "a priest who fulfilled not well his ministry, for when he was eating and drinking and whoring he offered the sacrifice unto the Lord at
his holy altar" (ANT 543; AA 29-30: presbyter fuit qui non
consummavit ministerium suum bene; cum erat manducans et bibens
et fornicans, offerebat hostiam domino ad sanctum altare eis).
This old man is being strangled by the angel guardians of Tartarus, who simultaneously pierce the sinner with something very much like a pitchfork (AA 29: uidi illic hominem subfocari
ab angeliis tartarucos abentes in manibus suis ferrum trium
angulorum de quo perfodiebant viscera senis illius). The next old man was a bishop who, like the priest, did not properly perform his duties. Having a great reputation, he was nevertheless not truly holy, for "he gave not righteous judgement, and had not compassion on widows and orphans." He is forced up to his knees in the river of fire, and additionally, and most appropriately, this man who had no compassion is struck in the face with stones by angels who "suffered him not to say: Have mercy on me." Thus is it "recompensed unto him according to his iniquity and his doings" (ANT 543; AA 30: non fecit iudicium iustum, et uiduas et orfanos non est misertus; nunc autem retributum est ei secundum iniquitatem et opera sua).

Also appropriately punished is a third soul who is similarly immersed to his knees in the river of fire. His out-stretched hands are bloody, and worms are crawling out of his mouth and nostrils. This soul was "a deacon, who devoured the offerings and committed fornication and did not do right in the sight of
God" (ANT 543; AA 30: diacconus fuit qui edebat oblaciones et fornicabatur et rectum non fecit in conspecto dei). A fourth soul, also immersed to the knees, was a reader who did not himself obey the Lord's commandments. Appropriately the soul's lips and tongue are lacerated by an angel who wields "a great razor, red-hot" (ANT 544; AA 30: AA nouaculam grandem ignitam).

In addition to singling out corrupt churchmen, the visionary of course portrays the punishments for selected sins committed by laymen. Mentioned above were magicians, the impious who must gnaw on their own tongues, fornicators and adulterers, promiscuous girls, fastbreakers doomed to perpetual hunger and thirst, the heathen, those who commit infanticide, and the false religious ascetics. Also excoriated are moneylenders or usurers, schismatics, offenders against orphans and widows and the poor, and homosexuals, each of whom must also pay a "due penalty" or his "own penalty."

The visionary journey of Paul has provided the author an excuse both for conveying information about the otherworld and for criticizing contemporary practices, including those of erring church leaders. But there were certain limits on what could be conveyed in a narrative like the Visio Sancti Pauli because the nature of the narrator prevented the apocalypse from taking certain directions. Paul, for all his questions, is a pseudonymous narrator who is a saint. He does not receive the vision for his own good, and while it may play a role in
illuminating him, it plays no role in reforming him. The author provides two reasons that explain why Paul is the recipient of a vision. First, he is to carry a message back to the land of the living. True, he is forbidden to tell of what he has seen and heard in the third heaven; but he is explicitly instructed to inform the living about the other regions of the otherworld.

Secondly, he is rapt because of the request of the righteous, who cannot wait for Paul's death, though it is imminent, to meet and acclaim him. While he is journeying through Paradise, he is met by Mary and two hundred angels:

And she [Mary] came near and saluted me, and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God and angels and men. For all the saints have besought my son Jesus who is my Lord, that thou shouldst come here in the body that they might see thee before thou didst depart out of the world. And the Lord said to them: Wait and be ye patient: yet a little while, and ye shall see him, and he shall be with you for ever. And again they all with one accord said unto him: Grieve us not, for we desire to see him while he is in the flesh, for by him hath they name been greatly glorified in the world, and we have seen that he hath excelled (done away with) all the works whether of the lesser or the greater. (ANT 550)

[Veniens autem iuxta salutauit me et dixit: Aue, Paule, dilectissime dei et angelorum et hominum. Omnes enim sancti precati sunt filium meum Ihesum qui est dominus meus, ut uenires hic in corpore ut uiderent te priusquam exires de saeculo; et dixit eis dominus: Sustinete et pacienter agite; adhuc modicum et uidebitis eum et erit in aeternum uobiscum; et iterum communiter omnes dixerunt ei: Ne contristes nos; volumus eum uidere enim in carne constitutum, per hunc enim glorificatum est nomen tuum in saeculo ualde, et uidimus quia omnia opera substullit minorum siue maiorum. (AA 38)]

Among the many righteous who greet Paul are numerous heroes of
the Old Testament, including the twelve patriarchs, who echo Mary, praising God, because he "hath not grieved us, that we might see thee yet being in the body, before thou departedst out of the world" (AA: non contristauit nos, ut uiderimus te adhuc in corpore constitutum priusquam exires de mundo). Each in turn comes forward to praise Paul.

These explanations for Paul's rapture into the otherworld are fairly mechanical ones. This fact suggests that, even though the vision contains numerous features that would seem to encourage an allegorical narrative of a spiritual journey, in the final analysis Paul is only at the center of the vision insofar as he is needed to give the author the opportunity to put doctrine into the mouth of his guide. For a visionary to truly become the center of his or her own vision, a different kind of narrator is needed. And such a new narrator appears once the writers of otherworld visions no longer feel compelled to place their accounts in the mouths of pseudonymous narrators. The next chapter will therefore examine the change in the conditions that produced visions, a change that permitted the rise of the voice of an author in crisis and that allowed authors to still convey doctrine but to widen and personalize the range of problems that could be explored through vision.
CHAPTER IV

THE SHIFT FROM PSEUDONYMITY

The apocalypse was only one of several genres that provided enduring narrative patterns for early Christian writers. Numerous examples survive of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic equivalents of canonical acts, gospels, and letters, many of which were read not only during the patristic period but also throughout the Middle Ages. The popularity of such literature can be inferred, as W. Schneemelcher observes, from the large number of translations from Greek into Latin that proliferated not only in the first centuries of the Church but also during the Middle Ages. In addition to the evidence of translation, Schneemelcher points to two further signs of the popularity of such apocrypha: the composing of texts that "develop and rearrange" previous apocrypha and the signs of "after-effect and stimulus" in "new literary creations or in monuments of art." But however well-known all such apocrypha were during the Middle Ages, it was the apocalypses that had a special appeal to medieval readers. As Schneemelcher observes, "[i]n particular the apocalypses appear to have been read; at all events their influence can be traced." In Italy, for example, the tradition of apocalypse influences, through the Visio Sancti Pauli, the depiction of the journey to the otherworld in Dante's
Commedia (Schneemelcher 65).

This one apocalypse, the Visio Sancti Pauli, can be used to illustrate all three types of evidence that Schneemelcher relies on to gauge the popularity of apocrypha in the West. The Visio Sancti Pauli was repeatedly translated into Latin and repeatedly reworked. The Latin redactions were further translated into various vernaculars, and development and rearrangement likewise occurred in the vernaculars. In England, for example, its popularity is dramatically apparent when one considers Gordon Hall Gerould's observation that the only saint's legend written in English that has come down to us from the twelfth century is a prose translation of Paul's vision of hell. In the following century the Vision was twice rendered into English, this time into verse in two completely independent translations. One omits much of the narrative, retaining only the description of the pains of hell, which is put into the mouth of the soul of a dead man who has returned from the otherworld. The second, found in one MS of the South-English Legendary (Laud 108), is a paraphrase of one of the most popular of the Latin redactions of the vision (Gerould 222). The following century saw the composition of yet another English verse version of the Vision, this one a more faithful translation of the same Latin redaction that was the source of the paraphrase in the Laud MS of the South-English Legendary (Gerould 229). This particular Latin version was again translated into English around the year 1426 by the chaplain John
Audelay (Gerould 254-55).

In addition to reworkings and direct translations of the Vision of Paul, its "after-effect and stimulus" is evident in the creation of new literary works. Various topoi from the vision are adopted into other visions. For example, the eleventh-century Vision of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, borrows the "bridge of souls" that serves as a test in the Vision of Paul (Gerould 126). The episode in which the soul is challenged by demons upon leaving his body is developed into the Debate of the Body and Soul. But the "after-effect and stimulus" manifests itself on a larger level than that of topoi. The structure of the apocalypse itself provides a model for other visions. The Vision of Tundale, for example, is an "imitation" of earlier visions, among them that of Paul (Gerould 248).

P. Vielhauer applied the term "pseudo-apocalypse" to the Pastor Hermæ, one of the first of the "new literary creations," and that phrase will serve as a useful label for an entire class of writings. As used in this dissertation, "pseudo-apocalypse" will be applied to texts that are indebted, directly or indirectly, to apocalypse for their structures but differ from apocalypse in one or both of the following ways. First, while the author of a pseudo-apocalypse may adopt most of the conventions of apocalypse—vision or multiple vision, journey, guide, and allegory—the content placed within this structure in some way may be said not to be "apocalyptic" at all. Eschatology
may be present in the pseudo-apocalypse, but the concern will not always be with what happens at the end of time. Rather, the content of pseudo-apocalypse takes the form of an increasing concern with the fate of the soul immediately after death. Pseudo-apocalypse looks forward only glancingly, or not at all, to the fate of souls at the last judgment. And the pseudo-apocalypse does not address its warnings to a collective audience, to an entire nation that must mend its ways. Pseudo-apocalypse does not address an "Israel" that must reform as if it were one. The topic of pseudo-apocalypse is the progress or fate of the individual soul. In the case of the Pastor Hermæ, the content is not eschatological at all, but, as Kirsopp Lake points out, it develops a doctrine of repentance that explores the ramifications of sin after baptism.5

Secondly, the pseudo-apocalypse is not pseudepigraphic. It is not attributed to any of the Old Testament figures that had long been associated with revelation. Nor is the pseudo-apocalypse attributed to an apostle or another figure from the soon-to-be canonical books of the New Testament. The pseudo-apocalypse is not set in the past. Instead, the revelation's contemporary authorship is frankly acknowledged. No attempt is made to disguise the authorship or date of the revelation. This fact will create problems of authority for these revelations, but it will also provide new possibilities.
This change from pseudonymous to non-pseudonymous authorship can only be explained by first accounting for the impulse toward pseudonymity itself. But hitherto most attempts to account for pseudonymity have not stressed the connection between the content of an apocalypse and the conventions that embody that content. Instead, most theories focus on sociological explanations. Such an approach is taken by R. H. Charles in the introduction to the second volume of his collection Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, in which he explains the phenomenon of pseudonymity exclusively within the context of Judaic beliefs about the validity of revelation. He traces the practice of pseudonymity to the third century B.C., and argues that it arose from "the absolute supremacy of the Law, which left no room for prophecy":

... in the third century B.C. the Law had come to be conceived as the final and supreme revelation of God. When once this idea of an inspired Law--adequate, infallible, and valid for all time--had become an accepted dogma of Judaism, as it became in the post-Exilic period, there was no longer room for independent representatives of God appearing before men, such as the pre-Exilic prophets. God had, according to the official teachers of the Church, spoken His last and final word through the Law, and when the hope was expressed that in the coming age a prophet will arise, he was only conceived as one whose task was to decide questions of ritual or priestly succession, or legal interpretation in accordance with the Law. (APOT II viii)

Thus, argues Charles, "[I]f the prophet who issued a prophecy under his own name after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah could not expect a hearing unless his prophecy had the imprimatur of the Law"
The authors of Daniel, Enoch, Jubilees, and the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, who "not only challenged many of the orthodox views of the time and condemned them, but ... also carried forward the revelation of God in the provinces of religion, ethics, and eschatology," were forced to issue their prophecies under the names of great figures of the past whose authority would stymie the objections of the orthodox adherents to the Law (APOT II viiii-ix).

The second circumstance that Charles believes contributed to the need for pseudonymity was the evolution and sealing of the three-part canon of Law, Prophets, and Wisdom Literature. Once the canon of the prophets had closed, the only prophetic books that could gain a hearing were pseudonymous ones (pp. viii-ix). The pattern was set by the acceptance of the book of Daniel into the Wisdom Literature:

Daniel was admitted into the Canon in the belief that it was written by the ancient worthy of that name; but not among the Prophets, for the prophetic Canon was closed, but among the Hagiographa. The example of Daniel was followed by Jewish apocalyptic down to the thirteenth century A.D. It was pseudonymous and remained pseudonymous; for the Law was supreme, inspiration was officially held to be dead, and the Canon was closed. (APOT II ix)

Charles contrasts this situation with that of "anti-legalistic" Christianity (APOT II vii), in which, he claims, "for the first century at any rate, apocalyptic ceased to be pseudonymous, and the seer came forward in his own person" (APOT II viii).
Let us accept for a moment that Charles's explanation is adequate to account for the adoption of pseudonymity in a peculiarly Judaic context. Whatever the impulse or impulses that caused Jewish writers to adopt pseudonymity, Charles's model does not account for the literary practices of the "anti-legalistic" Christians, who were adapting and composing pseudonymous texts well before they had any canon to circumvent. There was, in fact, no first-century break in the tradition of pseudonymity, which moved directly into Christianity, both in apocalypse and in other genres. This pseudonymity was not a response by Christians to events analogous to the closing of the Old Testament canon, as Charles seems to imply by claiming a first-century pause in the use of the tactic of pseudonymity. Christians did not begin to grapple with defining a list of inspired books authored (reputedly) by the apostles, the standard for Christian canonicity, (Schneemelcher 30-31) until the middle of the second century (Schneemelcher 23), and even at the end of that century there was no universally accepted canon. By the end of the second century only the Gospels of Matthew and Mark had been universally accepted, but "the Gospel of Luke on the other hand was only hesitantly recognized and . . . there was considerable opposition to the Gospel of John." Schneemelcher presents evidence that in the last quarter of the second century some people rejected all the writings attributed to John, and that as late as the second decade of the third century the Gospel
of John was not universally accepted (Schneemelcher 33). The
canon does seem to have acquired a "fixed primitive form" near
the beginning of the third century, but there were regional
variations and certain books remained in dispute literally for
centuries (Schneemelcher 34). 7

The Christian canon thus was not closed in the second half
of the second century, but pseudepigrapha were nevertheless being
composed. Nor was there any stranglehold of the law analogous to
the one posited by Charles. Finally, pseudonymity was not
necessitated by belief that inspiration was dead. The validity
of inspiration is explicitly defended in Acts, when Peter rebuts
the charge of drunkenness made against the apostles, who, on
Pentecost, were "filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to
speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them
to speak" (Acts 2: 4). Peter cites Joel 2: 28-32a to prove that
those speaking in tongues foreign to them have been inspired:

this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel:
And it shall come to pass, in the last days (saith the
Lord), I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh;
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: and
your young men shall see visions; and your old men
shall dream dreams.
And upon my servants, indeed, and upon my handmaids
will I pour out in those days of my spirit; and they
shall prophesy. (Acts 2: 16-18)

[. . . hoc est quod dictum est per prophetam Ioel:
Et erit in novissimis diebus (dicit Dominus), Effundam
de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem: Et prophetabunt
filii vestri, et fillae vestrae, Et iuvenes vestri
visiones videbunt, Et seniores vestri somnia
somniabunt.
Et quidem super servos meos, et super ancillas meas, In
diebus illis effundam de Spiritu meo, Et
If inspiration had ever been held to be closed, this passage reopened it, and not only for the apostles but for other early Christians. Over a hundred years after Acts was composed the passage was used in the preface an unknown redactor added to the testaments composed by Perpetua and Saturus shortly before their execution about 202 C.E. In the Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, both Perpetua and Saturus narrate dreams that depict the fate of souls after death. The redactor first defends collecting "modern examples" of faith by arguing that such contemporary examples "will one day become ancient and available for posterity, although in their present time they are esteemed of less authority, by reason of presumed veneration for antiquity." He then argues on the same grounds used by Peter:

... let men look to it, if they judge the power of the one Holy Spirit to be one, according to the times and seasons; since some things of later date must be esteemed of more account, as being nearer to the very last times, in accordance with the exuberance of grace manifested to the final periods determined for the world. For "in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy. And upon my servants and my handmaidens will I pour out of my Spirit; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." And thus we... both acknowledge and reverence, even as we do the prophecies, modern visions as equally promised to us... (Wallis 276-77)

We are therefore still left with the question: why pseudonymity? And, what is perhaps more important for our purposes, why is pseudonymity finally dropped by some Christian writers? The
answer to the first question will help us answer the second.

P. Vielhauer examines pseudonymity in the early Christian period but he follows the lead of Charles in attempting to find sociological explanations for its presence or absence. His explanation, like that of Charles, hinges on whether a belief in the validity of revelation existed during the given period any one author was active. For example, writing about Christian prophecy in Palestine, he suggests that apocalyptic pseudonymity could be dispensed with because

we find for the first time the union of prophecy and Apocalyptic, a union which finds expression again and most impressively in the author of the Apocalypse of John. . . . As far as their vocation is concerned, the prophets were not Apocalyptists, but charismatic leaders of the churches, and the seer John did not compose the Apocalypse in his capacity as prophet—for the other prophets mentioned by him wrote no such books—but at the direct command of the exalted Lord, and that means, with authentic prophetic consciousness; consequently he did not write under a pseudonym, but under his own name. Later Apocalyptic and prophecy again fall apart; all Christian apocalypses are pseudonymous. (Vielhauer 1965a 607).

To Vielhauer, then, the author of Revelation is a "genuine prophet" who "knows he has been called by Christ" and who believes that the authority of his own name is sufficient (Vielhauer 1965b 623). Lacking such a belief, an author would resort to pseudonymity.

Vielhauer's explanation, however, presents two difficulties. First, it is in fact not accurate to state that "all Christian apocalypses are pseudonymous" after the period when "[a]pocalyptic and prophecy . . . fall apart." Secondly, like
Charles, Vielhauer is constructing an explanation for pseudonymity that is external to the text and contingent on a set of events peculiar to one time and one culture. Yet the strategy of pseudonymity was used by writers of many times and many cultures, and not just in apocalypses but in many types of texts. For example, as Vielhauer himself notes, Greek Sibylline literature, long before it was adopted by Jews of the Hellenistic Diaspora, "contained prophecies of disastrous content, and ... were attributed to the ancient Sibyl who kept prophesying through the ages" (Vielhauer 1965a 600). These Sibyllines feature the same kind of vaticinium ex eventu as that found in Jewish apocalypse.

An alternative line of inquiry is suggested by the explanation for the popularity of pseudonymity offered by John B. Gabel and Charles B. Wheeler, who suggest that

[p]erhaps the best way to conceive of pseudonymity in the late biblical and postbiblical era ... is ... as a literary convention. In the absence of charismatic figures who could proclaim with certainty, "Thus says the Lord," the vacuum was filled by written documents that set forth truth as the authors saw it but that claimed as authority the names of appropriate religious figures from the great days of the past. Pseudonymity of this kind was simply an established means of communication on spiritual matters at times—a way you did it when you had ideas to get across. (Gabel and Wheeler 134)

Speaking specifically of apocalypse, they suggest that pseudonymity is simply one of the conventions of the genre, a practice established by the Book of Daniel and its prototypical apocalypses:
The figure Daniel... was a celebrated wise man, one to whom folktales had attached over the centuries. The writer of the book that bears his name selected that particular figure as the one to receive and describe a series of apocalyptic visions. Other such figures in apocalyptic writings are Enoch, Isaiah, Baruch (the secretary of Jeremiah), Ezra, Peter, and Paul. Here it will suffice to remark that (1) the pioneering apocalypticist, the author of the book of Daniel, chose the potent figure of wise Daniel as his spokesperson in order to gain a hearing for his message of hope and (2) the success of the book of Daniel encouraged later imitation of its major literary features, including pseudonymity. In other words, what we are dealing with is a literary convention: If any writer after the time of Daniel chose to express his ideas in the form of an apocalypse, he used the standard features of apocalypses, including pseudonymity. (Gabel and Wheeler 134)

Although the evidence marshalled by Vielhauer raises some questions about the extent to which there was an "absence of charismatic figures" (see n. 6), the phrase "literary convention" invites us to consider pseudonymity as a literary phenomenon. Instead of looking at events external to the text which might have dictated this convention, perhaps we should examine how pseudonymity functioned in any given text. Certainly pseudonymity did lend authority to a text, even in the absence of belief that the canon was closed or that inspiration was dead. During the first century, when no text was canonical, all texts competed for a hearing, and attributing a text to an apostle was one way to gain one. Indeed, some now-canonical books won their place in the New Testament because they were falsely attributed to apostles. But I think that we can be even more specific about how pseudonymity functioned in a text. Comparing the
apocalypses that adopted pseudonymity—the vast majority—with the handful that did not will demonstrate that pseudonymity was a literary convention not dictated by a closed canon but one which developed and continued as a sensible and useful way of handling a particular content favored by Jewish apocalyptists. That content not being of interest to Christian apocalyptists, pseudonymity ceased to be mandatory. However, the convention was so thoroughly established that most writers continued it.

John J. Collins divides Jewish and Christian apocalypses into two categories depending upon whether or not they incorporate a tour of the otherworld. He further subdivides apocalypses by, among other criteria, whether or not they contain reviews of history. Of the non-journey apocalypses, those containing historical reviews are almost exclusively Jewish compositions. The only Christian example is "probably an adaptation of a Jewish work" (Collins 1979a 14). However, the non-journey apocalypses that depict either "Cosmic and/or Political Eschatology or Personal Eschatology" are exclusively Christian or Gnostic (Collins 1979a 14). Similarly, of the apocalypses containing otherworld tours, those incorporating historical reviews are again distinctly Jewish. No Christian examples exist, not even as adaptations of Jewish apocalypses. But there are Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic examples of tour apocalypses that depict cosmic, political, or personal eschatology.
All Jewish apocalypses are pseudonymous. But Adela Yarbro Collins identifies, in addition to the Shepherd of Hermas, four early Christian apocalypses that do not employ pseudonymity: Revelation, composed towards the end of the first century; the Shepherd of Hermas, written in the first half of the second century; the Book of Elchasai, composed in the opening years of the second century; the Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle 17b-19b; and the Story of Zosimus (Yarbro Collins 104). Following the classification scheme of John J. Collins, Yarbro Collins groups Revelation, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Book of Elchasai with the non-journey apocalypses that present cosmic and/or political eschatology (Yarbro Collins 70 ff). She classifies the apocalypse imbedded in verses 17b-19b of the Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle as a non-journey apocalypse featuring personal eschatology (Yarbro Collins 78 ff). She emphasizes that there are "notable differences between the Christian apocalypses of the non-journey type and the corresponding Jewish ones":

All [italics hers] the Jewish apocalypses of this type have both a review of history and cosmic eschatology as well as personal eschatology. (Yarbro Collins 83)

The final non-pseudonymous Christian apocalypse, the Story of Zosimus10 is classified by Yarbro Collins as a tour apocalypse that depicts only personal eschatology (Yarbro Collins 89 ff). In short, not one of the non-pseudonymous Christian apocalypses—indeed, scarcely any Christian apocalypse at all—contains a
recitation of history.

Such recitations were accomplished through *vaticinium ex eventu*, i.e., through purported prophecy attributed to a figure from the distant past. In other words, the historical surveys were accomplished through the convention of pseudonymity. This was indeed an admirable way of lending authority to the actual prophecies of the end of time with which the historical surveys culminated; the "prophecy" up to contemporary times was always demonstrably accurate. But when Christians adopted and adapted the genre of the apocalypse they were not interested in what Vielhauer calls the "national eschatology" of Israel (Vielhauer 1965a 606). The types of apocalypse that revolved around historical recitations were not embraced by Christians. Pseudonymity was therefore no longer required as a strategy to set the apocalypse in the distant past.

The Revelation of John is a case in point. When Vielhauer observed that Revelation was not pseudonymous, he also noted that "[a]ll the traditional apocalyptic features associated with pseudonymity and antiquity are missing," and among such features he includes the "surveys of history in phases given in the form of predictions" (Vielhauer 1965b 623). But he does not suggest that it is the lack of these historical reviews that may itself account for absence of pseudonymity. John J. Collins, however, in an article on "Pseudonymity, Historical Reviews and the Genre of the Revelation of John," suggests that the
most basic function of ex eventu prophecies was rendered superfluous by the historical context of Revelation. Insofar as pseudonymity was designed to provide an occasion for such prophecy, it was rendered superfluous too.11

As this observation demonstrates, in the final analysis a sociological explanation must be sought to explain why the Christians rejected the "national eschatology" so prominent in Jewish apocalypses. But once it is recognized that the Christian apocalyptists embraced new subject matter, then the problem of the presence or absence of pseudonymity can be explored as a literary phenomenon.

Most Christian apocalypses are in fact pseudonymous, not because they had to be but because pseudonymity had indeed become a literary convention, and still a very useful one for bringing authority to a vision. But some writers dropped the convention, no longer dictated by the presentation of peculiarly Jewish historical content, in favor of explicitly confronting the spiritual crises faced by Christians as individuals and/or as a community. The stage is then set for "pseudo-apocalypse," which borrows many of the trappings of apocalypse, but not pseudonymity, and which has its own content.

Ironically enough, in the case of the Shepherd of Hermas, the author's decision to write in his own name may have ultimately helped assure the book a hearing that was finally lost to the pseudonymous Apocalypse of Peter. In the Muratori Canon, which was composed in Greek around the year 200, the Shepherd,
Revelation, and the *Apocalypse of Peter* are classified together as "revelations," but the author of the Canon acknowledges that some have doubts about the canonicity of the *Revelation of Peter*. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, however, which makes no claim to apostolic authority, is nevertheless treated with great respect as a valuable book, even if not canonical:

"... of the revelations we accept only those of John and Peter, which (latter) some of our people do not want to have read in the Church. But Hermas wrote the Shepherd quite lately in our time in the city of Rome, when on the throne of the church of the city of Rome the bishop Pius, his brother, was seated. And therefore it ought indeed to be read, but it cannot be read publicly in the Church to the people either among the prophets, whose number is settled, or among the apostles to the end of time." (Schneemelcher 45).

The *Shepherd of Hermas* was so esteemed by some that it, as well as the *Apocalypse of Peter*, was actually included in one catalogue of the canon, composed in the West in the fourth century (Schneemelcher 45), but it is excluded by the Decretum Gelasianum, composed in the West in the sixth century, and by the ninth century Stichometry of Nicephorus (Schneemelcher 46, 51).

Thus both the *Revelation of Peter* and the *Shepherd of Hermas* were for a time considered for inclusion in the canon, but both were ultimately excluded, the *Revelation of Peter* in spite of its claim to apostolic authority. But the *Shepherd*, perhaps partly because of the kind of claim to authority it does not make, wins an audience in the West that is lost to Peter (which does not even survive in Latin). In 367, Athanasius numbers the *Shepherd* among the
other books besides these [canonical ones], which have not indeed been put in the canon, but have been appointed by the fathers as reading matter for those who have just come forward and wish to be instructed in the doctrine of piety. (Schneemelcher 60)

He condemns, however, the 'apocrypha', which are, he charges,

a fabrication of the heretics, who write them down when it pleases them and generously assign to them an early date of composition in order that they may be able to draw upon them as supposedly ancient writings and have in them occasion to deceive the guileless. (Schneemelcher 60)¹²

The convention of pseudonymity, instead of lending authority to a 'revelation', could arouse hostility, at least among leaders of the church.

Revelation and vision will be suspect throughout the Middle Ages, but beginning with the Shepherd of Hermas, it was possible—perhaps even in some ways desirable—for the visionary to speak in his or her own voice. Pseudonymity, which for so long had been such a useful convention, will be replaced by other means of impressing the readers with the authority of the visionary.
CHAPTER V
THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS
AND THE
PASSION OF SAINTS PERPETUA AND FELICITAS

It would create a false sense of uniform progression to suggest that apocalypse developed smoothly and irrevocably into neo-apocalypse. Some writers adhered to the convention of the pseudonymous writer; simultaneously others wrote under their own names or attributed revelations to fictive contemporary narrators instead of venerable Biblical figures. For example, the pseudonymous Visio Sancti Pauli was composed near the end of the fourth century, well after the two texts that will be examined in this chapter as examples of the shift in content that accompanied the choice of a non-pseudonymous narrator. The first of these two, the Shepherd of Hermas, a sequence of allegorical, ecstatic visions that utilizes the structure but little of the content of apocalypse, was composed around the middle of the second century (Yarbro Collins 74). The second, the Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas, a testament that incorporates visions of the otherworld, was recorded shortly after Perpetua's execution about the year 202 A.D. (Wallis 275). Both take advantage of the possibilities inherent in apocalypses like the Testaments of the
XII Patriarchs, the Ascension of Isaiah, and the Visio Sancti Pauli to portray the spiritual crises confronted by an individual. Journey and allegory are used to explore the choices that confront an individual rather than to portray cosmic and national eschatology.

The earlier of the two books, the The Shepherd of Hermas, is a neo-apocalypse divided into three sections: The First Book of Hermas, which is called his "Visions"; The Second Book of Hermas, called his "Commands" or "Mandates"; and The Third Book of Hermas, which is called his "Similitudes." In fact, all three sections, not just the first, contain visions and raptures. But these visions and raptures are for the most part not vehicles for eschatology but rather part of a framework for an allegory of church doctrine on the necessity for repentance in the face of the Parousia. As Kirsopp Lake has pointed out, "though the book is apocalyptic and visionary, its object is practical and ethical," for it returns repeatedly to the "problem . . . of sin after baptism." Similarly, Vielhauer has observed that the book contains "revelations on the possibility of Christian repentance" (Vielhauer 1965b 630). But Vielhauer goes somewhat further than Lake in arguing the extent to which the Shepherd limits itself to the practical and the ethical. He suggests that the Shepherd completely lacks eschatological content. He argues that the Shepherd is "an Apocalypse in its form and style, but not in its content, since it includes no disclosures of the eschatological
future or of the world beyond."² Vielhauer attempts to illustrate the non-apocalyptic character of this apocalyptic book with a brief analysis of Vision IV, the only section that contains typical apocalyptic images and characters. But here, Vielhauer claims, this "apocalyptic material" is not used eschatologically (Vielhauer 1965b 636). He lists the "fixed traits in the picture of the future End-time which threatens the whole of mankind" but points out that "they are 'de-eschatologized' and re-interpreted" into personal symbols in Hermas's own individual struggle to achieve and salvation. Drawing on the work of Martin Dibelius, Vielhauer argues that the shift from interest in the last days to interest in the fate of the individual immediately after death accounts for the peculiar treatment of normally apocalyptic material, the fact that "[t]he description of the heavenly journey of the individual takes on features of the final fate of the cosmos" (Vielhauer 1965b 638).³

Yet a concern with genuine eschatology is not completely lacking in the Shepherd. While Adela Yarbro Collins, like Kirsopp Lake, observes that the "primary interest of the book is how to deal with sins after baptism," she also argues that the book betrays a "strong eschatological interest" (Yarbro Collins 74). The eschatology takes the form of an interest both in the fate of souls after death and in the end times.⁴ Images and words can function on more than one level; a conventionally eschatological image can be used to portray a personal spiritual
crisis or earthly developments even while simultaneously retaining its more traditional signification. For example, as Collins points out, the same word is used to refer both to the persecution of individual Christians and the coming last days (Yarbro Collins 74). The tower which Hermas sees also functions on more than one level, since while it represents the church it also points toward the last days. After Hermas asks his guide if the end of time is near, his guide tells him that the completion of the tower, which is imminent, will inaugurate the final days (Vis III, viii. 9; see Yarbro Collins 74). Finally, the author's beliefs about repentance, while the central topic of the book, are predicated on the expectation that God will soon break into history and bring it to a close:

The eschatological orientation of the book is shown in the fact that repentance and forgiveness of sins after baptism are not accepted as a repeatable process. The book proclaims a new but final call for repentance which presupposes a short time until the end, during which the faithful can indeed remain sinless (Vis II. ii). (Yarbro Collins 74)

Vielhauer pointed to Vision IV as an example of the non-apocalyptic use of traditionally apocalyptic images, but a closer analysis illustrates that these images, while they are adapted as symbols of the individual's personal struggle to reach salvation, have also retained their apocalyptic associations. The traditionally apocalyptic images in Vision IV would be more accurately described as multi-leveled than as non-apocalyptic. The beast that Hermas confronts is a personal obstacle that he
encounters in his own times in the course of his own journey, but it also functions, as Church tells him, as a "type of the great persecution to come" (Vis. IV. ii. 5, iii. 6). The features of the beast also retain eschatological significance. The beast has a multi-colored head, and the Church explains to Hermas the meaning of each color. One, the "colour of fire and blood," she explains, signifies that "this world must come be destroyed by blood and fire" (Vis. IV. iii. 3). Nevertheless, while the book is not utterly devoid of eschatological content, such content is subsidiary to the book's main theme, which is indeed, as both Lake and Vielhauer agree, the possibility of salvation for Christians who have sinned after baptism. The bulk of the book does address the practical and ethical, and the eschatology is a backdrop to the book, not the subject of it.

In the course of expounding upon the theme of salvation for those who have reverted to wrongdoing, the author of the Shepherd uses the genre of apocalypse in new ways. Like a traditional apocalypse, the Shepherd of Hermas is a first-person narrative divided by the "fixed outlines" of raptures and visions that are revealed and interpreted by angels over the course of many dialogues with the visionary. But in a departure from the usual form, the two angels are more than interpreters of the visions. Instead, they are figures with several layers. In Vis. II.4.1 and III.3.3 the old lady is identified with the Church; this is an entirely secondary feature which conflicts with the fact that the Church is the recipient of the
message of repentance from the old lady and that its condition is dealt with by her in Vis. III. . . . An analogous situation obtains in the case of the Shepherd. He is designated as the angel of repentance, but he is also the one to whom Hermas 'has been delivered', and he 'who will live with him the rest of the days of his life', i.e. a protecting angel." (Vielhauer 1965b 634)

The interpreting angels of earlier apocalypses have here turned into the multi-layered characters of an allegory (Vielhauer 1965b 635).

Allegory is a typical feature of apocalypses (Vielhauer 1965b 635), but the allegory in the Shepherds of Hermas is striking in its extent and complexity and in the fact that the angels have been drawn into it. Both angels illustrate the "artificial linking and allegorizing of different figures and motifs," a characteristic of the Shepherd that is "prominent, and . . . remarkable throughout the entire work . . ." (Vielhauer 1965b 635). And, again, as the above discussion pointed out, the allegory in the Shepherd is, in the main, not used to portray the end of time but to elucidate points of developing Christian doctrine. The allegory in the Shepherd is not, in the words of Vielhauer, "eschatologically determined" (Vielhauer 1965b 635).

The content of the Shepherd differs from that of traditional apocalypse. So, too, does the purpose of the allegory and the role of the angels. But attention should also be paid to the change in the role of the narrator, which differs dramatically from that of the visionary in the Vision of Isaiah or the Visio
Sancti Pauli. Because of the omission of historical review in the guise of history, the narrator is able to come forward under his own name. Furthermore, the author has converted into a positive virtue the fact that he no longer needs a pseudonymous narrator. The author of the Visio Sancti Pauli, less innovative, has preserved the convention of the pseudonymous narrator and is forced to artificially motivate Paul's rapture. And both Paul and Isaiah must be incongruously ignorant in order to provide the motivation that allows the angels to expound the requisite doctrine. But Hermas, neither patriarch nor prophet nor apostle, has no claim to sanctity. Paul repeatedly worries about the fate of other souls; Hermas is worried about the fate of his own soul. He is a narrator convincingly in need of revelations on the subject of penitence. Thus is created a figure authentically in need of growth, who, in the course of multiple visions, engages in allegorical actions as he moves through an allegorical landscape peopled with allegorical figures. The result is a book that causes a student of medieval literature to feel again and again a shock of recognition, for Hermas might well be Dante or Langland's Long Will.

The first book of this allegorical quest, that of the "Visions," is, as the title suggests, made up of not one but several visions. This feature, that of repeated visions, is a common one in apocalypse. We have already seen its presence in the apocalyptic sections of the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs.
Here the division into discrete visions and raptures marks the stages that Hermas must go through before certain truths may be revealed to him. Also typical of apocalypse is the fact that the first vision occurs in response to crisis. But atypical is the fact that the crisis is a personal one. Unlike Reuben and Levi, Hermas does not receive a vision because he is distressed by the condition of Israel. Instead, he is personally distressed.

After he sees a beautiful woman bathing in the Tiber, his mind becomes filled with the thought that it would be pleasant to have such a woman as a wife:

*When I saw her beauty I reflected in my heart and said: "I should be happy if I had a wife of such beauty and character." This was my only thought, and no other, not one. (Lake 7)*

This line could be interpreted in a two-fold manner: Hermas has become obsessed with the thought of this woman, or his wish was purely innocent. Certainly Hermas did not believe his desire to be sinful—at least not initially. But while traveling to Cumae he becomes sleepy and is seized by a spirit and carried to and through a special landscape, but not to any particular, named locale. He comes to a plain, after being carried "through a certain pathless district, through which a man could not walk, but the ground was precipitous and broken up by" rocks and falling fissures (Lake 7, 9; Gebhardt: *ambulans obdormivi, et*
spiritus me sustulit et tuli me in altam viam, per quam homo 
ambulare non poterat; erat enim rupibus et scissuris delabentibus 
conrosa). The dreamer's journey through this impassable 
landscape and his arrival at a nameless plain emphasizes the 
ideal nature of his vision. As Theodore Bogdanos has pointed out 
in "'The Shepherd of Hermas' and the Development of Medieval 
Visionary Allegory," the landscape is a reflection of the state 
of turmoil that Hermas has been thrown into because of his desire 
for the woman. The setting "reflect[s] his inner turbulence, 
functioning as a minuscule 'selva obscura' in the hero's 
spiritual journey." In addition, Hermas's passage through this 
difficult landscape suggests that this is not a journey that a 
man could take unaided. This element, the inability of a 
visionary to make unaided progress, physical or spiritual, has 
been implied in the other apocalypses by the very presence of the 
angeli interpres. It will become an explicit element in such a 
later vision as that of Tundale.

Having arrived at the nameless plain, Hermas kneels down to 
pray. As he does so the heavens open to reveal the first of 
several mediators who will instruct Hermas in a series of 
vertical dialogues. This mediator, like Dante's Beatrice, is the 
woman whom Hermas had desired, and she accuses him of sin and 
urges him to pray. The heavens then close, and Hermas, like Long 
Will in the beginning of Piers Plowman, is left "all shuddering 
and in grief," posing to himself the question, "If this sin is
recorded against me, how shall I be saved?" (Lake 11). An important first step has been taken; Hermas has been shaken out of his complacency. Several of the visions written subsequent to the Shepherd will also contain initial visions that pose a problem or make the visionary aware of the struggle he faces to reach salvation. For example, in the Vision of Wettin, which directly cites the Shepherd, the aged monk confronts evil angels who personify Deceit. But instead of falling into despair, a temptation posed by the representations of the evil angels, the monk responds correctly by having the fourth book of Gregory's Dialogues read to him, and he is thereby strengthened through a subsequent vision.

As Hermas meditates, a great chair made of white wool appears before him, and the second mediator, "a woman, old and clothed in shining garments with a book in her hand" appears and takes her place in the chair (Lake 11). This lady expatiates upon the sin of desire and upon Hermas's other sins. She then reads from her book, but many of her words "were frightful, such as a man cannot bear," so that Hermas cannot remember them. But he does succeed in committing the last few words to memory, "for they were profitable to us and gentle" (Lake 15). The Shepherd emphasizes the possibility of salvation even for the faithful who sin but who nevertheless sincerely repent. The division between the two sections of the lady's book underscores this possibility: the first words, the harsh ones, are for the "heathen and
apostates" but the second words, the gentle ones, are for the "righteous" (Lake 17).

The second vision takes place a year later as Hermas is once more on his way to Cumae. While Hermas is thinking about the previous vision, "the spirit again seized me and took me away to the same place, where I had been the previous year" (Lake 17). Hermas kneels down to pray, thanking the Lord for making him worthy of this vision and for revealing to him his sinfulness in the first vision. After he has finished praying, the old woman appears, this time "walking and reading out from a little book" (Lake 17). This book contains what Lake calls the "main point" of the Shepherd, that it is possible for sin after baptism to be forgiven, though only once. Now it becomes clearer why Hermas has chosen to use the trappings of authority provided by the form of an apocalypse or revelation, for Hermas's teaching differs from that of Hebrews VI and other texts, which do not hold out the possibility of repentance after baptism (Lake 21 n 1). Hermas is claiming that a new doctrine has been revealed to him. Indeed, a device of revelation on top of revelation seems designed to highlight the fact that Hermas is claiming the status of inspiration for his book. He is allowed to transcribe the book but its meaning is hidden from him. However, after he fasts for fifteen days, "the knowledge of the writing was revealed to me" (Lake 19). The circumstances surrounding the message seem designed to bring authority to the revelation, but since the
Shepherd is not set in the past through pseudonymity, the usual story of the sealing of the revelation is not needed. Dispensing with such a command, necessary to explain why a presumably ancient revelation had only lately begun to circulate, the woman instead forthrightly orders Hermas to "take this message to God's elect ones" (Lake 19). Hermas is claiming a divine commission.

Two additional short visions within Vision II reinforce the importance of the message contained in the little book. While Hermas sleeps, a young man appears to him in a dream and asks him to identify the old woman. Hermas believes her to be a Sybil. The young man, however, tells him that she is "The Church," who is old because "she was created the first of all things" (Lake 25). By this means Hermas underscores the legitimacy of the teaching, whose source is not pagan, as some might mistakenly believe, but the venerable Church itself. The old woman herself reappears in another short vision to give detailed instructions on how Hermas is to disseminate the revelation.

The third vision, like the unlocking of the secrets of the little book, takes place after Hermas, who is yet another insatiably curious visionary, has fasted for a long time and prayed for a further revelation that the Church had promised him while he was rapt in the second vision. As a result of his entreaties, Church appears and promises that, since the dreamer is "so importunate and zealous to know everything," she will show him another vision. She commands him to wait in a field where
she will rejoin him at a certain hour. As Hermas waits in the field, he confesses his sins, a confession which is overheard by the Church. Her reaction demonstrates how very different a narrator Hermas is from, for example, Isaiah, whose own ultimate place in heaven is not in question. The Church rebukes Hermas for his manner of confession, one which betrays selfishness:

"Hermas! stop asking all these questions about your sins, ask also concerning righteousness, that you may take presently some part of it to your family" (Lake 29). His distance from perfection is also demonstrated when the Church will not let him sit at her right hand on the couch which has so miraculously appeared in the field place. Hermas is grieved because he must sit on her left. Church observes his grief and tells him that he is yet entitled to sit on the right hand. But she holds out hope that he can someday merit the honor:

Are you sorry, Hermas? The seat on the right is for others, who have already been found well-pleasing to God and have suffered for the Name. But you fall far short of sitting with them. But remain in your simplicity as you are doing, and you shall sit with them, and so shall all who do their deeds and bear what they also bore. (Lake 29).

[Tristaris quoniam in parte dextra non sedisti? aliorum locus est: eorum qui iam placuerunt deo et passi sunt pro nomine eius, tibi autem multa restant ut cum ipsis sedes. sed quomodo manes in simplicitate tua, permane, et sedebis cum eis, tu et omnes quicumque fecerint quod illi fecerunt et passi fuerint ea quae passi sunt. (Gebhardt 33)]

After Church has explained who those are who may sit at the right hand and has once again held out the promise that Hermas,
though he has many failings, may be "cleansed" from them, she tries to depart, but, in response to Hermas's renewed entreaties for the promised vision, she raises a rod and reveals the six young men building a tower on water out of stones brought by thousands of other men. Some of the stones brought by the thousands are rejected by the six young men. Of these, some are left scattered around the tower, but some are cast far away, to roll into the desert or to fall into fire.

The lady would have departed after pointing out the tower to Hermas, but he begs her to explain the meaning of thes sights: "Lady, what does it benefit me to see these things, if I do not know what they mean?" (Lake 33). The exasperated Church replies, "You are a persistent man, wanting to know about the tower," but Hermas argues disarmingly that, if she will explain them, he will carry the word to his brethren. She agrees to explain the "parables of the tower" and to "reveal everything" to him, but warns him that he must afterward

no longer trouble me about revelation, for these revelations are finished, for they have been fulfilled. Yet you will not cease asking for revelations, for you are shameless. (Lake 37)

[nunquam me fatiges de iisdem revelationes autem istae finem habent, quoniam completae sunt. non autem relinquetur revelatio, quae postulata fuerit, vacua. (Gebhardt 37)]

Again, Hermas tries to bring authority to his revelation by emphasizing how privileged he was to learn these things. At the same time he tries to forestall the acceptance, indeed, even the
utterance, of contradictory revelation. After his revelation, there will be no more. One wonders if the oft-proclaimed belief in the death of inspiration is simply a rhetorical strategy to deprive competing doctrines of the stamp of authority.

The lady explains that the tower being built is herself, "the Church" (Lake 35; Gebhardt 37: turris enim quam vides, quae aedificatur, ego sum Ecclesia). But Hermas continues to press her for particulars and explanations. Through a series of questions and answers, we learn why the tower is built on water, who the six men are, who the thousands are, and what each kind of stone represents. At last, once again exasperated, Church demands, "How long will you be stupid and foolish, and ask everything and understand nothing?" (Lake 43). Nevertheless, she continues with her explanations, here pointing out that Hermas should "[u]nderstand . . . first from your own case" why those who have faith but also "riches of this world" are not suitable building blocks for the Church (Lake 43). Once again Hermas becomes more than the excuse for conveying doctrine. The character of Hermas works on his own salvation in the course of this sequence of visions.

After Hermas has finished asking the Church about the tower, she points out that seven women are about the tower, which is "supported by them" (Lake 47). The seven are in Latin Fides, Abstinencia, Simplicitas, Innocentia, Castitas, Disciplina, and Caritas, each of whom is the daughter of the preceeding virtue,
Faith thus being the mother of all. Like the building of the tower, the significance of the seven and their relationship one to another must be explicated by Church. Having delivered a virtual sermon on these seven virtues, Church is carried away by the six young men. But Hermas, waking, is still not satisfied. He wishes to know why Church has changed her appearance in the course of the three visions.

Now she had appeared to me brethren, in the first vision in the former year as very old and sitting on a chair. But in the second vision her face was younger, but her body and hair were old and she spoke with me standing; but she was more joyful than the first time. But in the third vision she was quite young and exceeding beautiful and only her hair was old; and she was quite joyful, and sat on a couch. (Lake 53)

Troubled because he wishes an explanation for this revelation, Hermas is instructed by Church in yet another dream, "a vision of the night," to fast so that his wish will be fulfilled. After a fast of one day, a young man appears, who, after rebuking Hermas both because of his endless requests for revelation and because of his failure to understand the revelations that he has been granted, explains the three forms in which Church appeared to Hermas. Each form is a reflection not of the condition of the Church but of the limitations of Hermas at that point in the vision. At first Hermas's "spirit [was] old and already fading
away, and had no power through your weakness and double-mindedness" (Lake 55). But as Hermas progresses spiritually, so too the Church, through increasingly youthfulness, seems to grow stronger. The revelation of the first vision renews Hermas's spirit, his faith becomes stronger, and he is therefore granted the vision of the tower. Likewise, once he has benefited from the second vision, his faith grows stronger still, and Church becomes "young and beautiful and joyful" (Lake 59). The appearance of the Church, which could have been easily allegorized to represent the improving condition of a reformed community, is instead used to reflect the state of one soul within it. Stages—or at least potential stages—in the growth of a visionary were implied in Isaiah and Paul through the questions and comments of angeli interpres. Here in the Shepherd the stages are made explicit through the angel's commentary on the changing appearance of Church.

In the fourth vision the Church takes yet another form. Hermas, "clothed in the faith of the Lord and remembering the great things which he had taught me" (Lake 63), safely bypasses a monstrous beast that is both a traditional apocalyptic figure and a symbol of personal testing for Hermas. After he has passed this test, he meets a maiden, "'adorned as if coming forth from the bridal chamber;' all in white and with white sandals, veiled to the forehead, and a turban for a head-dress, but her hair was white" (Lake 63). Church explains to him that he was able to
escape the beast because of his trust in the Lord. He is again commissioned to spread the word to the faithful. Then, after explaining some features of the beast, she disappears for the last time, to be replaced, in the Mandates and Similitudes, by a new mediator, the Shepherd from which the book takes its name.

The Shepherd's arrival, which inaugurates the Mandates, has traditionally been treated as the beginning of a fifth vision, and Hermas's encounter with this teacher is indeed cast in the form of a revelatory experience. In fact, the Mandates and the Similitudes that follow are divided into a whole series of visions. The sequence begins when the Shepherd enters Hermas's home, where he is praying as he sits on his bed. The Shepherd, who is later identified as the "angel of repentance" (Lake 71), first dictates commandments and parables to Hermas, stating and explaining metaphors for sin and salvation, but he also reveals to Hermas scenes that are handled in the same way as the allegorical process of the building of the tower of the Church. For example, in one visionary episode, Hermas, again in his house, "suddenly saw" the Shepherd sitting beside him (Lake 171). The Shepherd takes Hermas back into the country, where he reveals to him a vision of two shepherds and their flocks. Each shepherd is a personification, and the sheep likewise represent the kinds of men under the governance of each shepherd. The first shepherd is the "angel of luxury and deceit," the second the "angel of punishment," and Hermas's guide explains in allegorical terms how
luxury and deceit seduce men and how punishment follows. In yet another episode, Hermas is walking in the country, where he sees an elm and a vine and is "considering them and their fruits" (Lake 143). The Shepherd appears to him to explain to him that each is a "type" of a servant of God. The Shepherd shows Hermas other trees, these leafless and dry, and explains their significance, and then shows him yet another gathering of trees, "some budding and some withered" (Lake 149), again expounding upon their meaning. The visions thus incorporate both personification and diagrammatic allegory.

These features—the imperfect narrator, the allegorical landscapes and diagrams, and the many allegorical guides and other personifications—are those that seem so familiar to a student of medieval literature. By adopting the structure but not, for the most part, the content of apocalypse, the Shepherd of Hermas becomes an allegorical quest for individual salvation and a possible model for later such quests. Certainly any discussion of apocalypse in general will remind a reader of medieval allegory. Bernard McGinn's summary of the features of apocalypse in his Visions of the End sounds very much like a description of such a fourteenth-century poem as William Langland's Vision of Piers Plowman. The presence of allegorical figures is one characteristic mentioned by McGinn. He further points out that the vision of a journey, generally to heaven, is one of the most frequent forms taken by the apocalypses. Such a
visionary journey usually disturbs and perplexes the traveler. Similarly, in Piers Plowman, allegorical figures are encountered by a perplexed traveler on a visionary journey. But in spite of these general similarities, it is the Shepherd of Hermas in particular that seems to adumbrate medieval allegorical quests. Of course, both the journey and the perplexity are found in the Shepherd, which in addition relies heavily on allegory. But in the traditional apocalypses the guide or guides are nothing other than angelic psychopomps. They do not represent anything other than themselves. The Shepherd of Hermas, however, relies on several mediators that double as personifications, one of whom is the angel whose characteristics alter throughout the allegory but who personifies the church in its several manifestations. Its guides do not only convey doctrine; they act out the process of salvation that is undergone by the narrator. Furthermore, however much the form of the traditional apocalypse reminds the reader of later allegories, it is the Shepherd of Hermas that demonstrates how that form could be adapted to non-eschatological content.

The similarities shared by the Shepherd and later allegories have not gone unnoticed. The possible influence of the Shepherd of Hermas has been briefly examined by Theodore Bogdanos, who attempts to demonstrate the role of the Shepherd as a "significant prototype in the development of medieval visionary allegory" (Bogdanos 33). He argues that the Shepherd "displays
for the first time the dramatic pattern which underlies most medieval allegorical dream visions from Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (ca. 524) on*

The dreamer-hero finds himself in a profound spiritual crisis. One or several authoritative figures appear to him in one or several visions and help the dreamer place his crisis in a new perspective of truth, thus inducing its resolution. Such truth is communicated to the visionary hero through symbolic imagery and through rational, conceptually articulate dialogue in which the authoritative figure engages the dreamer. Their encounter takes place in a visionary landscape which has an objective reality of its own (as a supernatural realm, for example), while at the same time functioning as an imagistic concretization of the dreamer’s psychic reality—an objective correlative of his inner state at each stage of his spiritual development. (Bogdanos 34).

Bogdanos’s sketch of the pseudo-apocalypse could with ease be transformed into a description of such a later poem as Langland’s. Not only does it share an overall pattern with Langland and other writers of allegorical dream visions; so too many of the smaller features are held in common. For example, Bogdanos compares the authoritative figure, in the *Shepherd* the woman who personifies the Church, to Boethius’s Philosophia, Alan of Lille’s Natura, Dante’s Virgil, and Langland’s Holy Church (Bogdanos 35, 37). Similarly, he suggests that later visions incorporate a feature of the visionary landscape of the *Shepherd* that he calls the “structural center,” in Hermas’s vision the tower whose construction represents not only the building of the Church but also the “process of restoration of man’s inner identity and of his proper relationship to God’s universal order”
The *Shepherd of Hermas*, influenced by apocalypse, itself becomes influential and thus passes down the pattern of the vision to succeeding generations of writers. Bogdanos suggests that early on it may have been a prototype of the pattern found in Boethius's *Consolation*. But perhaps it recontributed the pattern over the centuries and thus had both a direct and indirect influence on later writers. There is evidence for its continuing influence in the West both in the number of Latin manuscripts and the number of citations. Ernst Robert Curtius declares that the "*Shepherd of Hermas* is the most important document of early Christian vision literature" and states that it "circulated from the second century onwards in Latin translations." In their edition, Oscar De Gebhardt and Adolf Harnack list sixteen manuscripts dating from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries. (Five of these manuscripts, the latest dated to the fifteenth century, are in British libraries.) (Gebhardt xiv-xix). In the *Patrologiae Graeca*, Migne reprints Gallandi's collection of citations of and quotations from the *Shepherd*, a list that includes Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, Jerome, Rufinus, Cassian, Prosper, Maximus, Bede, Walafrid Strabo, Pseudo-Tertullian, and John of Salisbury. Of these citations, that from the writing of Walafrid Strabo is itself taken from a vision, one which shows the influence of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. 
Another writer who apparently was influenced by the *Shepherd of Hermas* is Perpetua, who, along with fellow-Christian Saturus, was executed about 202. Shortly before their deaths both authored narratives recounting their persecution in jail and the visions they experienced while imprisoned. An unknown contemporary redactor supplied a preface and an account of the execution itself. J. Armitage Robinson, in the introduction to his edition of the *Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas*, suggests that the *Passion* is indebted to the *Shepherd* for a "multitude of details." For example, in her first vision, Perpetua encounters and safely passes a huge dragon under circumstances very like those under which Hermas, in his fourth vision, encounters and safely passes a "very great beast" (Vis. iv. 1. 6) (Robinson 28). Robinson sees the influence of the *Shepherd* in the portrait of the man *in habitu pastoris*, though, as he acknowledges, the figure of a shepherd is common in "Christian literature and art." (Robinson 28). Further parallels are, however, more compelling. Some are of ideas. The torment of Perpetua’s brother and his ultimate deliverance mirror ideas in the *Shepherd* about the possibility of salvation through suffering after death. Other parallels are of characters or events or images. The comforting words spoken by the deacon Pomponius in Perpetua’s fourth vision mirror the words spoken to Hermas by the Angel of Repentance, who speaks of wrestling with the devil. Yet another similarity is that between the
extraordinarily tall trainer carrying a rod and his assistants, who assist Perpetua before the wrestling match, and the tall man with the rod and his companions in the Shepherd. The shoes made of gold and silver Robinson compares with the "white shoes" of the Church when she appears to Hermas after he has escaped the Beast (Vis.iv.2.1). In the vision, after Perpetua wins the wrestling match against the Egyptian, i.e., the devil, she receives a "green bough, on which were golden apples" (Robinson 30). In the Shepherd, those who bear "rods with buds upon them and some fruit as well" may enter the Tower; the Shepherd, in reply to a question from Hermas, tells him that these favored individuals are those who "wrestled against the devil and wrestled him down . . . these are they who suffered on behalf of the Name" (Robinson 31). In addition to these and other parallels with the Shepherd in Perpetua's visions, Robinson finds the influence of the Shepherd in the vision of Saturus, Perpetua's fellow martyr. As he acknowledges, taken singly, each instance means little, but taken together, the parallels produce the impression that Perpetua and Saturus very likely knew the Shepherd:

Evidence of this kind is cumulative; and even if individual instances of comparison may seem fanciful and overstrained, yet when we recall at once Perpetua's escape from the monstrous dragon by the help of the Name; her vision of the Man in a shepherd's dress; the effort of Dinocrates to get at the water, and his subsequent release from punishment; the promise of Pomponius and the beautiful shoes; the green bough with the golden apples, and the going with glory to the Gate of Life; and then the passage of Saturus and herself,
borne by four angels to the East; the more more
glorious angels who clothe them and take them in; the
Man with the white hair and youthful countenance; the
kiss, and the command to go and play, and the
unspeakable odour which took the place of food; the
bishop and presbyter rebuked to their quarrellings—it
is difficult to believe that all these details, some of
which seem to cry for an explanation of some kind, are
wholly independent of the striking parallels which are
offered to us in the Shepherd of Hermas. (Robinson 34-
35)

While the *Shepherd of Hermas* was an allegory only concerned
in passing with eschatology, most other descendants of apocalypse
continued in the eschatological tradition—but with a difference.
The eschatological passages in the *Testaments of the XII
Patriarchs* and in *Ezra* were first of all apocalyptic—concerned
with the last days—and were secondly nationalistic—concerned
not so much with the fate of the individual as the fate of
Israel. The *Visio Pauli* and the *Vision of Isaiah* were
eschatologically oriented but not concerned with the fate of
Israel. But neither were they totally concerned with the fate of
individuals—groups of sinners are portrayed, classes of sinners.
But in the visions of Perpetua and Saturus, for the first time
contemporary individuals are at the center of the visions. In
the *Passion*, steadfast Christians confront death and their
resolve is strengthened by visions of the reward they will
receive for their faith. The visions play a role in the lives of
two individuals. Out of this is born a new convention, one which
replaces pseudonymity; again and again visions are reported by
contemporaries on the point of death, and those visions help
prepare the visionaries for death. This was not the case in the visions embedded in the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, which, while narrated by men on the point of death, were experienced years earlier. Nor was it the case in the Visio Pauli, or the Vision of Ezra. The narrators in each of these cases is the excuse for, and lends authority to, the vision, but the vision plays no role in his life. In the coming visions, however, the narrators will have personalities. They will be characterized by their visions and their reactions to them. Individuals will be seen coming to terms with death. Others will experience their visions while gravely ill but will recover and, because of the vision, will amend their lives and spend their remaining days in virtuous living. The demise of pseudonymity allowed a new kind of vision, one in which fallible, troubled, even sinful narrators come forward to speak to their contemporaries.

The brief visions in the Passion are themselves not outstanding for their images, which are very conventional. For example, Saturus’s description of heaven includes mention of light, of singing, of the throne, and of the stolae or garments of the blessed, all elements that can be traced to earlier visions. But, conventional as the content of the visions is, the Passion is noteworthy for the way in which the visions are so thoroughly integrated into the narrative so that their significance, personal and allegorical, is made plain. Perpetua faces numerous trials that test her strength, not the least of
which is the pull of family—father, mother, two brothers, and her own nursing infant. She has to resist the temptation to weaken in her resolve out of concern for her family. She is concerned about her infant, and her father and mother make piteous appeals that she think of them and renounce her faith. Then of course the conditions of the dungeon are a trial, and fear of the arena another one. But each of her trials is but another variation of one struggle, in which she must "wrestle" against the devil. Each is an obstacle that must be surpassed. Her father, for example, who, "overcome by the devil's arguments" (Wallis 278), comes to the dungeon to appeal to her, represents a temptation that must be resisted, and the visions provide a counterpoint to his arguments and appeals. The visions are linked together in a pattern that provides an allegorical level to Perpetua's experiences.

Perpetua receives her first vision after several days of imprisonment, when one of her brothers urges her to seek a vision in order to learn their fate:

Then my brother said to me, 'My dear sister, you are already in a position of great dignity, and are such that you may ask for a vision, and that it may be made known to you whether this [trial] is to result in a passion or an escape.' (Wallis 279)

[Tunc dixit mihi frater meus: Domina soror, iam in magna dignatione es, tanta ut postules visionem et ostendatur tibi an passio sit an commeatus. (Robinson 66)]

This passage illustrates one of the methods that replaced the conventions of antiquity and pseudonymity as means of lending
authority to revelation. Perpetua has the necessary stature to be the recipient of a revelation. Her sufferings on behalf of her faith entitle her to ask for a vision. Many medieval visions will follow the same pattern: a visionary, having suffered through a long period of mortification and meditation, has earned a vision. Sometimes the suffering of the visionary will take the form of a lengthy illness.

Perpetua does ask for a vision and reports "what was shown me":

I saw a golden ladder of marvellous height, reaching up even to heaven, and very narrow, so that persons could only ascend it one by one; and on the sides of the ladder was fixed every kind of iron weapon. There were there swords, lances, hooks, daggers; so that if any one went up carelessly, or not looking upwards, he would be torn to pieces, and his flesh would cleave to the iron weapons. And under the ladder itself was couching a dragon of wonderful size, who lay in wait for those who ascended, and frightened them from the ascent. (Wallis 279)

[uidoe scalam aeream mirae magnitudinis pertingentem usque ad caelum, et angustam, per quam non nisi singuli ascendere possent; et in lateribus scalae omne genus ferramentorum infixum. erant ibi gladii, lanceae, hamis, macherae: ut, si quis neglegenter aut non sursum attendens ascenderet, ianiaretur et carnes eius inhaererent ferramentis. et erat sub ipsa scala draco cubans mirae magnitudinis, qui ascendentibus insidias praestabat, et exterrebat ne ascenderent. (Robinson 66)]

Perpetua sees that the first to ascend the ladder is Saturus, who will be the first to die. When he reaches the top he calls to Perpetua to follow him, but warns her to beware lest the dragon bite her. The dreaming Perpetua replies confidently:
And I said, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall not hurt me.' And from under the ladder itself, as if in fear of me, he slowly lifted up his head; and as I trod upon the first step, I trod upon his head. (Wallis 279)

[et dixi ego: Non me nocebit in nomine Iesu Christi, et desub ipsa scala, quasi timens me, lente eiecit caput: et quasi primum gradum calcarem, calcavi illi caput. (Robinson 66, 68)]

The image of treading on the head of the dragon, which represents Perpetua's successful struggle against the devil, will be echoed in her vision of the wrestling match with the Egyptian and in the redactor's interpretation of Perpetua's entry into the arena on the day of her martyrdom.

Perpetua arrives safely at the top of the ladder, where heaven takes the form of "an immense extent of garden," and the Lord is a large, white-haired man, dressed like a shepherd and milking sheep, who gives to Perpetua a little cake of cheese. Perpetua then awakes, and her vision needs no interpretation: "I immediately related this to my brother, and we understood that it was to be a passion, and we ceased henceforth to have any hope in this world" (Wallis 280).

Her next vision helps her to remain steadfast even in the face of her fears for her family. Indeed, the vision demonstrates how her faith succours a member of her family, her younger brother Dinocrates. Perpetua is "besieged" by her father, who throws himself at her feet and for the second time begs her to reconsider her stand.
Have pity, my daughter, on my grey hairs. Have pity on your father, if I am worthy to be called a father by you. If with these hands I have brought you up to this flower of your age, if I have preferred you to all your brothers, do not deliver me up to the scorn of men. Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your aunt, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you. Lay aside your courage, and do not bring us all to destruction; for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything. (Wallis, 280)

Perpetua is, however, firm in her resolve, even when her tearful father throws himself at her feet and kisses her hands. The grief-stricken old man departs but some days later renews his appeal when Perpetua is publicly interrogated. He appears with Perpetua's infant and begs her to have pity on her infant. The procurator seconds the father's appeal, but Perpetua remains firm and publicly declares herself to be a Christian. The procurator orders the old man to be beaten—a sight grievous to Perpetua—and condemns Perpetua and her fellow-Christians "to the wild beasts" (Wallis 281).

Perpetua cheerfully returns to the dungeon, but soon has cause to fret on account of a family member. She had been nursing her child in prison and accordingly, once she has returned to the prison, she sends for her infant. But her father will not relinquish the child. Yet, through a small act of
divine intervention, Perpetua is relieved of the discomfort she might have suffered through being denied the infant:

And even as God willed it, the child no longer desired the breast, nor did my breasts cause me uneasiness, lest I should be tormented by care for my babe and by the pain of my breasts at once. (Wallis 281).

Perpetua's next vision, narrated immediately after the above episode, is placed within this context of grief and care for family. Her vision of her brother Dinocrates provides a counterpoint to father's claims on Perpetua. She and her fellow-prisoners are praying when suddenly Perpetua thinks of the boy, who had died at the age of seven:

After a few days, whilst we were all praying, on a sudden, in the middle of our prayer, there came to me a word, and I named Dinocrates; and I was amazed that that name had never come into my mind until then, and I was grieved as I remembered his misfortune. And I felt myself immediately to be worthy, and to be called on to ask on his behalf. And for him I began earnestly to make supplication, and to cry with groaning to the Lord. Without delay, on that very night, this was shown to me in a vision. (Wallis 281-82)

Perpetua sees Dinocrates in a "gloomy place," but she cannot approach him because she is separated from him by a "large
interval" (Wallis 282). There is a pool of water in this gloomy place, and the seven-year old Dinocrates, who is "parched and very thirsty," stretches himself up in an attempt to ease his thirst, but the height of the pool's brim foils the boy's efforts. The pool appears to be a font, and the boy in need of baptism (cf. Robinson 29). His face is filthy and pale, and Perpetua can see on his face the hideous wound that caused him to die a repulsive death.

Perpetua is distressed by the suffering of her brother, but she is also confident in the power of her prayers. She prays for him over a period of several days, and at last a third vision is "shown" to her. She sees her brother in a bright place, and he is now clean, well-dressed, and his lesion has been healed and replaced by a scar. Nor is he thirsty anymore; the brim of the pool is as low as his navel, and on the pool's edge is a goblet filled with water that never empties however long the boy drinks. After drinking as much as he wishes, the boy departs from the pool "to play joyously, after the manner of children." When Perpetua awakes, she has no trouble understanding that her prayers have been answered: "he was translated from the place of punishment."

The third chapter, the last written by Perpetua herself, develops the theme of the first vision, in which Perpetua treads on the head of the dragon. In the Argument, Perpetua is described as being "again tempted by her father" (Wallis 283).
It is now very close to the day set for Perpetua's execution, and her father "worn out with suffering," tears at his beard, throws himself on his face on the ground, and begins "to reproach his years, and to utter such words as might move all creation."

Perpetua is again sorrowful, but juxtaposed with this temptation is a triumphant vision. The deacon Pomponius, not soldiers or guards, summons her to the amphitheatre:

The day before that on which we were to fight, I saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came hither to the gate of the prison, and knocked vehemently. I went out to him, and opened the gate for him. . . . And he said to me, 'Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come!' And he held his hand to me, and we began to go through rough and winding places. (Wallis 283)

[Pridie quam pugnaremus, uideo in horomate hoc uenisse Pomponium diaconum ad ostium carceris, et pulsare vehementer. et exiui ad eum, et aperui ei . . . et dixit mihi: Perpetua, te exspectamus; ueni. et tenuit mihi manum, et coepimus ire per aspera loca et flexuosa. (Robinson 74, 76)]

They arrive breathless at the amphitheatre, where Perpetua is to wrestle with an Egyptian. Perpetua finds that she has the strength for the struggle: she finds herself transformed into a man. Furthermore, her trainers rub her with oil, which will make it difficult for the Egyptian to seize her, but the Egyptian himself rolls in the dust. They struggle, and the Egyptian tries to grasp her feet, but she is able to overcome him and, after he has fallen on his face, she treads on his head. When Perpetua awakes she recognizes that she "was not to fight with beasts, but against the devil" (Wallis 284). The passage is linked to the earlier one in which Perpetua treads on the head of the dragon,
but, as Peter Dronke has pointed out, it is also linked to the temptation represented by her father's last visit to the prison:

In his last prison-visit he throws himself to the ground (prosternere se in faciem, IX 2) and in this he resembles the Egyptian wrestler, who rolls himself in the dust, and later falls on his face (cecedit in faciem, X 11). He had flung himself at Perpetua's feet imploringly (se ad pedes meos iactans, V 5), whilst the Egyptian, trying to seize her feet (pedes adprehendere, X 10), is openly hostile. The father wrestling with Perpetua emotionally is imaged in the Egyptian wrestler. . . .

The story of the martyrdom itself, the "day of their victory," is told by the redactor, who follows Perpetua by using the image of treading on the head of an opponent as a symbol for victory over fear and temptation. As the martyrs proceed to the the amphi-theatre, Perpetua is calm and steadfast. She walks "with placid look and with step and gate [sic] as a matron of Christ, beloved of God; casting down the lustre of her eyes from the gaze of all" (Wallis 289). With her fellow-martyrs, she refuses to put on the garb of pagan priests and priestesses, and she sings psalms as she enters the amphi-theatre. As the redactor observes, she was "already treading underfoot the head of the Egyptian" (Wallis 289).

The Passion, like the Shepherd of Hermas, takes advantage of the allegorical possibilities of vision. Also like the Shepherd, the Passion concerns itself not with national but with personal eschatology. Furthermore, the Passion introduces a new element. Saturus and Perpetua are the first visionaries to see contemporary individuals in the otherworld, not members of
classes, but named individuals. Saturus, whose vision of heaven is also recounted in the *Passion*, sees Perpetua and others who were soon to be martyred. And Perpetua sees Dinocrates. The visions that will be composed by medieval authors take advantage both of the allegorical possibilities of vision and the trend toward "personalizing" visions that is begun here in the *Passion* of Perpetua.
CHAPTER VI

THE MARRIAGE OF ALLEGORY AND "REALISM"

The Shepherd of Hermas and the Passion of Perpetua illustrate two qualities that are to be important in later medieval visions of the otherworld. On the one hand, the visions were amenable to allegorizing. In particular, since the visions were often cast in the form of journeys, they were suitable for narratives of spiritual pilgrimages. On the other hand, with the dropping of the pseudonymous narrator, visions began to accumulate details that would create contemporary narrators. That is, since the visions were no longer attributed to biblical prophets or apostles, it was not always enough to simply place an account into the mouth of a narrator without giving information about that narrator. The history and credibility of the pseudonymous narrator will always have been established, but the redactor of a non-pseudonymous medieval visions had to provide such information himself. Thus dropping pseudonymity forced the writer to create characters and plots in order to provide credibility, which formerly flowed from the authority of the putative narrator. For example, the redactor of a vision might appeal to the changed behavior of a returned visionary as evidence that his account was not to be dismissed. Thus, since
more context was necessary, a veneer of "realism" formed. Visions were filled with particulars and populated not only with classes of people but with named individuals. Visionaries were given histories, professions, relatives, homes. Visionaries had an existence that extends both before and after the experience of the vision.

As both the Shepherd of Hermas and the Passion of Perpetua illustrate, this realism did not prevent the simultaneous development of the allegorical possibilities of the pseudo-apocalypse. The allegorical elements of the visions in the Passion not only co-existed with the waking events of Perpetua's autobiography but were generated by those events. The same can be said of the Shepherd.

The centuries following the composition of the Passion of Perpetua were marked both by the translation of genuine apocalypses from Greek into Latin and by the composition of numerous short pseudo-apocalypses. The evidence for the vigor of this vision tradition has been preserved in the Dialogues of Gregory the Great. Composed in 593, the Dialogues contain numerous reports of otherworld visions. Usually brief, these accounts often merely document the fact that a vision took place without providing any details of what the visionary saw. Still, the details that are reported show that the visions are indebted to the tradition of the apocalypse and pseudo-apocalypse. But an examination of the visions in the Dialogues will demonstrate not
only the path through which visions were disseminated but also how the visions were read and what direction the visions were taking. Gregory confirms the fact that visions could be read allegorically; he continues the trend of enveloping the visions with the appearance of verisimilitude; and in the process of grappling with the problem of credibility, he legitimizes the visionary experiences of sinners.

The visions are found mainly, but not exclusively, in the fourth book, which is a collection of miracles intended to demonstrate the existence of the soul and to explore its nature. But visions were also frequently counted among the miracles attributed to saints. And so the second book of the Dialogues, an account of the life of St. Benedict and the miracles attributed to him, includes a chapter that narrates a vision which is dependent, directly or indirectly, on the Visio Sancti Pauli. Benedict, who had been sleeping in a tower, arises before matins and goes to the window to pray:

In the dead of night he suddenly beheld a flood of light shining down from above more brilliant than the sun, and with it every trace of darkness cleared away. Another remarkable sight followed. According to his own description, the whole world was gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light. As he gazed at all this dazzling display, he saw the soul of Germanus, the Bishop of Capua, being carried by angels up to heaven in a ball of fire. (Zimmerman 105)

[subito intempesta noctis hora respiciens, vidit fusam lucem desuper cunctas noctis tenebras effugasse, tantoque splendore clarescere, ut diem vinceret lux illa quae inter tenebras radiasset. Mira autem res valde in hac speculatione secuta est: quia, sicut post ipse narravit, omnis etiam mundus velut sub uno solis]
radio collectus, ante oculos ejus adductus est. Qui venerabilis Pater, dum intentam oculorum aciem in hoc splendore coruscae lucis infigeret, vidit Germani Capuani episcopi animam in sphaera ignea ab angelis in coelum ferri. (PL 66: 198)

This vision, brief as it is, has preserved in truncated form two elements from the Visio Sancti Pauli: an all-encompassing view of the earth is combined with the going-out of the good soul. To these traditional elements is added specificity: the good soul, anonymous in the Visio Sancti Pauli, is given a local habitation and a name. In this case, providing a name, a profession, and a habitation for the soul does more than lend an air of verisimilitude to the brief narrative. Benedict's ability to identify the soul is a crucial element because it permits an epilogue that confirms the inspired nature of his vision. A messenger is dispatched to Capua, where he discovers that Bishop Germanus has died at the moment of Benedict's vision. The vision is thus imbued with the appearance of credibility through two means. The vision was, of course, either experienced by or attributed to St. Benedict, the venerable author of the Rule of St. Benedict, but the credibility of the vision is further strengthened, first, by specificity of detail and, secondly, by the "proof" provided after the vision's end. It is these two means that are later used repeatedly to establish the credibility of visions not placed in the mouths of saints, indeed of visions placed in the mouths of sinners. The particular outcome of this vision, the simultaneous or subsequent death of an individual
seen in the otherworld, was an especially frequent means of confirming a vision. 4

This vision, brief as it is, can provide us with more than a simple example of the trend toward specificity. It is followed by a commentary in which Gregory both explicates the vision and tries to explain how a vision takes place. As in the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, the apparent smallness of the earth has a spiritual meaning. But perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a spiritual meaning takes the form of a shrunken world. Benedict in fact does not see the entire world in one panoramic glance. Instead, he "sees" a spiritual truth that takes on the form of a diminished earth. Imbued with spiritual sight, he sees a metaphor:

*all* creation is bound to appear small to a soul that sees the Creator. Once it beholds a little of His light, it finds all creatures small indeed. The light of holy contemplation enlarges and expands the mind in God until it stands above the world. In fact, the soul that sees Him rises even above itself, and as it is drawn upward in His light all its inner powers unfold. Then, when it looks down from above, it sees how small everything is that was beyond its grasp before.

... how else was it possible for this man to behold the ball of fire and watch the angels on their return to heaven except with light from God? Why should it surprise us, then, that he could see the whole world gathered up before him after this inner light had lifted him so far above the world? Of course, in saying that the world was gathered up before his eyes I do not mean that heaven and earth grew small, but that his spirit was enlarged. Absorbed as he was in God, it was now easy for him to see all that lay beneath God. In the light outside that was shining before his eyes, there was a brightness which reached into his mind and lifted his spirit heavenward, showing him the insignificance of all that lies below.

(Zimmerman 106)
In Gregory's commentary, the external light becomes the analogue, the visible or material sign, of the light which is truly important, the spiritual light which illuminates St. Benedict's soul, permitting him to see and understand a spiritual truth that itself takes the form of an analogue. He "sees" an idea.

Even a vision experienced by a layman could be read in a metaphorical or an allegorical manner. In the "Vision of a Certain Soldier," the visionary, like St. Benedict, is not dreaming. Instead, he experiences rapture brought on by a serious illness, for he is so near death that his soul is drawn out of his body (PL 77: 384: ad extrema pervenit. Qui eductus in corpore exanimis jacuit . . . ). While the soldier lay senseless in his trance,
He saw a river whose dark waters were covered by a mist of vapors that gave off an unbearable stench. Over the river was a bridge. It led to pleasant meadows beyond, covered by green grass and dotted with richly scented flowers. These meadows seemed to be the gathering place for people dressed in white robes. The fragrant odors pervading the region were a delight for all who lived there. Everyone had his own dwelling, which gleamed with brilliant light. One house of magnificent proportions was still under construction and the bricks used were made of gold. But no one could tell for whom the house was meant. There were houses also along the banks of the river, some of which were infected by the vapors and stench rising from the river, while others remained untouched.

On this bridge saint and sinner underwent a final test. The unjust would slip off and fall into the dark, foul waters. The just, unhampered by sin, could walk over it, freely and without difficulty, to the beautiful meadows on the other side. (Zimmerman 239)

The description of heaven—pleasant green fields filled with flowers and sweet smells and inhabited by men dressed in white—is not unusual. Nor is it an original idea that there are mansions in heaven. The idea that it is necessary to cross a
noisome river is likewise a borrowed element. What is noteworthy is the commentary that follows, for in it Gregory allegorizes the scene. Peter, his interlocutor, asks, "But how is it that the house in the beautiful meadow was constructed with bricks of gold? It seems rather ridiculous that in eternity we should still need metals of this kind" (Zimmerman 241; PL 77: 385, 388: *Quid est hoc, quaeso te, quod in amoenis locis cujusdam domus laterculis aureis aedificari videbatur? Ridiculum est valde, si credimus quod in illa vita adhuc metallis talibus egeamus*). Are there literal houses in heaven? Gregory’s answer shows that the objects described are figures used to signify spiritual truths. Just as Benedict was comprehending an idea when he "saw" the shrunken earth, so the soldier is perceiving an idea when he "sees" the mansions. Gregory’s reply shows that Peter is right in wondering whether such a thing as literal metal will be present in the otherworld:

Surely no one with common sense will take the phrase literally. We may not know the person for whom the mansion was constructed, yet from some details of the vision we can tell what kind of good works he must have performed in his lifetime. Since the reward of eternal glory is won by generosity in almsgiving, it seems quite possible to build an eternal dwelling with gold. (Zimmerman 241)

*[Quis hoc, si sanum sapit, intelligat? Sed per hoc quod illic ostensum est, quisquis ille est cui mansio ista constructur, aperte datur intelligi quid est quod hic operatur. Nam qui praemium aeternae lucis eleemosynarum largitate promerebitur, nimirum constat, quia auro aedificat mansionem suam. (PL 77: 388)*]

It is figurative gold and a figurative house.
The action, too, is allegorical. Gregory adds a description of the people who are carrying the bricks of gold for the construction of the house. They are old people and little children, a fact that shows metaphorically that “our eternal dwellings in heaven are built by those who benefit from our almsgiving here on earth” (Zimmerman 241; PL 77: 388: *Qua ex re colligitur, quia hi quibus hic pietas facta est, ipsi illic operatores esse videbantur*). A similar message is expressed by the next story, the account of Deusdedit, for, reports Gregory, “Someone had received a revelation about him in which he saw a dwelling being built for him by workmen who engaged in their work only on Saturdays” (Zimmerman 242; PL 77: 388: *de quo alter per revelationem vidit quod ejus domus aedificabatur [sic], sed in ea constructores sui solo die sabbati videbantur operari*). The visionary later found out that Deusdedit on each Saturday gave to the poor all that he can spare after purchasing necessities for himself.

Gregory continues his allegorical explication in response to further questions from Peter, who asks why some of the houses by the river are “touched by the fumes and mists, and others were not? And then, why did he see a bridge and a river?” (Zimmerman 242; PL 77: 388: *quod quorundam habitacula foetoris nebula tangebantur, quorundam vero tangi non poterant; vel quid quod pontem, quid est quod fluvium vidit*). Gregory replies:

*We arrive at a true understanding through images. For example, the just were seen passing over a bridge to a*
beautiful meadow, because the road that leads to eternal life is narrow. The soldier saw a river of polluted water because the noisome stream of carnal vices continues daily to flow on toward the abyss. The dwellings of some were touched by the mist and stench from the river, others were free of this defilement, because there are always some who perform good deeds zealously, yet are stained by sins of the flesh through the pleasures of thought. (Zimmerman 242-43)

[Ex rerum . . . imaginibus pensamus merita causarum. Per pontem quippe ad amoena loca transire justos aspexit: Quia angusta valde est semita quae ducit ad vitam (Matth. VII, 14). Et foetentem fluvium decurrentem vidit, quia ad ima defluit quotidie carnalium hic putredo vitiorum. Et quorumdam habitacula fetoris nebula tangebat, quorumdam vero ab ea tangi non poterant; quia sunt plerique qui multa jam bona opera faciunt, sed tamen ad huc carnalibus vitiiis in cogitationis delectatione tanguntur. (PL 77: 388)]

Gregory's commentary asks the reader to look upon the visionary otherworld not as a literal place but as an *imago*: a representation or similitude. To some medieval readers, otherworld visions may have been read as literal descriptions of heaven and hell, but Gregory's commentaries provide evidence of the existence of a metaphorical reading.6

Gregory provides evidence of the increasing specificity of visions. He also illustrates that visions could be read metaphorically or allegorically. Finally, he demonstrates that a new kind of narrator had replaced the patriarchs, prophets and apostles. While many visionaries were similar to St. Benedict, who had prepared for his vision through contemplation and prayer, others were sinners struck down by illness or death. Gregory provides a rationale that legitimizes the visionary experiences
of such sinners. Peter, Gregory’s interlocutor, asks Gregory to explain why "some are called out of this world by mistake and come back to life again" (Zimmerman 237; PL 77: 381: quod nonnuli quasi per errorem extrahuntur e corpore, ita ut facti exanimes redeant, et eorum quisque audisse se dicat, guia ipse non fuerit qui erat jussus deduci?):

Whenever this occurs . . . a careful consideration will reveal that it was not an error, but a warning. In His unbounded mercy, the good God allows some souls to return to their bodies shortly after death, so that the sight of hell might at last teach them to fear the eternal punishments in which words alone could not make them believe. (Zimmerman 237)

[Hoc cum fit . . . si bene perpenditur, non error, sed admonitio est. Superna enim pietas ex magna misericordiae suae largitate disponit, ut nonnulli etiam post exitum repente ad corpus redeant, et tormenta inferni, quae audita non crediderant, saltem visa pertimescant. (PL 77: 381)]

To support this explanation, Gregory describes the salutary effect of a vision experienced by a Spanish monk named Peter who died but came back to life and declared that he had seen hell with all its torments and countless pools of fire. He also mentioned seeing some of this world’s outstanding men tossing in the flames. When his turn came to be cast into the fire, an angel in shining white robes suddenly appeared to prevent him from being buried in the burning mass. ‘Leave this place,’ he said, ‘and consider well how you are to live henceforth.’ (Zimmerman 238)

[Inferni supplicia atque innumera loca flammarum se vidisse testabatur. Qui etiam quosdam hujus saeculi potentes in eisdem flammis suspensos se vidisse narrabat. Qui cum jam ducetur esset ut in illas et ipse mergetur, subito angelum coruscit habitus apparuisse fatabatur, qui eum in ignem mergi prohiberet. Cui etiam dixit: Egredere, et qualiter tibi posthac vivendum sit, cautissime attende. (PL 77, col. 381)]
Tours of hell are a boon granted to sinners by a merciful God. Peter returns to life and adopts such an ascetic regime that "even had he kept silent, his penitential fasts and night watches would have been eloquent witnesses to his terrifying visit to hell and his deep fear of its dreadful torments" (Zimmerman 238; PL 77: 381: Tantisque se postmodum jejuniis vigiliisque constrinxit, ut inferni eum vidisse et pertimuisse tormenta, etiamsi taceret lingua, conversatio loqueretur). This explanation of the genesis of admonitory otherworld visions assumes and calls for a very different type of narrator than those of the apocalypses which otherwise influenced the content and structure of the medieval visions. And once again, credibility must proceed from the narrative itself, not from the authority of a holy narrator. Details provide the appearance of verisimilitude. Gregory tells us that he was told the story from the monk Sclavonion, who heard the story first-hand from Peter. Of the visionary himself, we are told of his birthplace and that he had lived with Sclavonion in the desert Evasa. And, of course, the visionary's behavior after his experience is testimony to the compelling nature of the vision.

That establishing the credibility of a vision was crucial is apparent from the writing of Gregory himself, who is aware of the possibility of error. In his Dialogues, he warns that not all dreams are inspired, for they arise from many sources:

It is important to realize . . . that dreams come to the soul in six ways. They are generated either by a
full stomach or by an empty one, or by illusions, or by our thoughts combined with illusions, or by revelations, or by our thoughts combined with revelations. The first two ways we all know from personal experience. The other four we find mentioned in the Bible. (Zimmerman 261)

Since it is difficult to determine the cause of a dream, a person must be cautious before trusting one. Holy men, because they have a certain "inner sensitivity," are able to distinguish between revelation and illusion, but the utmost attentiveness and vigilance are required. Even the fact that a dream contains a prophecy that is later borne out by events may be no guarantee that a dream is rooted in inspiration, for the "master of deceit" may be able to entrap the soul because he is "clever enough to foretell many things that are true in order finally to capture the soul by but one falsehood" (Zimmerman 262; PL 77: 412: Sancti... viri inter illusiones atque revelationes ipsas visionum voces aut imagines quodam intimo sapore discernunt, ut sciant vel guid a bono spiriitu percipient, vel guid ab illusione patiantur. Nam si erga haec mens cauta non fuerit, per deceptorem quam solet multa vera praedicere, ut ad extremum). Gregory provides evidence of a skepticism toward revelation that is present throughout the Middle Ages. It is therefore not surprising that this awareness of the doubtful nature of dreams should prompt
The Irish monk Furseus experienced a revelation in which he, like the soldier and like Peter in Gregory's Dialogues, seemingly died but shortly returned to life with an account of an otherworld journey. Even though this reworking of the otherworld tour had been put into the mouth of a saint, Bede was at pains to adduce worldly evidence to lend authority to the teller and his tale. The burn marks with which Furseus returns provide visible evidence of the veracity of his account. His reactions when telling the vision are also convincing. First of all, he will not tell the vision to just anyone but only to those "who questioned him about them, because they desired to repent." The vision is treated as a divine revelation that is not to be cheapened by light or frequent telling. Secondly, Bede has, through testimony only once removed from the event, an account of a venerable man who saw Furseus sweating as he told the vision, so compelling was the experience:

An aged brother is still living in our monastery who is wont to relate that a most truthful and pious man told him that he had seen Fursa himself in the Kingdom of the East Angles and had heard these visions from his own mouth. He added that although it was during a time of severe winter weather and a hard frost and though Fursa sat wearing only a thin garment, yet as he told his story, he sweated as though it were the middle of summer, either because of the terror or else the joy which his recollections aroused. (Colgrave 275)
[Superest adhuc frater quidam senior monasterii nostri, qui narrare solet dixisse sibi quendam multum veracem ac religiosum hominem, quod ipsum Furseum viderit in provinciae Orientalium Anglorum, illasque visiones ex ipsius ore audierit, adiciens quia tempus hiemis fuerit acerrimum et glacie constrictum, cum sedens in tenui veste uir ita inter dicendum propter magnitudinem memorati timoris uel suavitatis, quasi in medias aestatis caustae suduerit. (Colgrave 274)]

But even as the vision is enveloped in details that lend it an air of verisimilitude, it also is wrapped round with metaphor. As in the vision of St. Benedict, the visionary is able to look back and, from his high vantage point, see the entire world. But the visionary takes the detail from the Visio Sancti Pauli rather than from Gregory’s Dialogues. Furseus’s vision retains the angelic command that the visionary look back, even though the dialogue between visionary and angel that prompted the command is not similarly retained. Furthermore, as in the Visio, the world is enveloped by flames. (In the vision of St. Benedict it is unclear whether flames surround the world.) But this time the world seen by the visionary is described as a “dark valley” (vallem tenebrosam), its darkness a sign that Furseus is receiving an illuminating revelation that allows him to rise above the spiritual darkness usually experienced by those trapped by the world:

When Fursa had been taken up to a great height, he was told by the angels who were conducting him to look back at the world. As he looked down, he saw some kind of dark valley immediately beneath him and four fires in the air, not very far from one another. When he asked the angels what these fires were, he was told that they were the fires which were to kindle and consume the world. (Colgrave 273)
In the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, the visionary's guide interprets the fire metaphorically as the "unrighteousness that is mingled by the princes of sinners." The flames in Furseeus's vision likewise are given a metaphorical interpretation, but a more elaborate one. An angel accompanying Furseus explains that:

One of them is falsehood, when we do not fulfil our promise to renounce Satan and all his works as we undertook to do at our baptism; the second is covetousness, when we put the love of riches before the love of heavenly things; the third is discord, when we do not fear to offend our neighbours even in trifling matters; the fourth is injustice, when we think it a small thing to despoil and defraud the weak. Gradually these fires grew together and merged into one vast conflagration. (Colgrave 273)

In the course of "spiritualizing" Furseus's vision, the narrator gives the flames an eschatological meaning that operates on two levels. Like the beast that Hermas encounters in his fourth vision, the four flames which menace the world represent both an apocalyptic threat and an individual one. The visionary
himself is imperiled by the four flames. As the flames draw close, the visionary appeals to his guide, who reassures him by explaining that each man will be "burned" only by those flames that represent the sins in which he "burned" in life:

That which you did not kindle will not burn you; for although the conflagration seems great and terrible, it tests each man according to his deserts, and the evil desires of everyone will be burned away in this fire. For just as in the body a man burns with illicit pleasures, so when he is free from the body, he makes due atonement by burning. (Colgrave 273)

[Quod non incendisti . . . non ardebit in te; nam etsi terribilis iste ac grandis esse rogus uidetur, tamen iuxta merita operum singulos examinat; quia uniuscuiusque cupiditas in hoc igne ardebit. Sicut enim quis ardet in corpore per inlicitam voluptatem, ita solutus corpore ardebit per debitam poenam. (Colgrave 272)]

This example of the tendency of medieval writers to "spiritualize" the visions arises from a belief that the flames of hell are psychological rather than physical or material. Alan E. Bernstein has documented "a perceptible, though fluctuating, current within the Latin theological tradition of a metaphorical or psychological interpretation of hell." Origen was the first major Christian theologian to depict an incorporeal hellfire. In an explication of Isaias 50: 11, "Ambulate in lumine ignis vestri, / Et in flammis quas succendistis," Origen describes an "internal and subjective" fire that is kindled by the sins of the individual. This psychological fire fueled by sin is analogous to the bodily "fevers" fueled by overeating. This psychological fire is also analogous to the fires "with which passions and
vices attack the soul, as 'when the soul burns with the flames of love, or of zeal, or is gnawed by the fires of malice'." Origen also explains the process in terms that are reminiscent of the judicial scene played out when the soul leaves the body: when the sins or "mental fuels are gathered in one place, 'the conscience is agitated and goaded by its own stimuli and functions as its own accuser and witness'" (Bernstein 516: Ipsa conscientia propriis stimulis agitatur et compungitur, et sui ipsa efficitur accusatrix et testis).

Bernstein adduces from Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine further evidence for the belief that the fire of the otherworld is, at least in part, psychological or "metaphorical" (Bernstein 517). Jerome provides evidence through his complaint that "'many' hold the 'fire which will not be extinguished' to be the 'consciousness of sins, which torments [the soul] with suffering'" (Bernstein 517). Like Origen, Ambrose, who was apparently one of the "many," compares the flames kindled by sin to the "fevers" caused by overindulgence:

Just as worms and fevers arise out of overeating, similarly, if someone does not boil down his sins, as for instance by some interval of sobriety or abstinence, but by mixing sins with sins he contracts as it were a certain indigestion of old and new transgressions, he will burn in his own fire and be consumed by his own worms. . . . The fire is that which the sorrow for the transgressions generates; the worm is that by which the sins of the irrational soul goad the mind and the senses of the culprit and devour certain viscera of the conscience, which, like worms, arise one from the other as if out of the body of the sinner. (Bernstein 517)
As Bernstein observes, "it is the sinner's own sense of guilt which torments the soul from within" (Bernstein 517).

In *The City of God*, Augustine, like Jerome, illustrates the fact that there were differing interpretations of the nature of the torments of hell. In his comments on the verse *Vermis eorum non morietur, / Et ignis eorum non extinquetur* (Isaias 66: 24), Augustine examines three positions: that both fire and worm torment the spirit, that fire torments the spirit but the worm of "anguish" gnaws the spirit, and that both fire and worm afflict the body. He favors the last interpretation. However, even this last interpretation allows for some spiritual suffering, for, "when the body is thus in pain, the soul also will be tortured with unavailing remorse."  

as for this fire and this worm, there are some who want to make both of them refer to the pains of the soul, not of the body. They say that those whose penitence is too late, and therefore ineffectual, those who have thus been separated from God, are burnt in the fire of the soul's sorrow and pain; and therefore, they maintain, 'fire' is quite appropriately used as a symbol for that burning pain. That is why the Apostle says, 'If anyone is led astray, do I not burn with indignation?' They suppose that the 'worm' is to be taken in the same way; for, they say, the Scripture says, 'Like the moth in a garment, or the worm in timber, so does sorrow torment the heart of a man.' Those, on the other hand, who feel sure that in that punishment there will be pain of both soul and body declare that the body is burnt by the fire while the soul is, in a sense, gnawed by the 'worm' of sorrow. (Bettenson 984)  

Augustine finds the latter belief "more plausible" than the first, "inasmuch as it is obviously absurd to suppose that in that state either soul or body will be exempt from pain"
But he proposes a third interpretation, that both fire and worm torment the body, and that "the scriptural statement is silent about the pain of the soul for this reason, that, although it is not stated, it is taken as implied that when the body is thus in pain, the soul also will be tortured with unavailing remorse" (Bettenson 984). To support his interpretation, he adduces Ecclesiasticus 7: 19, vindicta carnis impli ignis et vermis, arguing that the "reason for the addition of 'the flesh' can surely only be that the fire and the worm will be punishments of the body" (Bettenson 984). But, though he prefers to believe that both fire and worm torment the body, he is very tolerant of those who adopt the view that the fire is material, the worm spiritual:

Well then, each one of us must choose as he thinks fit between those interpretations. He may ascribe the fire to the body, and the worm to the mind, the former literally and the latter metaphorically; or he may attribute both, in the literal sense, to the body. . . . he may think either that the worm, along with the fire, refers, in the literal sense, to the bodily punishment, or that it refers to the punishment of the soul, the word being used by a transference of sense from the material to the immaterial. (Bettenson 984-85).

He does not, however, accept the first reading, that both fire and worm are spiritual, for, the "important thing is," he argues, "that we should never believe that those bodies are to be such as to feel no anguish in the fire" (Bettenson 985).

Augustine, then, prefers to believe that the torments of hell are material. Nevertheless, he does believe in one kind of
mataphorical fire. In his discussion of Isaiah 66: 24, he is considering the fire to which the resurrected will be subjected after the Last Judgment. But what of the conditions of sinful souls in "Hades" awaiting resurrection? What is the nature of the torments endured by such souls? According to Augustine, they suffer metaphorical torments, not material ones:

I should indeed have said that the spirits are destined to burn, without possessing any material body, just as the rich man was on fire in Hades when he said, ‘I am tortured in those flames’; this is what I should have said, if I had not observed that the appropriate reply would be that the flames in the parable were of the same kind as the eyes which the rich man ‘raised and saw Lazarus’, and the tongue on which he longed for a drop of water to be poured, and the finger of Lazarus which he suggested as the instrument of that boon—and yet these characters were souls without bodies. Thus the flames burning the rich man and the little drop of water he craved were of the same nature as visions seen in dreams, or in an ecstasy, when people perceive entities which are immaterial and yet display the likeness of material realities. For even when the subject himself appears in such visions (in spirit, not in body), he sees himself there so like his own bodily appearance as to be completely indistinguishable from it. (Bettenson 986)

There were, then, three traditions that would encourage the metaphorical or spiritual interpretation of the vision. First, a tradition existed—though no consensus—that the pains of the eternal hell itself would be, either in whole or in part, spiritual. Secondly, even those who believed that the torments would be material might nonetheless believe that the interim pains were metaphorical. Thirdly, the phenomenon of the vision was explained in terms of metaphor.
Furseus thus sees flames which a reader might have interpreted allegorically even without the benefit of commentary. St. Furseus is threatened by flames which represent individual sin and individual punishment, the "burning" of sin being itself the punishment of sin, a punishment which follows the soul from life to afterlife. At first the illusion is created that Furseus himself will remain untouched by these "flames," as were so many earlier visionaries who were mere interlocuters whose questions permitted the guides to explicate and expound. The escorting angels part the fires so that he may pass. Like the Bishop Germanus, he is enveloped by fire yet untouched by it. Able to enter the otherworld, he tours it and witnesses the "burnings of wars against the just" (King I 423). But he is more than an onlooker. Furseus, like the good soul in Paul's vision, but unlike Paul himself, is put on trial. He is arraigned by the wicked spirits but defended by the good spirits. Apparently acquitted, he is able to see the "heavenly company," among whom are several "holy men of his own nation" whom he recognizes as former priests and with whom he speaks. But he is not permitted to see heaven itself. After the souls of the priests "had ended their communication," they "returned to heaven" (King I 423). Escorted by angels, the souls had come out to meet Furseus in some unnamed sub-heaven. Furseus is not yet ready to catch even a glimpse of heaven itself. His guides remain with him "to bring him back to the body" (King I 423) and with them Furseus begins
to retrace his steps. But when Furseus begins to pass through
the path the angels again open through the flames,

the evil spirits seized one of those who were burning
in the flames, hurled him at Fursa, hitting him and
scorching his shoulder and jaw. Fursa recognized the
man and remembered that on his death he had received
some of his clothing. (Colgrave 273, 275)

Commenting upon this event, one of the guiding angels transforms
the events into visible signs of what is occurring within
Furseus. Explains the angel, "You were burned by the fire you
had kindled. For if you had not received the property of this
man who died in his sins, you would not have been burned by the
fire of his punishment" (Colgrave 275). Furseus himself has
suffered within his soul the pain of sinning. The scars which
Furseus forever after bears must also be interpreted as physical
analogies for the mental turmoil and struggle experienced by
Furseus. For after his soul is returned to its body, he is
described as forever bearing "the marks of the burns which he had
suffered while a disembodied spirit . . . It is marvellous to
think that what he suffered secretly as a disembodied spirit
showed openly upon his flesh" (Colgrave 275).

The same methods of recording and interpreting vision
illustrated by the Vision of Furseus likewise influence the
narration of a later vision,¹³ that of Drythelm, who according
to the common pattern, was ill for several days, died at the beginning of one night, but returned to life the following night. This is once again a vision enveloped in details designed to invest it with credibility. First, like Furseus, the revived visionary adopts a demeanor that is dramatic testimony to the intensity of his experience. The visionary had led a virtuous life but even so found cause for amendment in the course of his otherworld visit. Upon his return he divides his goods among his wife, his sons, and the poor, then enters a monastery, there living out his days in such penance of mind and body that even if he had kept silent, his life would have declared that he had seen many things to be dreaded or desired which had been hidden from other men. (Colgrave 489)

[Tanta mentis et corporis contritione... ut multa illum quae alios laterent uel horrenda uel desideranda uidisse, etiamsi lingua sileret, uita loqueretur (Colgrave 488)]

Plunging into the icy water of a river was one of the mortifications to which Drythhelm subjected himself. Nor would he change out of his cold, wet clothes after standing in the river praying and singing. Instead, he would let them dry on his body. This regimen he followed even in winter:

When in winter time the broken pieces of ice were floating round him, which he himself had had to break in order to find a place to stand in the river or immerse himself, those who saw him would say, 'Brother Drythhelm,--for that was his name--'however can you bear such bitter cold?' He answered them simply, for he was a man of simple wit and few words, 'I have known it colder.' And when they said, 'It is marvellous that you are willing to endure such a hard and auster
life', he replied, 'I have seen it harder.' (Colgrave 499)

In two laconic sentences the visionary impressively conveys the horror of an experience that makes his present sufferings seem mild.

In addition to the visionary's behavior, there are the reactions of auditors to lend authority to the vision. Dryhthelm receives the medieval equivalent of celebrity endorsements. The story was passed along to Bede by a priest-monk named Hemgils, who was

an eminent priest and whose good works were worthy of his rank. He is still alive, living in solitude in Ireland and supporting his declining years on a scanty supply of bread and cold water. He would often visit this man and learn from him, by repeated questionings, what sort of things he saw when he was out of the body. . . . (Colgrave 497)

A second appreciative auditor was King Aldfrith, "a most learned man in all respects," who "gladly and attentively" listened to
Drythelm's narrative whenever he was in the vicinity of the monastery; it was in fact at his request that the visionary was admitted into the religious community (Colgrave 497). Drythelm's story thus repeatedly passed muster with men both learned and religious.

The visionary was familiar with the underworld journey recounted in Vergil's Aeneid—he quotes a line from an underworld journey in that book—^14 but most of the content of his vision is drawn from the Judaeo-Christian visions of the otherworld. Drythelm has a guide, an angelic being with "shining countenance and . . . bright robes" (Colgrave 489), who reveals to him two places where the sinful are punished and two where the virtuous are rewarded.\(^{15}\) Drythelm sees such traditional oppressive conditions and hellish torments as darkness and flames arising out of a pit, the gusts of fire "full of human souls which, like sparks flying upward with the smoke, were now tossed on high and now, as the vaporous flames fell back, were sucked down into the depths" (Colgrave 491). In paradise he sees a field filled with flowers, sweet odors, men in white rejoicing.

The Vision of Drythelm would be better described as admonitory than as allegorical. After seeing the first place of torment, Drythelm mistakenly believes that he is in hell, whose "intolerable torments" he has heard men describe (Colgrave 491). But his guide, reading his thoughts, tells him that he is in error. The message is clear: hell is very much more terrible
than Dryhthelm—or the reader—has imagined. The first torment is already intolerable, but there is worse to come. The pattern of error is repeated when the guide leads Dryhthelm from the darkness of the second place of punishment to the light of the first place of reward. Just as Dryhthelm mistakenly believed that the first region of torment was hell, so here he confounds these "abodes of the blessed spirits" with the "kingdom of heaven" (Colgrave 493, 495). Again his guide reads his mind and corrects him. And, just as Dryhthelm's earlier mistake served to impress upon the reader the horror of hell, so this error impresses upon the reader the fact that the joys of heaven must be great indeed. And indeed Dryhthelm now sees before him a "much more gracious light than before" (Colgrave 495).

However, even though nothing in the Vision of Dryhthelm directs the reader to interpret the otherworld descriptions as metaphor, the subsequent history of two elements peculiar to the vision provides evidence that at least some readers were reading allegorically regardless of the author's intentions. First, an explanation of a punishment is reworked so that it is linked with a sin that would have caused motion and emotion like that of the torment. Dryhthelm's guide leads him to a valley divided into a hot region and a cold one where sinners are punished by being hurled back and forth between the two regions:

It [the valley] lay on our left and one side of it was exceedingly terrible with raging fire, while the other was no less intolerable on account of the violent hail and icy snow which was drifting and blowing everywhere.
Both sides were full of the souls of men which were apparently tossed from one side to the other in turn, as if by the fury of the tempest. When the wretched souls could no longer endure the fierceness of the terrific heat, they leapt into the midst of the deadly cold; and when they could find no respite there, they jumped back only to burn once again in the midst of the unquenchable flames. (Colgrave 489, 491)

This valley is the place where those who delayed confession until death must suffer until the day of judgment, when they will be permitted to enter the kingdom of heaven. The tormented are simply sinners in general; no particular crime is specified. But this motif of alternate cold and heat is linked by later writers with a sin for which the punishment seems to be a metaphorical expression of the sin itself. For example, in the Poema Morale, this torment is reserved for those "who were of unsteadful thoughts, and made vows to God which they would not perform, those who began good works and would not complete them." The link between sin and torment is the equivalent of the idea that the fire which torments sinners is in fact the "burning" of sin within them.

Similarly, the author of the later Vision of Tundale will allegorize a confrontation between visionary and demonic spirits
and his rescue from them. The Tundale passage appears to be dependent on an episode in which Dryhthelm's "conductor" has led him to a pit. The visionary's angelic guide, whose "bright glow and coat" had provided the only light and guidance in that dark place, then vanishes, leaving Dryhthelm to face the demons on his own. The earlier Furseus also had been threatened by demonic spirits, but he was never deserted by his guides. Dryhthelm remains there in fear, not knowing what he should do, where he should turn, or what will happen to him. As he lingers there fearfully, he witnesses a scene like that in the Visio Sancti Pauli:17

I suddenly heard behind my back the sound of wild and desperate lamentation, accompanied by harsh laughter as though a rude mob were insulting their captured foes. As the noise grew clearer and finally reached me, I beheld a crowd of evil spirits, amid jeers and laughter, dragging five human souls, wailing and shrieking, into the midst of darkness. (Colgrave 491, 493)

(audio subitum post terga sonitum inmanissimi fletus ac miserrimi, simul et cachinnum crepitantem quasi uulgi indocti captis hostibus insultantis. Vt autem sonitus idem clariorredditus ad me usque peruenit, considero turbam malignorum spirituum, quae quinque animas hominum merentes heilulantesque, ipsa multum exultans et cachinnans, medias illas trahebat in tenebras... (Colgrave 490, 492))

While that rout of evil spirits drags the souls into the pit, another rout rises up and surrounds the visionary:

Being thus surrounded on all sides by foes and black darkness, I cast my eyes in every direction to see if there was any help or way of escape anywhere; and then there appeared behind me, on the road by which I had come, something like a bright star glimmering in the darkness which gradually grew and came rapidly towards
me. On its approach all the hostile spirits who were seeking to seize me with their tongues scattered and fled. (Colgrave 493)

[Qui cum undiqueuersum hostibus et caecitate tenebrarum conclusus, hoc illucque oculos circumferrem, si forte alicunde quid auxilii quo saluaret aeduniret, apparuit retro-ula qua ueneram quasi fulgor stellae micantis inter tenebras, qui paulatim crescess, et ad me oclus festinans, ubi adpropinquauit, dispersi sunt et auffugerunt omnes qui me forcipibus rapere quaerent spiritus instest. (Colgrave 492)]

This experience is later explained by the guide as a test: "When I left you for a time, I did so in order to find out what your future would be" (Colgrave 497). However, in the hands of the Tundale visionary, repeated episodes of abandonment and rescue are worked into a pattern that turns the vision into an allegory of mercy.

Linked with the allegory of mercy in Tundale is the notion that the ways of God are inexplicable. The Vision of Drythelm, too, reflects the inexplicable. For example, Drythelm sees no door in the wall, its length and height seemingly endless, that surrounds paradise; but "we suddenly found ourselves on top of it, by what means I know not" (Colgrave 493). Similarly, the vision over, Drythelm suddenly finds himself "by what means I know not, alive and in the world of men" (Colgrave 497). The Vision of Tundale includes several events which the visionary finds inexplicable but which become metaphors for the expression of mercy, which would not, after all, be mercy unless it abrogated the rational demands of justice.
The fact that some later writers read certain motifs metaphorically does not, of course, prove that Drythelm intended such interpretations or even that his contemporaries would have perceived the metaphorical possibilities of the vision. As Peter Dinzelbacher observes, one must distinguish allegoresis—the interpretation supplied by a reader—from allegory—the presence of which is intended by the author or redactor of a vision. But the interpretations provided by the redactors of the visions of St. Benedict, the soldier, Peter, and Furseus, suggest that a reader would have been open to such possibilities. Yet it would be a mistake to press the point too far. Visions were written for many reasons and were read for many reasons. Nevertheless, the later history of these motifs demonstrates that Augustine's and Gregory's theories of the nature of visions and Origen's, Anselm's, even Augustine's, theories of the nature of the otherworld permitted visions to be both written and read as metaphor.
CHAPTER VII
"REALISM" IN TWO OTHERWORLD VISIONS:
TUNDALE AND EYNSHAM

The previous chapter elucidated the ideas that encouraged the allegorical reading of otherworld visions and demonstrated the responses to those ideas. These impulses to interpret the torments and rewards of the otherworld in, at least in part, metaphorical terms survived into the twelfth century and beyond. In the twelfth century the most common belief was that sinners suffer both material and spiritual torments in hell, an interpretation which allowed for both literal and metaphorical descriptions of the torments of hell. The idea is found, for example, in Pope Innocent III’s On the Misery of the Human Condition. Even before death, the sinner suffers not only physical but psychological torments, in which the sin itself is the agent of punishment. In an explication of Wisdom 11: 17—by what things a man sins, by the same also he is tormented—Innocent enumerates the destructive effects of sinning upon the sinner:

Pride inflates, envy gnaws, avarice goads, wrath inflames, gluttony chokes, lechery destroys, lying ensnares, murder defiles. So, too, other vices have their portents, for the sinful delights which entice men are the very instruments of God’s punishment.
Innocent is partly describing the physical degeneration caused by sinful behavior, but he is also describing the psychological torment of the unhappy sinner, for whom "the worm of conscience never dies, and reason's light is never put out" (Howard 21).

Psychological as well as physical torments are present at every stage of a sinner's existence, both in his progress through life and during his exit from it. Just as the active sinner suffers physically and psychologically from his sins, so too the sinner on the verge of death must face both bodily and mental torment (Howard 68-69). Finally, Innocent describes the damned in hell as suffering both internally and externally. The sinful will be tormented by worms and by fire: "Double for both: a worm and fire inside him which gnaws and burns the heart, and an exterior worm and fire which gnaws and burns the body" (Howard 72). The interior worm is a "worm of conscience," which will devastate sinners in three ways: "It will trouble them with memories, disturb them with repentance, and torture them with anguish" (Howard 72). Such double torments are found in the visions as well, where gnawing worms and burning fires, as well as of other torments, are sometimes literal punishments, sometimes psychological ones which the visionary is compelled to describe through analogy because of the inherent limitations of language.

But the spiritualizing of the visions went forward even when torments were described literally. It was not necessary for a
medieval reader to interpret the otherworld in metaphorical terms in order to perceive allegorical meaning in visionary journeys. As the bestiary tradition demonstrates, a literal phenomenon could carry metaphorical meaning because of its very nature. While the descriptions of animals may seem fanciful to us today, the meaning perceived in animal behavior and anatomy reveals a belief that, just as all things are written for our instruction, so all things are made for our instruction. Theories of cosmology similarly reflect the belief that the structure of the universe mirrors the nature of God. This analogical habit of mind could likewise govern the interpretation of visions in which an otherworld is described in the most concrete terms. One such tangible otherworld is found in the Vision of Tundale, which was recorded in Latin prose in 1149. The vision was immensely popular, both in Latin and in the many vernaculars into which it was translated. Among the translations is an English metrical version that was composed near the end of the fourteenth century.

In a study of this English version, Leo J. Hines has raised the question of whether the vision can be read allegorically. He answers with a very qualified ‘perhaps’, for any more specific answer would, he says, require a "reconstruction" of the "understanding of a fourteenth-century English audience." He attempts a partial reconstruction by amassing details about the iconographic background of various images, such as the tree and
the arraigning demons. But such an investigation focuses our attention on each individual passage without encouraging us to see the poem as a whole. The reader of Tundale cannot help feeling that something is happening on a larger scale, that meaning is emanating from the plot of the poem. But at first that larger meaning seems elusive, for, notwithstanding Hines's efforts to identify allegorical passages, the poem lacks the more obvious accoutrements of allegory. The protagonist, for example, is a real individual rather than a personification. Tundale represents no abstraction. He is not, to borrow a phrase from Erich Auerbach, an "attribute, virtue, capacity, power, or historical institution." He is not reason or will or humanum genus. Nor are the other characters in the poem personifications. The setting, too, is real. The otherworld in which Tundale travels is a literal one, and the path that takes Tundale through the geography of the otherworld is not described allegorically. Nor is his destination a figurative castle. The vision is a real, not a literary event, and the torments and rewards Tundale observes in the otherworld are not metaphorical.

But there is an alternative to Hines's method of attempting to isolate the allegorical level in Tundale. Erich Auerbach has traced the history of the word figura and proposed a figural reading of another vision of the otherworld, that of Dante. In Auerbach's formulation, a figural interpretation of an individual's experiences is compatible with the historicity of
that individual. In fact, the allegorical significance of a
figura is actually rooted in the historicity of the individual.
Such an approach assigns to each life a "place in the
providential history of the world" that gives that life meaning
but nevertheless preserves the particularity of the individual
(Auerbach 70). In Auerbach's view, "the literal meaning or
historical reality of a figure stands in no contradiction to its
profonder meaning, but precisely "figures" it; the historical
reality is not annulled, but confirmed and fulfilled by the
deeper meaning" (Auerbach 73). Thus, Auerbach argues, in the
Commedia, Dante
does not destroy or weaken the earthly nature of his
characters, but captures the fullest intensity of their
individual earthly-historical being and identifies it
with the ultimate state of things. (Auerbach 71)

Or, in the words of Peter Dronke, figural allegory
allow[s] for the simultaneous presentation of vividly
individual creations and hidden meanings—meanings that
do not conflict with the perception of individuality
but are consubstantial with it.6

Figural allegory, then, allows for a character like Tundale,
who is realistic and historical, yet whose highly individual
experiences are subsumed into the allegorical. If Tundale is
analysed in the same way that Auerbach and Dronke approach the
vision of Dante in his Commedia, then a pattern becomes clear.
Through Tundale's experiences we learn about God's mercy and its
relationship to God's justice. In spite of its elaborate
descriptions of torments, the poem is not about hell or damnation
but about salvation. The Vision of Tundale celebrates God’s mercy, which is repeatedly juxtaposed with the demands of justice as Tundale is repeatedly rescued from the torments of hell by his guardian angel.

Tundale is proud, irascible, envious, lecherous, gluttonous, covetous, and slothful. This list of all the seven deadly sins is the only one of its kind in the English otherworld visions, but Tundale must not be mistaken for a walking compendium of the sins man is heir to. He is quickly particularized as a rich man but a wicked one. His business practices are ruthless. Lending out nine shillings, collecting ten, he is a usurer who will never make a loan out of charity. He is also a merchant who inflates the prices of his goods. He does sell merchandise on credit, but in exchange he extorts even higher prices. This merciless and uncharitable man does not revere God or Holy Church but instead loves contention and strife. His love is misdirected to jugglers and liars and his wealth is misspent on the support of evildoers.

Pitiless himself, Tundale would be a powerful example of God’s mercy if he could be saved in spite of his damnable character. Furthermore, God’s graciousness would have to be great enough to counteract the circumstances of Tundale’s death, which are likewise damnable. Tundale’s soul is seized when he is in the midst of sinfulness. The avaricious merchant travels to the house of a customer to collect the money he is owed from the sale of three horses. The customer begs an additional day to pay
off the debt and offers him an oath as surety. But Tundale "grucchud and waxyt wroth" (1. 68). In fact, his wrath is a show, for "... Tundale was bothe quynte and whys; / He sette pe horsus to full hye prjse / For he had no pay in honde" (11. 71-73). Tundale will accept late payment, but only on the condition that he pry even more money from his hapless buyer.

Anxious to placate, the customer is very courteous and meek and convinces Tundale to stay for a meal. But, appropriately enough, at the first swallow of this ill-gotten meal, Tundale becomes sick. Believing himself about to die, he attempts to rise to return to his home but instead, apparently dead, falls to the floor.

Tundale’s plight seems like that of the drunkard in the Vision of the Monk of Eynsham. Unshriven and in a stupor, the drunkard both literally and figuratively vomits forth his soul, the culmination of a binge that began on Christmas day, no less. Believing that a person who dies in the act of sinning cannot be saved, his friends doubt that praying for him will alleviate his misery. But the drunkard, however wicked his deeds, dies in the proper spirit, calling upon the Lord and begging for the intercession of his saints. Therefore, he is given the chance to expiate his sins. His appeal at the instant of death is enough to win him the boon of punishment in purgatory, even though he deserves otherwise for his deeds. Similarly, the last words Tundale utters, before he falls to the floor, are, "A Iesu Cryst,
y aske mercy, / Y can no [beter] remedy" (11. 95-96).

Given Tundale’s character and the circumstances of his death, justice would seem to require his damnation. But because of his final words, a tension between the demands of justice and mercy is set up upon his arrival in the otherworld. In an episode that shows the influence of the tradition arising from the Visio Sancti Pauli, perhaps transmitted through the Vision of Furseus, Tundale is met and arraigned by demons. In the Vision of Furseus, Satan argues that Furseus has unjustly profited by accepting gifts from wicked persons. He charges that “This man hath not purged himself from his faults on earth, nor hath he yet received punishment. Where then is God’s justice?” But an angel replies that the demon does not know “God’s secret counsels . . . So long as repentance is hoped for, Divine Providence protects man” (Lives 249).

Similarly, the demons in Tundale accuse the ghost of having “don owre counsel most” and of having “wro3t aftur owre red” (11. 172, 174). In particular, he is accused of falseness and fickleness, of having “noresched” slander, of loving strife and lechery, of using “voutry, / Pryde, envy and covetys, / Gloten[y [and] all odur [fol]ys” (11. 190, 194-6).

The demons do seem to have a case. But as Tundale stands in that place which is as “[me]rke as ny3t,” he sees a bright star (1. 219), which resolves into a spirit who is Tundale’s guardian angel. This angel upbraids Tundale, who had never paid attention
to his counsel. Nevertheless, says the angel, "Goddus mercy schall be save, / Allpaff bu servydyst non to have" (11. 257-8).

The demons are outraged when they realize that they are not to have Tundale, who, as they had pointed out at his arraignment, belongs to their "owne fere" because he chose their "felyschyp" in life (11. 179, 185). Now they reiterate and amplify their argument, explicitly raising the issue of justice, as they say to the angel

... "Bu art not [lele] iustyce. Bu art fals and unrytwysse. Bu seydust bu schuldust reward sone Ylke mon after bat he habe done. Tundale is owrus with skyl1 and ry3t, For he habe saruyd hus day and ny3t. Full wykydy has he levyd longe. Yf we hym leyf, bu dost hus wronge" (11. 273-80; Wagner 12).

Hitherto the otherworld visions have been noteworthy for their insistence that each man should be punished according to his deserts, and the punishments have even frequently been tailored so that the punishment would be exquisitely appropriate to the offense. But when the fiends here articulate this principle, but it is abrogated by the operation of God's mercy through the instrument of the angel, who successfully leads Tundale away from the clutches of the fiends who would drag him to hell.

This theme, the triumph of mercy, continues to play a part in each stage of the poem. In Passus 11, for example, the visionary witnesses the first group of sinners and their punishment. The angel leads him into a dark place where only the
angel provides illumination (1. 312). Tundale sees a "delfull dwellyng" in a "depe dale full marke" from which a foul stench arises (11. 318, 315). The ground here is covered with red-hot coals upon which lies an enormous iron even hotter than the coals. The tormented souls are laid upon this iron, where they are made as

... molton as wax in a p[a]n.
Bei ronnen brow fyr [and] yron bope,
As [molton] wax [dope] brow a clobe.
(11. 340-2; Wagner 13).

In a common visionary motif, the disintegrated souls are somehow gathered together again, only to be subjected to the same burning and melting. The cycle is endless. 8

The angel now, as he will throughout the vision, explains to Tundale the significance of what he sees. All the sinners in this part of hell are being punished for the sin of patricide or matricide. Either the condemned souls actually committed the deed, or they assented to it, or their "cursyd red" was responsible (1. 349). Tundale himself should be suffering their torment. But he has been spared—though not through any merit of his own. Declares the angel, "... of his peyn schall pu not fele, / And yett pu hast deservyd hit welle" (11. 355-6).

Though Tundale completely escapes this torment and two of the ones which follow, he will not, as the angel warns, be left altogether unscathed and untested. However, after a short period of suffering he will be miraculously rescued from those punishments to which he is subjected. In each case his escape
will highlight the mysterious, inexplicable operation of God's mercy. Emphasized in each escape are its suddenness and inexplicability and the fact that nothing in Tundale's power can account for his good fortune. Indeed, this miraculous progress follows Tundale into heaven, where his entrances into successive gardens surrounded by gateless walls are every bit as sudden and inexplicable as his escapes from torment. Yet in neither hell nor heaven do these miraculous translocations represent flaws in the narrative or attempts to lend a dream-like quality to the vision, hypotheses which have been offered to account for these sudden moves. Always Tundale's guide will remind us that Tundale deserves a chance neither to experience purgatorial torments nor to ultimately escape these pains. The action mirrors this message.

The first of these undeserved rescues allows Tundale a quick release from the clutches of a hideous beast so enormous that nine thousand armed men might ride inside its mouth. Within this beast are tormented thousands of souls, who are driven in to their punishment by fiends wielding burning clubs. This beast is ordained to swallow

\[\ldots\, \text{couetows men}\]
\[\text{Bt in erbe maky3t hit prwod and tow3e}\]
\[\text{And neuer wenon to have ynow3e,}\]
\[\text{But eyyr coueton more and more}\]
\[(11. 484-87; Wagnrr 17).\]

The beast is so thirsty that all the waters, great and small, that ever ran east or west are not sufficient to satisfy its
thirst. Thus it is fitting that this insatiable beast swallow

\[\ldots \text{yche} \ldots \text{covetows wy3t}\]
\[\text{Dat wenon never to have,}\]
\[\text{Ne holden hom payd, nor vochensaffe.}\]
\[\text{For ay be more bat bei han free,}\]
\[\text{Bo more covetows m[el]n may hem see}\]
\[\text{(11. 496-500; Wagner 17).}\]

The angel tells the usurer that he must endure this punishment for the covetous, and after he explains its significance, the angel vanishes, leaving Tundale to go on alone. The fiends seize him, beat him, and cast him into the beast, where other fiends continue to beat him and lions and dragons, adders and snakes, tear and gnaw at him. First he burns in fire, then freezes in ice. In his anguish he torments himself, tearing with his nails at his own cheeks.

Tundale does not know how he comes out of the torments within the beast, a fact which is in keeping with the idea that one cannot account for one's own deliverance. Yet delivered he is. He finds the bright angel standing before him, and his touch gives Tundale strength and makes him whole.

The next inexplicable rescue takes place at a lake, whose waves, which make a hideous din, rise "as hye / As any mon my3t see with ee." Within this lake are huge, sinister beasts waiting to swallow souls that might tumble from a long and narrow bridge whose surface is spiked with sharp iron and steel pikes. Passage over this bridge is a torment ordained for those who rob and steal from the church. One soul is attempting the crossing, but he is burdened by a sheaf of grain that represents stolen tithes.
Tundale, the angel says, must himself cross this bridge.
And, while the man must cross burdened with the tithes that he
stole, Tundale is forced to cross while leading a wild cow, which
he must return to the angel once he reaches the other side. His
burden is an appropriate one, for the angel points out that he
had stolen his neighbor's cow. He is thus burdened by the theft
of the beast in his attempt to find his way to salvation.

Tundale seizes the cow by the horns and leads it to the
bridge; but he cannot pass further than the middle of the bridge,
where he encounters the tithe-stealer coming from the other
direction with his burden. The bridge is so narrow that the
sinners can neither pass each other nor turn back. Tundale
cannot rescue himself from his dilemma. But he can be delivered
through mercy. Suddenly the angel again stands before him,
telling him to let the cow go and be comforted, "For bu schalt no
more lede be cow" (1. 676). Tundale will no longer be burdened
by this sin.

Passus VII finds Tundale and the angel travelling dark paths
through a wilderness. They arrive at a house, larger than any
mountain, that is constructed like an oven. From its mouth burst
fire and stinking "lye" within which burn the condemned souls (1.
700). Tundale hopes that God's grace will deliver him from this
punishment, and the angel reassures him that, while he must enter
this house, he will not be "schend" by the lye (1. 714). But at
first this seems to be a small boon, for, though he is indeed
left unburned by the lye, he must experience other punishments. Tundale sees in the middle of the fire "many a fawle bocchere" wielding (1. 716) knives and hooks and axes, with which they hack souls into bits, which reassemble themselves so that the punishment can begin anew. In a marvelous bit of understatement, the poet observes that "bis bo3t Tundale a full grette peyn" (1. 730). This pain, the angel warns him, he must endure. The fiends surround him and with their instruments they cut him to pieces. In spite of the pain, he does not die, for he is immediately made whole again but only to suffer further.

But God's mercy must be illustrated one more time before Tundale perceives the significance of this sequence of events. Tundale comes out of this place of torment without being able to explain how his escape came about. He somehow finds himself sitting in a dark place called the "[schadowe] of deđe" (1. 782), where a turning point in his spiritual development takes place. He began the poem as a sinner, but his experiences have brought to him the fear of damnation. Yet up to this point he has not understood the significance of his repeated escapes. Even though he sees his guardian angel standing before him, his sight is "dym"—and we feel that this is a spiritual dimness more than a physical one. He complains to the angel that he has seen "no [token]yng" of the truth of "be word bat wryton was / bat Goddys mercy schuld passe all byng" (11. 788, 786-7). The angel's reply raises once again the tension between mercy and justice. There
is no one on earth who deserves salvation, "[b]e he of synne neuer so clene, / No3t a chyld . . . / Dat was boron and deed [bis] day" (11. 822-24). The visionary has thus been the witness to and the recipient of more mercy than he realized:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dat word d[esseyues] mony a mon.} \\
\text{Alpauff God be full of mercy,} \\
\text{Ry3twessnes bewowyb [go] Perby.} \\
\text{But he foryevyb more wykkydnes,} \\
\text{Denne he [veng]eb [brow] ry3twesnes.} \\
\text{Bo peynus bat bu haddus wer but ly3t.} \\
\text{Grettur pu schuldyst have bolud with ry3t.}
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 790-796; Wagner 25).

At last Tundale begins to understand. He falls to his knees and thanks God that "he schapped so wele" (1. 798). But, though Tundale now recognizes the extent of God's mercy, he still must learn of the relationship between mercy and justice. Justice demands that sins be punished; mercy permits that the punishment take the form of purgation, not eternal damnation. Tundale was not consumed by the lye, but neither did he escape unscathed. The angel asks Tundale to consider why any man would believe that God would immediately forgive all his sins without requiring him to undergo penance. If sinners had nothing to fear at all, then a man would never do well. Therefore

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots \text{ pei bat ar synfull kyd} \\
\text{And no penans in body dyd,} \\
\text{God takyb on hem no venians,} \\
\text{Yf pei hadon [every] repentans.} \\
\text{But yette pe soule som peyn schalt have} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 805-10; Wagner 25).

God is not indifferent to justice.

To guard Tundale from the mistaken belief that mercy is the absence of justice, the angel subjects Tundale to two further
torments, from both of which he will, according to pattern, be suddenly rescued. For the last one, he is led by the angel down a dark path that seems endless. They follow it until they reach a "depe gyll" which is filled with smithies within which are tormented men who sinned through the products of the blacksmith's art.

"Lo yond," quod be angyll, "[brow] is gyn HaPe [gart] mony a mon do syn. Wherfor with hym aftur bare dede, Þe ðei schult be peynod in þis stede" (ll. 1017-20; Wagner 31).

As the angel informs him, Tundale deserves to be tormented in this place. Tundale is carried by fiends into a smithy, where he is tossed into the midst of the fire, which is stirred with great bellows as if he is to be melted like new iron. He suffers this pain in the company of thousands of others, who, when molten, are cast onto an anvil and smitten with hammers as if they were being tempered like iron and steel.

After Tundale is delivered from this deserved torment, the angel explains the significance of what he has endured:

"Tundale," he seyd, "now may þu see Werof þi synnus seruyd þe. Þe [fell] to have a greater angwys For þi delytes and þi folys, Þese þat þu art delyuered froo Wer ordeynyd þe peyn for to doo, For why þat same company Folyddyn þe in [þi] folys" (ll. 1081-88; Wagner 32).

The guilty Tundale is left speechless. He "stod [stille]" and
cowbe no3t say, / For his wytte was ner away" (11. 1089-90). But the angel comforts the stunned sinner, reminding him again that he has much to be grateful for. No matter how great the torments encountered thus far, there are worse—but Tundale will escape them. Furthermore, though Tundale, as his journey continues, will see souls who have been cast into hell to suffer endless pain for their misdeeds, he will also see others who "so3ton Goddys mercy" and who will therefore pass that pain unscathed (1. 1103).

Tundale's journey through the realms of purgatory and hell culminates with a scene that was adumbrated by the arraignment in which the theme of justice versus mercy was first broached. In a dark place Tundale suddenly is deserted by his guardian angel. Inexorably, it seems, Tundale's abandoned soul flits toward hell. The wretched Tundale again tears at his cheeks and laments the fact that he does not know what the best counsel would be.

Hearing his cries, fiends carrying instruments of torture approach him and greet him as if he were a soul newly arrived in hell. They mouth the message of the angel--but only part of it:
"For bi wykkydnes and bi foly / In fyr to brenne art þu worby" (11. 1185-86). They assure Tundale that

De þarre not þynke, on no wysse,
Too be deleyuered of þis angwysse
In [merke]nes schalt þu euen bee,
For ly3tnes schalt þu neuer see.
Þu [par] trust not helpe to have,
For noo mercy schall þe save
(11. 1195-1200; Wagner 34).
But the fiends are to be foiled again. Rather undramatically, the angel simply comes onto the scene, and the fiends immediately flee. The fact that Tundale's rescue should be effected so quietly is itself a powerful illustration of the magnitude of God's mercy. It requires no dramatic, epic battle for God's agent to rout the pack of demons.

The late middle ages saw a resurgence of interest in otherworld visions, but this interest is sometimes described as decadent, as if the final recrudescence of a genre in decay. Thus the elaborate descriptions of torments found in visions like that of Tundale have been viewed both as morbid and as the very raison d'être of such accounts. But the torments in the Vision of Tundale must be examined within the context of a pattern of repeated and undeserved escapes. Such an examination allows them to take their rightful place within a 'figural allegory' of salvation. For, in fact, the elaborate torments in the English metrical version of Tundale are described not to satisfy some craving for details about hell but so that the point can be made that God's mercy is so great that even those who deserve such horrific punishments can be saved. God's mercy must be bountiful indeed if a soul as culpable as Tundale's is allowed to purge itself. As Tundale rejoices in the conclusion of the poem,

\begin{verbatim}
Lord ... lovyd mot by bee.
For by marcy and bi gudnes
Passus [here] all [my] wykkydnes,
Passe hyt be m[ykyl] and grevys soore,
By grace and bi mercy is meche more
(11. 2310-2314; Wagner 55).
\end{verbatim}
Paradoxically, and therefore all the more appropriately, the very magnitude of the torments described in Tundale has become a measure of God's mercy.

A figural approach to events, people, animals, and objects permitted—even encouraged—the Tundale visionary to preserve a concrete protagonist with his own history because, in fact, a spiritual meaning was incarnate in that history. But there were other forces besides an analogical view of the world that encouraged the preservation of the individuality or historicity of characters in visions. Visions were sometimes utilized for political criticism: in an effort to legitimize a new regime, a "visionary" might report having seen the king's predecessor in hell. The fact that the visions were used as vehicles for social criticism also helped bring, if not individuality, at least a certain amount of concreteness as sinners were differentiated at least into groups by social class or profession. The increasing elaboration of the principle of appropriate punishment also led to individual sketches. At first punishment was appropriate in the sense that it was directed at the offending body part. A vain woman, for example, might be hung up by the hair of which she had been so proud. But appropriate punishment also came to mean that an individual would be condemned to repeatedly enact his crime, but with great pain. For example, the Vision of Thurkill, said to have occurred in 1206, describes the punishment in hell of a proud man, a churchman, a knight, a chief justice,
two adulterers, two backbiters, a church-robber, a brutal herdsman, a dishonest tradesman, and a knavish miller. Each is punished by being forced to re-enact his crime. The justice, for instance, takes bribes from both sides in a court case—but the coins burn his hands. The miller steals flour—but he smothers and burns in it. Vivid portraits are created both of typical sinners in action and of the attendant punishments. Then, too, the crystallization of the idea of purgatory in the twelfth century also encouraged writers of visions to create portraits of individuals. Authors began to use visions to convey the message that the living could intervene on behalf of the dead. Individuals are singled out to be described—and they are not monsters but souls whose stay in purgatory can, we are reminded, be shortened by our prayers, deeds, or alms. Sometimes these souls are identified with specific individuals that the visionary knew in life. The concreteness already permitted by figuralism was further encouraged by these developments.

Also fostering the creation of concrete individuals was the growth in the twelfth century of interest in the psychology of the sinner. Confessional manuals, which had supplied the clergy with lists of penances to be assigned for particular sins, increasingly guided confessors in probing the minds of the penitent. As we have seen in the Vision of Tundale, simultaneously with this development some visions shifted away from depicting sinners who passively endure their assigned
torments in purgatory. We begin to see portraits of penitents who develop spiritually as they progress toward Paradise and Heaven. The late-twelfth century British vision, translated from Latin into English in the fifteenth century as *The Vision of the Monk of Eynsham*, illustrates this new interest in the mind of the sinner through the portraits and confessions of individual sinners in the midst of the dynamic process of changing.¹⁰

Mary Flowers Braswell, in *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages*, has studied the impact of the *Omnis utriusque sexus* decree of the Fourth Lateran Council, which in 1215 mandated annual confession.¹¹ The decree generated a profusion of "how to" manuals designed to guide the clergy as they led the laity through confession. These manuals emphasized the need for genuine contrition rather than the simple fulfillment of assigned penitential acts. The confessor, in order to lead the sinner to this contrition, needed to encourage him to be introspective, to thoroughly examine his motives and to evaluate the nature of his sins. Braswell contends that such manuals, with their emphasis on the interior of the individual sinner, influenced literary characterization, leading authors to create self-aware, introspective characters. She explores in particular the occurrence of "confession" or parodies of "confession" in the fourteenth-century Ricardian poets Langland, Gower, Chaucer and the Gawain-poet.
Braswell presents a compelling argument for the influence of the confession manuals on literary characterization, but it is worth extending her argument slightly backwards in time. As Leonard E. Boyle points out in "The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology," few or none of the decrees of the council were complete innovations. Boyle writes that "[b]y and large the package of constitutions . . . simply summed up, on the one hand, some local practices which had proven themselves in various parts of Europe and, on the other, some of the theological and legal advances of the renaissance of the twelfth century." The Fourth Lateran Council "put[ted] its stamp on a century or so of innovation and practice" (Boyle 31).

Just as the decree itself was not completely an innovation, so too the resulting "literature of pastoral care" (Boyle 31) was not newly developed in response to the decree. Boyle points out that the movement towards providing the clergy with manuals of pastoral care in fact began before 1215 (Boyle 31). The various kinds of manuals that he discusses were not, he says, created only after the Fourth Lateran Council. Though examples were fewer in number, most types of manuals existed or developed between the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils, i.e., between 1179 and 1215 (Boyle 33). Thus, though the Fourth Lateran Council led to an explosion in the number of works devoted to pastoral care, several manuals of confession were in fact already available fifteen or twenty years before the Fourth Lateran Council met and
promulgated the Omnis utriusque sexus decree (Boyle 33).

The Omnis Utriusque Sexus decree of 1215 therefore may be described as ratifying and intensifying trends that were already present, trends that were in existence when The Vision of the Monk of Eynsham was composed in or shortly after the year 1196. Certainly the author of this vision shows the familiarity with the theory and practice of confession and the intense interest in the interior of the sinner that Braswell describes in works written after 1215. The act of confession can in fact be said to be the second main organizing principle of the vision. The journey is of course the first, but within the frame of the journey the vision is organized into a series of confessions. Repeatedly the visionary is the auditor of the accounts of self-aware sinners, while his descriptions of the torments seem to take on an almost perfunctory quality. Indeed, the descriptions of torments sometimes serve only to remind the reader of the importance of the individual’s state of spiritual development. When the visionary does recount the collective punishment of groups of sinners, he observes that different sinners experience the same torment yet some benefit sooner, becoming purified, progressing spiritually and therefore moving to the next stage of purgatory, each at his own individual rate.

The emphasis on the interior life of the sinners becomes apparent the moment the visionary arrives in Purgatory. He reports that he has been given the ability to see into the souls
of the sinners. He is privy to the intensity of the sinners' mental suffering and the depth of their contrition:

Nowther these thyngys ware unto my syghte as naturaly a man seyth with bodely ys that ys to saye the ytwarde peynys that a man sofryth yn bodye, but also what they felte ynwardly good or euylle and with what heuynesse or wyth what gladnes they were smyte wythinforthe in her sowllys alle was to me that tyme playne and opyn. (Arber 42-43)

[Neque enim, ut carnalium oculorum natura consuevit, eorum superficiem tantummodo qui videbantur perstringebat obtuitus, se que in occultis bona vel mala sentiebant qui afficiebant letis aut tristibus, omnia intuenti pervia fuerunt atque conspicua. (AB 260)]

The visionary in fact gains insight into the mental states of the sinners in three ways: through the kind of visionary empathy described above, through listening to "confessions" made to others, and through "confessions" made directly in response to his own questions. Of the three, however, the last two are the most important. Out of the many encounters with sinners in the vision, three will, I hope, suffice to illustrate the influence of the importance of the act of confession to the characterization of sinners in The Vision of the Monk of Eynsham.

The first self-aware sinner encountered in the vision is a lecherous woman being led to hell by demons. Her confession is one of the shorter ones, but it sets the pattern for the remainder of the vision. With his insight, the visionary recognizes both the exterior signs of sin and the interior signs of contrition. The woman is "keuerd wyth the vesture of schame and vellonye", but "wyth yn sche is byttyn wyth the conscyens of
shameful dedys done wyckedly" (Arber 43). Even before the woman speaks, the visionary perceives that this self-aware woman "felte thanne in her fulfylled" the passage in Job 21: 13 that promises that "Ducunt in bonis dies suos et in puncto ad inferna descendunt"—those who spend their days in pleasure will suddenly descend to hell (Arber 43).

St. Margaret arrives, descending, like Tundale's guardian angel, in a blaze of light, and this self-aware sinner appeals to her for mercy. She is appropriately contrite. She acknowledges that she is "ryghtfully put to peynys and tormente" and confesses the sin of lechery, declaring that "I knowlege and verely knowlege that yn al my lyfe y dyspyseyd the commawndementys of god and gaue my body to al onclene leuyng" (Arber 44; AB 260-61: ob scelera propria meritis iustè suppliciis addicte. Confiteor, et vere confiteor, guia in omni vita mea mandata Dei contempsi corpusque meum omnium pollutionum labe fedavi . . .).

Furthermore, she has neither "louyd affectualy" God and his saints nor, with the exception of St. Margaret, has she done "any worshippe to hem yn dede" (Eynsham 44; AB 261: vel affectu dilexi vel facto venerata sum). She is also aware that she has not, prior to death, made a valid confession. Nor has she done sufficient penance:

... I beleuyd ... that by the remedy of confession al my synnys hade be weshte awey. But alas for sorowe my confession was not sufficient to weshte and do awey so gret and so mony foule synnys and olde by cause y lackyd before the feruor of contricion and dyd not for my synnys euynworthy penans. (Arber 44)
But her devotion to St. Margaret has won her a chance to make a truly contrite confession, and that in turn moves St. Margaret to intercede on her behalf. She will not go to hell after all. Just as she won a second chance to confess, so has she won a second chance to do her penance, albeit in purgatory.

The first sinner who confesses to the visionary himself is the goldsmith briefly referred to above in the discussion of the Vision of Tundale. His confession well illustrates the insistence of the confession manuals that the sinner be aware that the circumstances of a sin determine its gravity. For example, the sinner acknowledges and keenly regrets the fact that he sinned on the holy day of Christmas. The goldsmith, who had been known by the visionary in life, had died from "for over mekylle drynkyng wyne" (Arber 46; AB 263: nimia vini potatione ingurgitatus vitam ebrietate vendiderit . . .). Because the goldsmith had continued in deadly sin to the very instant of his death, the visionary had suspected that he fell into the class of people for whom no one should pray. The goldsmith, reports the visionary, had spent his last three days alive continuously drunk. Though the visionary had thus been doubtful about whether or not to bother praying for the goldsmith, thinking that his prayer would probably be wasted effort, he has prayed for him,
though slowly and doubtfully. Despite his doubts, and somewhat to his surprise, the visionary does encounter the goldsmith in the second place of pains, "saying hym afore mony other that y behylde. in goode hope and lyghtly sofryng hys peynys." (Arber 47; AB 263; *in hoc loco tormentorem quem postremo depinxi hunc michi cominus vicinum aspexi. Quem confestim agnostens, et pre multis allis quos videram spe bona tormenta tolerare leviusque afflictum cernens. opido miratus sum*). The visionary asks the goldsmith how he managed to pass the pains of the first place of torment. This question leads to the beginning of the goldsmith's confession, in which he creates himself as a character by spinning a mini-autobiography filled with details of time and place and person and cause. He acknowledges that the world must think him damned, but the intercession of the visionary's guide, St. Nicholas, has preserved him. The visionary then asks him to explain how he escaped eternal damnation, and the goldsmith's answer takes up a full chapter.

The goldsmith acknowledges that he indeed was a drunkard to the very end, but he had been distressed by his sinfulness and had tried to reform. He had never left off his devotion to St. Nicholas, and, no matter how much he drank in the evening, he would appear at the church by matins, sometimes even before the parish priest. The goldsmith also paid to keep a lamp burning in St. Nicholas's chapel and was responsible for the purchase of other ornaments. Finally, he had been careful to fully confess
himself to the parish priest twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter, and he added to the days of fasting ordained by the priest. Nevertheless, it becomes plain, just as in the Vision of Tundale, that no man, even with the best of intentions, can save himself. The goldsmith confesses that he only partly fulfills the terms of penance laid down by the parish priest.

Furthermore, his desire to drink and the bad company he kept caused him to return again to his sin. Thus on Christmas of all days, after keeping a fast, confessing, and receiving communion, he is drawn to drink.

Sothely on crystynmas daye after that y had rescuyyd the good lorde that y can not remembre withowte grete horror and heuynes. y was drawyn of an euyl custome as y seyd afor by overmoche drynkyng the same daye in to dronkynnesse ageyne to the grete injurye and range of seche a lorde whome y had rescuyyd a lyteyll before in to my sowle. And on the morow y wente to chyche as y usid to do fore waylyng the fowle vice the whiche y dyde the daye before purposyng to be ware of hyt and to do no more / but hit was as voyde and vayne. For by the occasion that y had of drinkyng and the deuylys sterlyng me therto / y was destitute and lost the stabulnes of vertu and the mighty purpos of soburnes that y had conceuyd; and so y fulfylde not my purpose in dede. but fowle as y dyd yysterdaye so y dyd to daye and by delectacion of ouer mekyl drynkyng fyl downe agayne to dronkinnes. (Arber 50)

[De more siquidem, ut prelibavi, Natalis Domini die, quæ vicinior exitus me de corpore discrimum antecesserat, cum essem vivifica mense celestis participatione refectus, quod meminisse sine ingenti horrore non valeo, nimia potatione in ebrietem traductus sum sine inuria et dolenda inhoratione tanti hospitis quem mentis habitaculo susceperam. In crastino ad ecleconom ut moris michi fuit ante lucem processi, quod pridie feceram lugens et damnnans ac de cetero damnnare proponens. At id frustra. Merito enim tanti excessus quem in tam sacra die post tanti perceptionem sacramenti negligenter admiseram, impetur
in me quod in populo quodam hostibus suis resistere non valenti rex ipsorum evenisse deflet. Sic, sic nimirum, virile sobrietas propositum quod mente conceperam, occasione potandi ingesta, instigante adversario et virtutis instancia destitutis, in facto non edidi, sed turpiter sicut heri, sic et hodie vitio blandiente succubui. (AB 266)

This process is repeated yet another day, the third one after Christmas. The goldsmith stays out drinking and returns home to sleep fully clothed and shod. Suddenly he awakes and thinks that the bells have rung for matins. His wife tells him that this is not the case and he lies down again: "Trewly thanne fyrst y toke a slepe and anone after y toke my dethe (Arber 50-51; AB 267: In momento enim post hec, dormitio prius somni et confestim etiam mortis me pervasit).

While the goldsmith sleeps, he is strangled by a certain devil, who fears that if the goldsmith lives longer he will be able to amend his ways through the mercy of his patron saint Nicholas. This devil believes, as did the goldsmith's friends, that if the goldsmith dies "in seche a perylle whytowte any contradiccion" he will be damned (Arber 51). But the goldsmith has one precious moment of awareness in which to call on his patron saint:

Trewly y felte him like an owle [toad in Latin] goo in to my mouthe the whiche oftyn tymes ful eyyll y opnyd to drynke and so thorowe my throte slyly came downe to my harte. And anone y knewe that hit was the deuil. Notwithstandyng y was yet myndfull of the mercijs of god and also of myne owne wrecyndnes and with stabulle purpose vowyd in my mynde that y wold purely and holy confesse me of alle my synnych. and vttwardly for euer forsake the wyse of dronkennes And to this y called as inwardly as y kowde. on sent Nicholas to be my borowe.
Sitting upon the heart of the goldsmith, the demon seizes it and then, reports the goldsmith, draws out of the goldsmith's mouth a "horrable voment of venyne and caste hit al abrode and so in the space of a twynbelyng of an ye he expellyd and caste me oute of my bodye" (Arber 51). The idea that the soul departs the body through the mouth is a commonplace, but the author has made it peculiarly appropriate here. The demon enters through the mouth—the route that led to the goldsmith's downfall—and the sinner vomits forth his soul.

Certainly the goldsmith's case seems desperate. Indeed, like the lecherous woman, the goldsmith acknowledges that damnation would be just. But, also as in the case of the lecherous woman, mercy is possible: "as ryghtwesly as y was to be dampde and cruelly to be ponyshte as mekely and as mercyfully he [St. Nicholas] hath noryshte and Kept me" (Arber 50). This is the message of the excursus, in which the topic of the punishments in hell is set aside and the tour of purgatory
becomes secondary to making this point.

This sinner is not saved in spite of the fact that he was in an unshriven state. His devotion to St. Nicholas did not excuse him from the need for contrition or penance. Instead, his devotion wins him the time—that "space of a moment"—in which to put his spiritual house in order. And having done so, he, like the woman, is granted the boon of purgatory, the opportunity to fulfill the penance that he should have fulfilled in life.

The lecherous woman is self-aware. The goldsmith also is introspective and his more detailed confession demonstrates his awareness that degree of guilt is determined by the circumstances of person, place, time, manner, and cause. By addressing these circumstances he creates himself as a character. These characteristics are among those identified by Braswell in literature influenced by the ideas of the confession manuals. Yet another characteristic of sinners in such literature, according to Braswell, is the fact that the sinners play active roles. Sinners have an effect on society, an ability to set events in motion. Their behavior provides an occasion for the creation of plot. I will describe one last confession, that of a prior, to illustrate this characteristic of the sinner.

Through his confession, the prior reveals his awareness both of self and of the fact that one circumstance that affects gravity of a sin is its repercussions in the lives of others. In his case, the aftershocks caused by his sin still continue, and
his penance is therefore not set for all time but is increased by
the misbehavior of the still-living. The prior must make good
his own sins, but he is also responsible for the sins committed
by those whose training had been in his negligent hands.

Like the lecherous woman and the goldsmith, this prior,
keenly self-aware, knows and admits his motives for failing to
do his duty. He confesses, "Trewlye the fauyr of pepulle and the
love of worschippe that y had me prinspaly noythe (Arber 66):

\[\text{The couetyse ambycyon that } y \text{ hadde to kepe my}
worschippe, and the fere that } y \text{ hadde to leue hit, so}
blynyd the sygte of my soule that } y \text{ lowsyd the brydyl}
of correccyon to the willys of my sogetys and sofryd}
hem to doo and folowe her desyrys and lustys as my yes
had be closydy. leste haply yef } y \text{ had correcte hem and}
refraynde hem from her lyghtnees they wulle hawe be to
me as enemies to labure and to have me out of my
worschippe and prelacyon that } y \text{ was in. (Arber 66)}\]

[\text{Amor vero excellentie et honoris ac favoris humani,}
tum sui ipsius vitio, tum aliorum occasione malorum,}
que illius michi causa merito imputantur, principaliter
nocuit, et heu dolori meo sicut modum sic et terminum,
ni Deus misereatur, funditus ademit. Cupido enim
retinendi honoris avida et amittendi timida ita}
exceceaverat oculos cordis mei ut discipline habenas
subjectorum voluntati omnino laxarem, permittens eos
eos velud clausis oculis voluptatibus suis et desiderlis,
ne forte illos acquirerem prelationis mee insidiatores,
si suis levitatibus meum experientur rigorem
oppositum. (AB 280)\]

Not only did the prior fail to act, but he belittled the efforts
of the good religious men who with zeal and devotion wished to
keep the order. Instead of helping and cherishing these
religious, the prior would join with their enemies and would
backbite. He would, he confesses, "speke euyl of hem and
This negligence caused by the prior’s “cruel lightnes” and his desire to retain his position produces results that are devastating not only to the prior’s moral status but to that of his underlings. Those in his care feel free to “pleye lewde gamys and to speke and clathyr tryfullys iapys and other lewnesse and also to goo and wandyr amonige secler folkys and ydeines” (Arber 67). Even though the prior did not approve of such wicked deeds, he did permit them. And in fact his former subjects are still committing such deeds—and some have gone on to commit worse. Therefore the prior is still suffering torments in the first place of punishment, and he feels that he has no hope of moving on to the next stage. His pains are continually augmented:

as ofte as they the whyche y lefte alyue dampnably offendyd. anone the deuyls ranne to me with grete scornes and vpbraydys and euermore and more with newe peynys encresyng my tormentys. (Arber 67)

[Quoties enim dampnabile a liquid perpetrarunt quos superstites post me reliqui, accurrunt demones inde michi cum exprobratione nimia insultantes, penas priores novis et atrocioribus semper accumulantes. (AB 281)]

Indeed, he reports that his first day in purgatory was the easiest one he had. He is also tormented by the thought of what sins his subjects might be committing at the moment. In particular, he worries that he will soon have to face the punishment for sodomy, a fairly nasty torment. The prior has set in motion a chain of events whose end he cannot foresee.
The *Vision of the Monk of Eynsham* is not only a journey through the terrors of purgatory but an examination of the mind of the sinner. Proceeding largely through confession, it is a vision that simultaneously admonishes the reader to fear the torments of purgatory and teaches him the importance of valid confession. Even when the visionary is describing the various torments—the kind of material we expect to find in journeys to the otherworld—he shifts his treatment toward the interior of the sinner. The corporeal punishments described do place this vision firmly within the admonitory tradition of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*. The vision at points does contain almost formulaic recitations of familiar tortures. But also depicted in the vision is another type of punishment, a noncorporeal one, in which there is an exquisite correspondence between the mind of a soul and the punishment assigned to it. In fact, a soul's sinful preoccupation becomes the instrument of its own torment.

Witness the fate of a clerk, a doctor of law, who made an incomplete confession because he was "aschamed" to confess the sin of sodomy. His pride follows him to purgatory to torment him. He must re-enact his sin, a painful enough sentence, but what distresses him the most is the public nature of his punishment, "the unhappy presentacion of [his] fowle and vnclene leyung." Again he is "asshamed," now because he, who had appeared so honorable, is revealed to be foul and abominable. To him, this unmasking is the worst pain he must suffer. He is
punished by his own pride.

The attempt to portray a correspondence between sin and punishment is, of course, not original to the monk's vision. As earlier chapters have demonstrated, long before the twelfth century like sinners had been grouped with like, and different, often peculiarly appropriate punishments had been assigned to these various groupings. Likewise not novel is the motif of perpetual, painful re-enactment of a sins or of torments that can take a psychological form. What is distinctive here is the extent of the emphasis on the psychology of sinning that permits the punishments to assault the mind as well as the body. This is in keeping with the psychological bent of the vision as a whole. The sinners do not arrive in a certain state of mind, serve a set period of purgatory, and graduate to bliss in the same state of mind in which they arrived. The souls progress spiritually through a sequence of punishments. Some sinners progress quickly through the process of purgation; others are slower to benefit. Like the Vision of Tundale, the Vision of the Monk of Eynsham lacks the obvious trappings of allegory and preserves, even accentuates the individuality of its characters. Nevertheless, this portrayal of souls as sinners struggling on a journey toward salvation is one of the ways in which the narrative is analogous to the struggle of the living, including the visionary himself, on the earthly journey toward salvation. Sinners must endure the otherworldly equivalents of the contrition and penance that they
should have experienced on earth. Thus the author of the Vision of Eynsham, even without making use of personifications, is able to turn his putative tour of the otherworld into an examination of the psychology of sinning.
CHAPTER VIII
PROLEGOMENON TO PIERS PLOWMAN

This study has focused on a number of characteristics that developed in the medieval Latin visions of the otherworld that were read in England either in Latin or in English translations. I would like to conclude by suggesting that the characteristics of apocryphal apocalypses and their literary descendants, these medieval accounts of visionary journeys to the otherworld, may help account for certain peculiarities of the Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman. The poem has been treated as an embodiment of apocalyptic ideas by several scholars, most notably by Morton W. Bloomfield in Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse, but no one has given developed consideration to the possibility that Piers should be placed within the context of apocalypse as a genre or a literary tradition. Bloomfield, for example, refuses to consider Piers as an apocalypse because he questions whether there is any such "genre." Yet any argument over whether the visions should be called a "literary tradition" or a "genre" would not change the fact that there was a set of texts, recognized as such, that shared a concatenation of content and conventions. The fact that one can sometimes find one writer explicitly imitating another indicates that there was an
awareness on the part of the writer that he was creating something within a genre or a literary tradition. Bloomfield has a second reason for rejecting the possibility, except in the most general sense, that the shape or structure of apocalyptic texts may be helpful in elucidating the structure of Piers. He cites as "fundamental differences" the presence in Piers of multiple guides, of personification, and of a quest. We have seen, however, that the pseudo-apocalypse of the Shepherd of Hermas relies on several mediators, one of whom is a woman who personifies the church; and the presence of allegorical figures is one characteristic mentioned by Bernard McGinn in his description of the apocalyptic in Visions of the End. Moreover, McGinn points out that a vision of a journey, generally to heaven, is one of the most frequent forms taken by apocalypses and that such a visionary journey usually disturbs and perplexes the traveler.

In addition to the similarities between apocalypse, pseudo-apocalypse, and Piers Plowman, such medieval visions as those of Thurkill, Tundale, and the Monk of Eynsham likewise display many of the features found in Piers Plowman. They are episodic. They present sequences of visions and colloquies. They mold together the trance, the colloquy, and the quest or journey. A narrator, in a trance, is guided on a journey, and a dialogue ensues between guide and visionary. The visionary's role seems to shift from foreground to background as the guide or, in some cases, the
guides sometimes take over the visions in order to explicate the scene. Yet at other times the narratives focus on the interior of the visionary or on the psychology of the souls he encounters in the otherworld. The episodic nature of the apocalypses and visions; the utilisation of vision, colloquy, and quest; the narrative inconsistencies created by a narrator who fades in and out of the foreground; the apparently digressive sermons and set-pieces such as infernal pageants—such features suggest that it would be worthwhile to place Piers Plowman, with what Bloomfield calls its "peculiar shifting organization," within the tradition of the apocalypse and of its descendant, the visionary journey.

Certainly the otherworld journey is a more compelling model for Piers Plowman than the allegorical dream narrative which Bloomfield includes among the six genres that influenced the structure of Piers Plowman (Bloomfield 34). As Derek Pearsall points out in his note to the opening lines of the C-text, which set the vision in "a somur sesoun whan softe was 3e sonne" (1. 1), the "use of the seasonal setting here is one of Langland's few allusions to fashionable poetic convention." A comparison with the Roman de la Rose shows how little Piers Plowman has in common with such narratives.

Constance Hieatt points to the thirteenth-century Roman de la Rose as "a sort of prototype" of the medieval dream vision. The Roman, she declares, "contains almost all the elements characteristic of this school of poetry. It was also the best
known and most influential example, serving as a model to several
generations of court poets, including Geoffrey Chaucer. Hieatt
lists the elements of the poem that become characteristic
features of the medieval dream vision (Hieatt 15-18). The Roman
begins with a discussion of dreams and makes reference to
Macrobius’s commentary on the dream of Scipio. The poet tells us
that what follows took place in a dream. The poet, who is young,
a quality appropriate for a lover, awakes on a beautiful May
morning, described in particular with attention to birds and
flowers, which have both decorative and symbolic value. The
poet follows a clear stream (a well will figure later in the
narrative) to a walled garden whose outer wall is decorated with
pictures representing the types not permitted in the garden, such
as Old Age or Poverty. Those found within the garden are
themselves personifications and include the God of Love, who is
depicted as a feudal lord (in other allegories the God of Love is
"often worshipped with a sort of parody of Christian ritual"
[Hieatt 17] is described). The lover is shot through the eye by
the God of Love, swears allegiance to him, and is ordered to
compose poems in honor of his lady. Finally, the lover attempts
to reach the symbolic rose, but his efforts result in the
imprisonment of Fair-Welcome in a tower.

Aside from its setting in a "somur sesoun," Piers seems to
have few similarities with the Roman. There is, for example, no
elaborate description of birds and flowers. Nor does the action
take place in a walled garden. Such similarities—for example, the presence of personifications and allegorical buildings—do not require positing that Piers is directly indebted to the genre of the allegorical dream vision. If Bogdanos is correct, then both poems may share a common ancestor.

Furthermore, in addition to the negative evidence of what the poem lacks, there is positive evidence that suggests that Langland was familiar with the tradition. Dante indicates his awareness of the tradition by protesting to his guide that he is no Paul. Langland, too, includes language that shows knowledge of Paul the visionary. He quotes the passage from 2 Corinthians—

_Audivi archana verba, que non licet homini loqui_ (Pearsall C.XX.433)—in a context which mirrors the one in which the words were traditionally placed: Paul was believed to have learned the secrets of hell during his rapture and the _Visio Sancti Pauli_ in its many redactions and translations always includes an account of Paul's journey to hell. In Will's vision, too, the line is associated with a glimpse of the afterlife. In both the B- and the C-text the Harrowing of Hell is taking place and Christ is speaking. In the B-text, Christ is describing the action of his mercy and the role purgatory plays in the granting of that mercy:

... though Holy Writ wole that I be wreke of hem that diden ille—

Nullum malum impunitum &c—

Thei shul be clensed clerliche and [clene] washen of hir synnes

In my prisone Purgatorie, til _parce_ it hote.

For blood may suffre blood bothe hungry and acale,

Ac blood may noght se blood blede, but hym rewe._3
The long Latin version of the *Visio Sancti Pauli* warns of what will justly befall various classes of sinners but also illustrates Christ's mercy because, in response to the pity felt by Paul and others, He grants the tormented sinners periodic respite in commemoration of the day on which He rose from the dead. Several of the shorter Latin redactions, including those that were translated into Middle English, focus on this incident alone and turn this respite into a weekly one that was granted each Sunday. Thus the issue of justice versus mercy, so central to *Piers Plowman*, was present at an early stage in the otherworld visions.

In addition to signalling his awareness of the Pauline visionary tradition, the nature of the narrator's experience frequently corresponds not to the kind of dreams found in a writer such as Geoffrey Chaucer, who was clearly indebted to the allegorical dream vision, but rather to raptures, sudden trances that a man falls into during waking hours. In the C-text, the seventh vision, which marks the end of dobet and the beginning of dobest, begins in Passus XXI. Will awakes from the sixth vision and writes down what he has "ydremed" (Pearsall C.XXI.1). He then prepares to attend mass and confession, dressing himself "derely," an action which Pearsall, following Robertson-Huppe', argues "symbolizes the change in his spiritual state. . . . He is now robed as a true wedding-guest (Matt. 22: 11), ready to enter into communion with Christ" (Pearsall 342, n. on 1. 2). While at
mass, he suddenly is rapt: "I ful eftesones aslepe and sodeynliche me mette" (Pearsall, C.XXI.5). Here the onset of the vision is unlike the conventional ones of allegorical dream visions. Instead, as in the apocalyptic tradition, the visionary falls suddenly into a state of rapture.

I would suggest then that in Piers Plowman we have a poet who was familiar with the otherworld vision. He explores in part a theme similar to those found in the otherworld visions—the relationship between justice and mercy. Perhaps more compelling, he employs the same type of organization, the same type of narrator, the same type of dialogues. He also peoples his vision with the same kinds of characters that people the later otherworld visions. There are also many other resemblances to be explored; for example, the inconclusive ending of Piers has similarities with the unfinished nature of some visions, which "conclude" with a new beginning for the visionary. A study that places Piers within the vision tradition may help to explain not only the overall structure of the poem but also the way Langland handles certain specific passages. I would like to suggest in particular that the way Langland handles the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins in Passus VI-VII of the C-Text can be compared with the way such portraits and speeches are presented in the visions.

There were two different kinds of encounters with "sins" in the early visions of the Otherworld. In one kind of encounter,
the soul of a newly dead man would confront the "spirits" of various sins, frequently seven in number. If a spirit perceived anything "belonging" to itself in the soul, then it could claim that soul. Frequently the soul had to traverse seven circles--face seven challenges--before finally escaping the clutches of the spirits. Apparently the number of deadly sins in Christian theology is ultimately based upon this tradition, though the final, i.e., Gregorian, list of sins is not identical to any surviving ancient list.

In his book The Seven Deadly Sins⁴, Morton W. Bloomfield has studied the process which led from Middle Eastern accounts of the Soul Drama or Journey to the Otherworld to the Gregorian list. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, seven chief sins are first mentioned late in the second century B.C., in the Testament of Reuben (Bloomfield 44). They take the form of the seven "spirits of deceit" that we examined as proto-personifications. Five hundred years later, Evagrius of Pontus uses four of same Greek terms—and a fifth that corresponds closely to one in the Testament—in the first list of cardinal sins drawn up by an orthodox Christian writer. Argues Bloomfield, "It is clear that in both cases, possibly five hundred years apart, we are dealing with the same tradition" (Bloomfield 45).

Two hundred years later the list of sins associated with the Soul Journey crystallized into its most influential form, the list in the Moralia of Gregory the Great (d. 604), the SIIAAGL list:
superbia, ira, invidia, avaritia, acedia, gula, and luxuria (Bloomfield 72-73). The influence of these seven sins can then be traced through homilies, into religious poetry, and finally into vernacular literature, including drama. In general, secular writers began to use the Sins at the end of the 12th century, but the 14th and 15th centuries saw the great flourishing of works dealing with the sins (Bloomfield 107). One format in which the sins appeared was the confessional formula which, Bloomfield says, was "ultimately to be used by secular writers, and [which] in the hands of Langland . . . receive[s] notable expression" (Bloomfield 118).

Yet there was another type of encounter with sins in the visions, one which took place when the visionary journeyed through hell. There the visionary would see not the sins or the spirits of deceit but groups of people representative of different sins, each group suffering a punishment for a particular sin. Curiously, though some of the deadly sins are mentioned, the descriptions of groups of representative sinners in hell rarely are organized by the seven sins. Visions of the Otherworld were being composed as late as the fifteenth century, but the Gregorian formula was rarely imposed onto them (Bloomfield 139). For this reason Bloomfield chooses to mention these visions only in passing. Instead of personifying the Seven Deadly Sins, the authors of the visions prefer to use their journeys to portray typical sinners or to criticise social
groups. Thus the visions continued their development quite independently of the SIIAAGL tradition. Meanwhile the Gregorian list of sins, cut loose from the Otherworld visions from which it was derived, was developed through many allegorical devices.

Now initially in the second type of encounter with sin, what is stressed was not the individuality of the sinners who were being punished. The sinners are frequently given grotesque features so that they seem more monstrous than human. And great attention is paid to the torments that the sinners are suffering. The sinners are damned, and the concern of the authors of these visions is to impress upon the living the need for reform in their own lives.

But as was demonstrated above in Chapter VI, several factors encouraged writers of visions to begin to particularize their sinners. The visions were utilized for political and social criticism; the principle of appropriate punishment was elaborated; the idea of purgatory was crystallized; the psychology of sinners was stressed in confessional manuals. Sinners are thus frequently not allegorical figures but representative ones. They are types and they are individuals.

A comparison of two visions, one early, another late, illustrates how the visions moved toward concreteness in the portrayal of men and women who represent sins. The first is a Middle English translation, quite a faithful one, of one of the shorter redactions of the Visio Sancti Pauli. In it the emphasis
is on the punishments, not on portraits of individual representative sinners. The second is the Vision of the Monk of Eynsham, in which many of the representative sinners are indeed individuals.

The Vernon MS contains an account, in Middle English, of St. Paul's vision of hell. This version is one of those designed to show the specialness of Sunday by recounting the legend that, because of the prayers of St. Paul, the damned are given respite from their punishment each Sunday. This account illustrates the early form of the tradition that those who commit different sins receive different, appropriate punishments. At first this principle is implied. The first sight St. Paul sees, before the gates of hell, is "[b]renynge tres bat neuer slakes" (Horstmann 11. 14). Upon these burning trees hang sinners, each by a different body part:

\begin{verbatim}
Mony on for heore synne bonne
Weore i-pyned and honged per-onne;
Summe bi hondes and bi feet þere,
Summe bi þe her, summe bi þe ere,
Summe bi þe Armes þat weore longe,
And summe þer hengen bi þe tongue.
\end{verbatim}

(Horstmann 11. 15-20).

The next torment Paul sees is a "caudren brennyenge at enes /
Of diuerse colours wiþ seue ernes" (Horstmann 11. 21-22). The sinners therein are "for heore synne / [d]iuersliche i-
pynet . . . (Horstmann, 11. 23-24). It is not stated but perhaps different sins are punished by the seven pains contained within the cauldron—those of snow, ice, fire, blood, adders, lightning,
and stink (Horstmann 11. 25-32). At any rate, within the cauldron "vche reseyued aftur his deedes" (Horstmann 11. 38).

It is in the description of a lake of torment that the principle of appropriate punishment is most fully illustrated and explained. Paul and his guide, the archangel Michael, come to a "wondur orible grisly flod" in which swim many devilish beasts that eat and gnaw sinners (Horstmann 11. 56). The souls of righteous men safely cross over this flood upon a bridge, but sinners fall off the bridge into the water, "Per to take and resseyue so / As pei on eorbe deserveden to" (Horstmann 11. 73-74; cf. 11. 85-86). The narrator expands upon the form the just deserts will take in a gloss upon the line "Ligate per fasciculos ad comburendum." Sinners who fall off the bridge will be bound in "Knucchenus"

To brenne, lyk to licchi,
Spous-brekers wip lechours,
Rauisschers wip rauisschours,
Wikked wip wikked also
(Horstmann 11. 78-81).

Paul next observes that the sinful souls are immersed to different levels in the "pyne" of the flood.

Summe to be kne, and summe to be hipes,
Summe to be navel, summe to be lippes,
And summe he sau3 bi-suyled as souwes
In hat pyne vp to be brouwes
(Horstmann 11. 89-92).

The catalogue is like the opening one in which the sinful souls are suspended by various body parts, but this time the connection between different sins and different levels of immersion is
explicitly stated. Paul asks his guide why some of the souls were immersed to the knee. Michael explains that those immersed to the knee "Bacbyters of men, / pat in word and dede . . . /
Hyndren heor euencristen pat bei may" (Horstmann 11. 100-102). Those immersed to the navel were "[s]pousbrekers and lechours" (Horstmann 1. 104). Those immersed up to the lips "[s]tryf and Iangelyng in chirche dude make, / Vche to opur Iangled wip scorn-
- / To heere godus wordus bei han forborn" (Horstmann 11. 108-110). Those immersed above the eyes, to the brows, "weore glade of be mischeef / Of heore nei3bors and of heore greef"
(Horstmann 11. 113-114).

As Paul turns toward another part of hell, he views a sequence of places, each reserved for a punishment appropriate to a particular class of sinner. First he sees men and women who "for-freten heore owne tonges" (Horstmann 1. 122). Michael explains that "pei vsuden Ocur and vsuri; / Merciable weore pei nouht" (line 126-127). Black maidens in black clothing boil in pitch and brimstone while burning dragons and serpents "[h]ongynge aboute heor nekke" gnaw them "to don hem schom, /
To-tere pe fflesch from pe bon" (Horstmann 11. 136-138). Michael explains that these were unchaste girls who "lyuede in . . . lecherie" and slew their illegitimate children, but who nonetheless "schewed hem to pe worldus degre / As bei maydens hedden i-be" (Horstmann 11. 159-160). Next Paul sees lean men and women, "wip-outen flesche," who are unable to touch the food
that lies before them. These "likerous" souls had failed to fast on earth.

Few individuals are singled out in Paul's vision, and none are named. One "Old mon sat þer wepynge / Bi-twene four deueles foul Jelrynge" (Horstmann 11, 175-176). Rather than representing one sin, he has led, in general, a sinful life, as Michael explains:

He was Neclygent aȝeynes forbod
And kepte not þe lawes of God,
He nas not chast of bodi i-souȝt
Ne of herte ne of his pouȝt,
But euer he was Couetous,
Proud of herte and contrarius;
þerof nolde he him not schrieue
Ne do no penaunce . . .
(Horstmann 11, 179-186).

This is as specific as the vision becomes. No attempt is made, for example, to describe how the old man manifested his covetousness. The old man neither moves nor speaks. He sits like an element of a tableau between the four howling devils.

The Vision of the Monk of Eynsham provides a strong contrast to this redaction of the Visio Sancti Pauli. In it, as we have seen, are individuals who are recognized by the visionary and identified by profession. It is true that the strong element of social criticism sometimes takes the form of depiction of categories of sinners as opposed to individuals. For example, the powerful and rich, including those in religious vocations, come in for especial criticism:

Trewly of tho persons [being tormented in purgatory] mony were bisshoppis and abbotys and other were of
other digniteees. Sothely some flowryd in prosperite in the spyrtyualte. Some in the temporalt and some in relygon; the whiche were seyn ponisht in dowbulle sorowwe aboue other persons. For y sawe them that were clerkys / Monks / Noonys / laymen and lay wemen so mekyl lesse ordende and put to peynys howe mekyl the lesse they had before of worldely dygnyte and prosperity. In trowthe y sawe hem greuyd in a more special bittirnesse of peynys aboue other. the whyche y knewe in my tyme were Iugys and Prelatys of other. (Arber 36)

But, although those who prospered on earth are singled out for the most dreadful punishments, the visionary sees members of all classes undergoing purgation. In a "certen regyon. that was ful wyde and brode" the visionary and his guide see "a company innumerabulle of men and women of every condicion of every profession and of every ordyr There were the doers of al synnys ordente to dyuers kyndes of peynes after the diuersite of synnes and qualite of person" (Arber 36).

But we also meet individuals. For example, a goldsmith confesses that he has amassed money through deceit and he suffers for it by perpetually pantomiming his greedy behavior:

In my grafte [crafte? (Arber)] also by the whiche y gate to me and to myn owre leuyng in the world often tymes in my beginnyng y begylde and dysceyued the pepulle for the fere of pouerte And now for that y am ful bitturly ponyshte . . . . Trewly often tyme y haue ben caste downe hed longe into a grete hepe of brenynyn money amonge the whiche y brente ful intolerably. And tho fyrye pensys y was compellyd to deuoure with an opyn mowthe that y felte alle my bowellys to brenne in me And hethir to often times y am compellyd to telle hem and of the towchyng of hem myne handys and fyngers ben fore peynde." (Arber 52)

As we have seen, the goldsmith's narrative is only one of several confessions heard by the dreamer. For example, he recognizes and
questions a doctor of law whom he had known in life, and he listens to a prior describe his negligent leadership and its consequences (Arber 65). In addition to these narratives, descriptions of clothing and appearance help create the sense that here are portraits of individuals, not allegorical figures. This is not to say, however, that some details of appearance are not conventional.

It seems to me that these portraits of individual sinners have something in common with those in Passus VI and VII of the C-Text of Piers Plowman. These portraits seem detailed, lively, the sinners individuals. They include details of dress and appearance and rely heavily on the sinners' narratives of their own lives and misdeeds. What accounts for the similarity between the sinners in the visions and the Sins in Piers Plowman? Neither the Sins in Piers nor the sinners in the visions are invariably adversaries that a soul has to battle either before or after death. In spite of the labels given them in Piers, some of the "Sins" are in fact individuals. Wrath is indeed an allegorical figure—his "confession" details his success in provoking wrath in other people. But Gula is not the sin of gluttony but a gluttonous man who details his misadventures because of his lapses. The sinners in purgatory can be purged; analogously, the individualized Sins in Piers can amend their lives.
Langland does organize his material within the format provided by the convention of seven deadly sins, but within this organization he handles the description and dialogue more in ways found in the later visions, which, though not organized according to any confession formula, were nonetheless filled with confessions. The matter of the non-visionary confessions, however, is often simply not the matter of Passus VI and VII. Look, for example, at the *Vices and Virtues*, a Middle English dialogue contemporaneous with the vision of the Monk of Eynsham. Much of it is taken up by a soul's confession to Reason. The soul confesses to many sins, including several deadly ones. But, though each "confession" is put into the mouth of this sinful soul, it is in fact the voice of the preacher that we hear. The confession contains no vivid narratives filled with place and name and color. Instead, each division is an exposition upon such matters as the etymology of the name of the sin or the relationship of one sin to another. Each sin is illustrated by a Biblical narrative, or a Biblical quotation is expounded upon. Sometimes a passage will hint at the types found in *Piers*, but more common is this passage of exposition:

This cursed spirit [of sorrow] makes the religious man, who has renounced all worldly things for God's love, sorrowful and dreary and heavy in God's works, and often causes [him] to regret that he ever has done so. So he [the spirit of sorrow] does the men who have promised to forsake sins, and so he does also the men who have promised God to do good, or to seek saints, or to fast, or to do some other good thing. In every wise he tries how he may hinder good works, or cause them to be done with displeasure, and with sorrow, and
The Sins were depicted in numerous ways during the Middle Ages—Sins were associated with parts of the body, Sins were depicted as animals themselves (Ancren Riwele, c. 1225; Bloomfield 149), or specific animals served as steeds of specific sins (Lumen animae; Bloomfield 138). Sins could be depicted as knights that had to be overcome (Qveste del Saint Grael, c. 1220; Bloomfield 121). Sins could be daughters of the devil, each to be married to the social class most susceptible to that vice (Jacques de Vitry, Sermones vulgares; Bloomfield 129).

But Sins could also be depicted as individuals—as the proud man, for example, or the wrathful man, as is the case in the Ancren Riwele (Bloomfield 149). Bloomfield suggests that "[t]he presentation of each Sin as a man [in the Ancren Riwele] foreshadows the types which are to appear in Piers Plowman. The ultimate source is no doubt confessional practice, confession formulas, and sermons" (Bloomfield 151). But perhaps we can add another source, the tradition of visions of the otherworld, in which increasingly we meet sinners who are typical yet individualized, who recite narratives of their lives, their transgressions, and woefully lament their weaknesses.

I'll close by mentioning a gap that Bloomfield senses as he tries to trace the source of the presentation of the Sins as men. He describes a wall painting (c. 1200) in a village church that portrays the Seven Sins:
... it [like the Ancren Riwle] seems to have ... sprung up mature, almost unfathered and in apparent isolation from time. It would fit our preconceived notions better if both the Ancren Riwle and the painting at Chaldon could be dated later. ... Lost literature and lost art probably explains, in both cases, the apparent uniqueness and technical facility. One expects a native tradition into which the Riwle and the nave paintings at Chaldon can fit. Possibly it was there. (Bloomfield 152)

I think it was there. True, the Gregorian Sins—and Bloomfield is on the lookout for texts that explicitly develop those sins—do not figure in a major way in the visions. But the portraits of individuals as representative sinners are there. I think what we have in Piers is a coming together of both traditions—the Gregorian labels, but also the kind of portrait found in the visions. Perhaps, then, we had better extend to seven Bloomfield's list of the six genres that influenced Piers Plowman. And perhaps we had better look to the one literary tradition that mixed allegorical figures with "real" ones to explain the type of characters that are found in Piers Plowman.

I do not wish to suggest that it is not profitable to examine Piers Plowman within the context of then-current eschatological ideas. But I hope that the above remarks suggest that it may be equally profitable to examine Piers within the context of the literary tradition of the apocalypse and its descendant, the otherworld journey.
NOTES

Abbreviations


EETS ........ Early English Text Society. London, 1864-.


Chapter I


5Jauss has medieval precedent for employing a broad interpretation of the term "allegory." Robert P. Miller suggests that the word "had a much broader meaning in the Middle Ages than it has today" and adduces as evidence Bede's definition of allegory in De schematibus et tropis (Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds [NY: Oxford UP, 1977] 42). Cf. the definitions in Dante Alighieri's Letter to Can Grande (Miller 81), Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae (Miller 81 n 2), and Giovanni Boccaccio's The Genealogy of the Pagan Gods (Miller 91 n 6).


7For an English translation of the Vision of Adamnan and a study of its sources and influence, see C. S. Boswell, An Irish Precursor of Dante (London: David Nutt, 1908).


Chapter II


3 In addition to the studies of Patch and Van Os, a major study of the history of various apocalyptic topoi is that of Marcus Dods, Forerunners of Dante: An Account of Some of the More Important Visions of the Unseen World, From the Earliest Times (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903). For a study of specifically eschatological elements, see Richard Kenneth Emmerson, Anti-christ in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature (Seattle, WA, 1981) 29, 47, 80.


5 Silverstein, Visio Sancti Pauli, 220-21. For quotations and allusions that testify to English knowledge of the Visio Sancti Pauli during the period A.D. 597 to 1066, see the entry for apocrypha in J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to the English:
The extent of visionary activity in the twelfth century is dramatically conveyed in the early thirteenth-century preface written by the redactor of the Vision of Thurkill, who places the narrative within the tradition of previous and contemporary otherworld visions in an attempt to gain credibility for the vision. He mentions the early (6th century) but influential Dialogues of Gregory but also the twelfth-century visions of Tundale and Eynsham and the Legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory. He suggests that visions in his day are occurring frequently because the end is at hand, a rationale identical to that offered six hundred years earlier by St. Gregory (H. L. D. Ward, "The Vision of Thurkill" Journal of the British Archaeological Association 81 (1875): 425-26, 440-42; Odo John Zimmerman, trans., Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues (The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 39 [NY, 1959]) 250-51.


P. Vielhauer, Introduction to "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," trans. from the German by David Hill, NTA II: 582, 586. Henceforth cited as Vielhauer 1965a. I will be relying heavily on the essays by Vielhauer and other scholars in Vol II of the NTA. According to Adele Yarbro Collins these essays must still be considered as "starting points" because of the dearth of other systematic studies ("The Early Christian Apocalypses," Semeia 14 (1979) [Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre]: 61. Henceforth cited as Yarbro Collins).


For further discussion of the problem of defining "apocalypse," see Paul D. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology, Revised edition, (Philadelphia, 1979) 427-44. He carefully distinguishes between three levels of definition: the genre apocalyptic, the perspective apocalyptic eschatology, and the religious movement apocalypticism (429):

The term apocalypse should be applied strictly as a designation of a literary genre. It is one of the favored media adopted by apocalyptic seers for communicating their message, though it is not the exclusive nor even the dominant genre. Rather, it takes its place among other genres such as the testament, the salvation-judgment oracle, and the parable as a means of giving expression to the
perspective of apocalyptic eschatology and as a vehicle for expressing the ideology of an apocalyptic movement. As in the case of all genres, the apocalypse is not rigid but underwent a history of development over the biblical and post biblical period. (430)


Cf. Bernard McGinn, who argues that the popular visions of the afterlife in the Middle Ages are one of the "twin offspring" of classical apocalypse (Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages [NY: Columbia UP, 1979] 15; the second of the "twin offspring" was prophecy or collections of prophecies).

John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," Semeia 14 (1979): 26: "All apocalypses ... are concerned with human conduct on earth since this conduct becomes the basis for rewards and punishments in the next life." This article will henceforth be cited as Collins 1979b.

As an example of Christian interpolation in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, see the eleventh testament, that of Joseph, which contains a symbolic dream-vision of the end of this period of history. Joseph tells his children that he dreamed (PG II: 1139: vidi somnia) that he saw twelve stags grazing together that became "scattered over the whole earth" (TJos 19: 2; PG II: 1139: Duodecim cervi pascebantur, et novem divis erant et dispersi in terra). Somehow, in the last days, things will be made right. A "virgin ... born from Judah" will give birth to a "spotless lamb" which will destroy the wild animals that rush at him (TJos 19: 8; PG II: 1139: ex Juda nata est virgo . . . Aonus immaculatus). This brief passage concludes with the exhortation that the children of Joseph keep the Lord's commandments and honor Levi—and Judah, "because from their seed will arise the Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world, and will save all the nations, as well as Israel" (TJos 19: 11; PG II: 1139: quoniam ex ipsis grietur vobis AONUS Dei, gratia salvans omnes gentes, et Israel). For a discussion of interpolations, see Charles, APOT II: 291.


All English translations of the Testaments will be taken from H. C. Kee, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, OTP I: 777-78. All Latin translations will be taken from Robert.
Grosseteste’s Latin translation, which is printed alongside his Greek source in the PG II: 1037-1150.


17 The nature of Jewish beliefs about the “last days” and “last things” is surveyed by John J. Collins in “Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 36 (1974): 21-43.

18 The description and explanation of the seven heavens form parts of the second and third chapters of the Testament of Levi (PG II: 1054):

II. Et ingrediebar de primo coelo in secundum, et vidi illic aquam suspensam in medio hujus et illius. Et vidi tertium coelum multo lucidius quam duos: etenim altitudo erat in ipso infinita.

III. Audi ergo de septem coelis: Inferius properterea tristius est, quia istud juxta omnes injustitias hominum est. Secundum habet ignem, nivem, glaciem, parata in diem praecepti Domini, in justo judicio Dei; in ipso sunt omnes spiritus retributionum in vindictam iniquorum. In terto sunt virtutes castrorum, ordinatae in diem judicii, ad faciendum vindictam in spiritibus erroris et Beliar. In quarto autem superius his sancti sunt; quoniam in supremo omnium habitat magna gloria in Sancto sanctorum, supra omnem sanctitatem. In hoc angeli sunt faciei Dei, ministrantes et propitiantes apud Dominum in omnibus ignorantis justorum. Offerunt vero Dominus odorem suavitatis rationalem, et sine sanguine oblationem. In eo autem quod subtus est, sunt angeli qui ferunt responsiones angelis faciei Domini. In eo vero quod post hoc est, sunt throni et potestates, in quo hymni semper Deo offeruntur. Quando ergo respexerit Dominus super nos, commovemur omnes nos; et coeli, et terra, et abyssi, a facie magnitudinis ejus commoventur: fillii autem hominum in his existentes insensibles peccabunt, et irritabunt Altissimum.

19 There are two Greek versions, each of which is based, according to Charles, on an independent Hebrew version (APOT II 286). One version preserves the tradition of three heavens; the other alters the three heavens into seven (APOT I 304 n. on II: 7-11). Grosseteste’s Latin translation reflects the later tradition of seven heavens.

21 There is almost universal agreement that the Revelation of John is pseudonymous. See for example Vielhauer, who argues that the author writes "under his own name" (1965a 607). See also P. Vielhauer, Introduction to "Apocalyptic in Early Christianity," NTA II: 623; and John J. Collins, who devotes an article to explaining why John dispensed with the convention of pseudonymity ("Pseudonymity, Historical Reviews and the Genre of the Revelation of John," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 39 [1977]: 329-43) But see Dabel and Wheeler 134 and 140.

22 Ch. Mauer, Apocalypse of Peter, trans. from the German by David Hill, NTA II: 667. Henceforth cited as Mauer.


Chapter III

1W. Schneemelcher, "Later Apocalypses," trans. from the German by E. Best, NTA II: 751.

2 In a homily that survives only in a Latin translation, Origen summarizes an episode from an Apocalypse of Abraham in which righteous and iniquitous angels argue over the disposition of a soul, perhaps that of Abraham (Montague Rhodes James, The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament, [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920] 16-17; cf. the Apocalypse of Paul). Also surviving in Latin translation is a reference by Origen to the Apocalypse of Elias, a book likewise known to Jerome. A fragment from the Apocalypse has survived in an eighth century MS as the Epistle of Titus, the disciple of Paul, which recounts how an angel showed Elias Gehenna, where sinners were suffering appropriate hanging punishments (James 53-55, 57). In the fourth century an Apocalypse of Adam was referred to in Latin by Nicetas of Remesiana (James 3). From a lost book of Baruch Cyprian quotes, in Latin, a passage that is similar to one in the surviving Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (James 77-78). Jerome draws on an Apocalypse of Zacharias in a commentary on Matthew, but may be dependent on Origen for his knowledge of the book (James 75-76).

3 For the Acts of Thomas, see the ANT 388-93. For the Vision of Ezra, see Yarbro Collins 87-88.


6. For further discussion of the composite nature of the the Ascension, see Flemming and Duensing 642-43.


9. An edition, based on a lost MS, was published in 1522, and this text was reprinted in 1832 (Flemming and Duensing 643). A modern edition was published in Charles 98-139. All Latin quotations will be taken from that edition.

10. The translations are mine, but the versions of Flemming and Duensing and Charles were consulted.

11. The word *aue* is a corruption of *me*; the older Latin fragment of the *Ascension* preserves the line as * quo me tolles* (Charles 103).


13. On the nature of the spiritual garments, see Charles 34-36. See also Box, who reports an analogue in the Slavonic *Enoch*, in which the "'garments' of the blessed are to be composed of God's glory" (Box xxiv).

14. Compare with Revelation 19: 10, where the visionary makes a similar mistake: "And I fell down before his feet, to adore him [his guide]. And he saith to me: See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God. (Et dicit mihi: Vide ne feceris: conservus tuus sum, et fratrum tuorum habentium testimonium Iesu. Deum adora.)"

15. The inability—or unwillingness—of men to profess belief in an unseen God is the motivating force behind the fourth book.
of Gregory's Dialogues, in which St. Gregory tries to demonstrate the existence of an invisible world, largely through narratives of visions that demonstrate the existence of a soul that lives on after the death of the body (Zimmerman 191):

After falling from that noble state he [Adam] . . . lost the inner light which enlightened his mind. Born as we are of his flesh into the darkness of this exile, we hear, of course, that there is a heavenly country, that angels are its citizens, and that the spirits of the just live in company with them; but being carnal men without any experimental knowledge of the invisible, we wonder about the existence of anything we cannot see with our bodily eyes. Adam could not possibly have entertained such doubts, for, although he was excluded from the happiness of paradise, he remembered what he had lost, because he had once known it. Carnal men, on the other hand, cannot remember or appreciate these joys when they hear about them, because, unlike him, they have no past experience to fall back on. (Zimmerman 190)

16 Compare the process of the Son's transformation with the progression of changes experienced by the soul descending to earth as it is described by Macrobius in his encyclopedic analysis of the dream of Scipio in Cicero's De re publica. In Macrobius's interpretation, the "soul descends from the sky to the infernal regions of this life" (Macrobius, Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, trans. William Harris Stahl [NY: Columbia U P, 1952] 133). As the souls journey "from the sky to the earth," they must pass through a "portal" created when the circle of the Milky Way crosses that of the zodiac:

So long as the souls heading downwards still remain in Cancer they are considered in the company of the gods, since in that position they have not yet left the Milky Way. But when in their descent they have reached Leo, they enter upon the first stages of their future condition . . . the first steps of birth and certain primary traces of human nature are found in Leo . . . (Stahl 134)

By the impulse of the first weight the soul, having started on its downward course from the intersection of the zodiac and the Milky Way to the successive spheres, not only takes on the aforementioned envelopment in each sphere by approaching a luminous body, but also acquires each of the attributes which it will exercise later. (Stahl 136)
These lines are taken from I Corinthians 2:9: *Quod oculus non vidi, nec auris audivi, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum.*

The conclusion of the vision, in which the visionary is told that he must return to the world, is typical of apocalypse. Cf. the end of the apocalyptic section of Daniel, where the angel instructs Daniel to "go thou thy ways until the time appointed: and thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot unto the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13; *Tu... vade ad præfinitum; et requiesces, et stabis in sorte tua in finem dierum*). In the medieval otherworld visions, however, the visionary typically does not return to wait out the final days before the end of time. Instead, a visionary in need of personal reform is shown what awaits him and is then given, through the mercy of God, time to reform himself and make amends for his sins. The eschatology is purely personal in the latter case.

Writing of the visionary-narrator in *Piers Plowman*, J. A. Burrow asserts that "it is his dissatisfaction with his successive visions which drives the poem along" (*"Words, Works, and Will: Theme and Structure in Piers Plowman, in Piers Plowman: Critical Approaches*, ed. S. S. Hussey [London: Methuen, 1969] 124). The apocalypses, too, are driven forward by the dissatisfaction of the various dreamers or visionaries.


It is impossible to understated the influence of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, which is given a prominent place in virtually every study of otherworld visions. On its popularity and influence see especially Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 3-14. See also Yarbro Collins 85 and Le Goff, who states that the "Apocalypse of Paul... exerted the greatest influence in the Middle Ages and... was an important point of reference not only for Saint Patrick's Purgatory, a late twelfth-century document that played a crucial role in the birth of Purgatory, but also for Dante" (Le Goff 33; see also 35-36).

Si gloriari oportet (non expedit quidem), veniam autem ad visiones et revelationes Domini. Scio hominem in Christo ante annos quatuordecim, sive in corpore nescio, sive extra corpus nescio, Deus scit, raptum huiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum. Et scio huiusmodi hominem sive in corpore, sive extra corpus nescio, Deus scit: quoniam raptus est in paradisum: et audivit arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui. (II Cor. 12: 1-4)
24 Montague Rhodes James, Apocrypha Anecdota: A Collection of Thirteen Apocryphal Books and Fragments (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1893) 11. Unless otherwise noted, Latin passages will be quoted from this edition of a French manuscript of the eighth century, which will henceforth be cited as AA. According to Yarbro Collins, this is the "oldest and best witness to the text of the Apocalypse of Paul . . ." (Yarbro Collins 85). English translations will be taken unless otherwise noted from James's ANT.

25 A passage from Silverstein's St. Gall MS (Silverstein, Visio Sancti Pauli, 137) is here substituted for the version in James's MS, which is badly corrupted. See ANT 537 and Duensing 773 n 4.

26 Compare with Gregor's motive for composing his Dialogues. See above n 15.

27 "Description of a vision seen by a monk of the monastery at Wenlock," trans. by Edward Kylie, in The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924); repr. in The Letters of Saint Boniface, trans. Ephraim Emerton (Records of Civilization No. 31 [NY: Columbia U P, 1940]).

28 The nature of appropriate punishment in the Visio Sancti Pauli and other apocalypses is examined in Himmelfarb, passim. Her third chapter is devoted to "measure-for-measure punishments."

29 The relationship between sexual offenses and the punishment of hanging by the hair is clearer in other surviving apocalypses. For example, in the Ethiopic version of the Apocalypse of Peter, which, in an earlier form, may have been the source of much of the Visio Sancti Pauli, the punishment is explained as resulting from the fact that women "plaited their hair not to create beauty, but to turn to fornication" (Himmelfarb 88). Such reasoning may account for the fact that shaving the head was a punishment for sexual offenses committed by Jewish women (Himmelfarb 74).
30 Silverstein’s St. Gall MS is used here because it preserves the renunciation of seculo, whereas James’s MS has the renunciation of deos. (Silverstein, Visio Sancti Pauli, 144: qui uidentur abrenuntiare seculo tantum).

31 The MS printed by James in the AA places the apathetic souls in the fiery river, but this reading represents a corruption; the sinners, appropriately enough, should be placed beside the fiery flood. See ANT 542.

32 Among the recensions of the Visio Sanct Pauli is one which presents this dialogue more elaborately. However, this recension tells the story in the third person instead of the first person of the Long Latin versions:

... interrogauit angelum qui essent dimersi usque ad genua. Et dixit angelus, ‘Hii sunt qui furtum fecerunt et rapinam et luxuriam, et inde penitenciam non egerunt et ad ecclesiam non uenerunt.’ ‘Domine, qui sunt hii qui usque ad umbilicum?’ Respondit angelus, ‘Hii sunt qui fornicantur et postquam assumpserunt corpus et sanguinem domini nostri Iesu Christi, et non sunt reuersi ad penitenciam usque ad mortem.’ ‘Domine, qui sunt hii qui usque ad labia?’ ‘Hii sunt detractores et falsi testes et qui murmuraerunt in ecclesia et non audierunt uerbum domini.’ ‘Qui usque ad supercilia?’ ‘Hii sunt qui fictum animum habent in corde et anuunt mala proximis suis, dum fidem habent ad illos. Et unusquisque homo qui hoc peccatum facit, si non penitebit, cadit in infernum, sicut illi fecerunt.’ (Silverstein, Visio Sancti Pauli, 153-54)

33 On the place of the Visio Sancti Pauli in the history of the development of the idea of purgatory, see Le Goff 36-38.

Chapter IV

1 W. Schneemelcher, General Introduction, trans. from the German by George Ogg, NTA: I 68.


Charles’s explanation is not universally accepted. His portrait of a monolithic Judaism has been altered since he issued his book in 1913. See, for example, Robert S. MacLennan and A. Thomas Kraabel, who speak of "the erroneous assumption that Judaism in the Roman empire was monolithic and everywhere the same. . . ." ("The God-Fearers--A Literary and Theological Invention," Biblical Archaeology Review 12 no. 5 [1986]: 51). See also Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," Journal of Jewish Studies 33 [1982]: 453-54.) Views have also changed about the role of prophesy in Judaism. Prophesy was not closed, and some prophets issued their prophecies under their own names. P. Vielhauer describes Judaism under the Greek and Roman occupations as "by no means without prophets (as a popular theory maintains) but . . . in fact rich in prophetic figures." He uses the writings of the historian Josephus and of Rabbinic scholars to document the activities of prophets, who were particularly active among the Essenes. But prophets were found among almost all groups. Pharisees prophesied at the court of Herod, and even priests, champions of the Law, could be seized by ecstasy. A peasant, Jesus ben Chananiah, "alarmed Jerusalem for years with his sinister prophesying of disaster," and, just as Jesus, in the New Testament accounts, was preceded by the prophet John, so did the prophet R. Akiba precede the Messiah Simon bar Cosiba. (Introduction to "Apocalypses and Related Subjects," NTA II: 601-602; cf. 602-605.)

The Revelation of John encountered even more difficulty in the East, where, even as late as the ninth century, its canonicity may have been questioned by some (Schneemelcher 40) In the Stichometry of Nicephorus, who was the patriarch of Constantinople during the years 806 to 818, the Revelation of John is "gainsaid" (Schneemelcher 50).


For example, 1 and 2 Peter are both pseudonymous (Gabel and Wheeler 179).

The Story of Zosimus is difficult to date. Its present form dates to the fifth or sixth century, but it may be built upon an earlier work that came into being before the middle of
the third century (Yarbro Collins 90).


1²Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History III.iii:

Since the apostle in the closing salutations of the Epistle to the Romans has made mention among others of Hermas (Rom. 16:14) to whom the book called The Shepherd is ascribed, it is worth noting that this book also has been spoken against by some; on their account it should not be reckoned to the generally recognized writings; by others again it has been rated as extremely necessary especially for such as need introductory, elementary instruction. For that reason, as we know, it has already been read publicly in (some) churches, and, as I have ascertained, has been used by some of the very ancient writers. (Schneemelcher 58).

Chapter V


2⁠Vielhauer 1965b 630. Cf. 635:

Hermas no doubt wishes to write an Apocalypse, but the apocalyptic framework embraces no apocalyptic picture. The Mandates include exhortation, traditional ethical sayings which the author arranges thematically, works out in an interpretative fashion and casts partly in the form of dialogue.

3⁠Vielhauer 1965b 638:

All these are fixed traits in the picture of the future End-time which threatens the whole of mankind. But in Vis. IV they are not used for apocalyptic description; they are "de-eschatologized" and re-interpreted. Hermas "does not catch sight in advance, in a visionary way, of a fragment of the End-time but, on a walk in the neighbourhood of Rome, experiences in a vision phenomena of the End-time as personal menaces in the present . . . The peculiar character of the Beast-vision is thus explained by the fact that the author has individualized apocalyptic terrors" (Dibelius, op.
In a modification of this kind a new understanding of existence seeks expression. "This process of individualization corresponds to an alteration in the Christian hope which was significant for that time: it is not the fate of mankind at the end of days, but the fate of the individual at the end of his life that is the centre of interest" (Dibelius, op. cit., p. 486). The description of the heavenly journey of the individual takes on features of the final fate of the cosmos.

Cf. 635:

The presence of paraenesis and allegory would not in itself argue against the apocalyptic character of the book, for both appear in Apocalypses. Allegory, in particular, is a stylistic feature in Apocalyptic, while every early Jewish and Christian Apocalypse has a paraenetic angle. But in that case, paraenesis and allegory are eschatologically determined, whereas this eschatological determination is absent from the Pastor Hermae.

See also 636:

The book belongs, if at all, only to a limited extent to the visionary literature . . . . All four visions (the preaching of penitence by the old lady, Vis. I; the heavenly letter on Christian repentance, Vis. II; the allegory of the building of the tower, Vis. III; the vision of the beast, Vis. IV) have no eschatological purpose, but rather a moral one. Vis. III and IV are intricate allegories . . .

4For passages that convey information about the fate of the soul after death, see the Similitudes II. 9; IV. 4; VI. ii. 3-4, v. 7; VIII. vi. 4, 6, vii. 3, 5, 6, viii. 2-5, ix. 4, x. 2; IX. xiv. 2; X. ii. 4; Visions I. iii. 2; II. ii. 6, 7, iii. 2; III. ii. 1; IV. iii. 5. See Yarbro Collins 74-75.

5Oscar de Gebhardt and Adolphus Harnack, Hermæ Pastor Graece. Addita Versione Latina Recentiore e Codice Palatino, (Patrum Apostolicon Opera Fasciculus III), Lipsiae, J. C. Hinrichs, 1877) 3.

Chapter VI

For example, the Visio Sancti Pauli could not have been translated into Latin until nearly the end of the fourth century (Yarbro Collins 85).

English quotations will be taken from Zimmerman, op cit. Latin passages will be taken from PL 66: 125-204 for Book II and PL 77: 149-430 for Book IV.

In the Visio Sancti Pauli the visionary is instructed to look down by his guide:

... the angel ... said unto me: Look down upon the earth. And I looked down from heaven upon the earth and beheld the whole world, and it was as nothing in my sight ... And I looked, and saw a great cloud of fire spread over the whole world, and said unto the angel: What is this, Lord? And he said to me: This is the unrighteousness that is mingled by the princes of sinners. ... (ANT 530)

(...) angelus dixit mihi: Respice deorum in terra. Et respexi de celo in terra, et uidi totum mundum, et
erat quasi nihil in conspectu meo . . . Et respexi et
ulii nubem magnam igne spansam per omnen mundum, et
dixi angelo: Quid est hoc, domine? Et dixit mihi: Haec
(est) iniusticia obmixta a principibus peccatorum. (AA
15-16)

4The motif occurs more than once in the Dialogues itself.
See for example the description of the death of Benedict’s sister
( Zimmerman 104).

5A test bridge is featured in one of the redactions of the
Visio Sancti Pauli, but it is not altogether clear whether
Gregory has borrowed the test bridge from the redaction or the
redactor has borrowed from Gregory. Nevertheless, the test
bridge is not original with Gregory. See Patch passim.

6Cf. the case of the man on the point of death who “sees” a
ship prepared to take him to Sicily. Peter asks why a ship would
appear to the dying man, and Gregory replies that “The soul has
no need of a conveyance. But it is not surprising that in the
vision a man of flesh and blood saw an object which was
physically real to him, and through it was given to understand
that the soul is transported spiritually” (Zimmerman 235). The
soul still trapped in the body can only understand through
images.

7The phrase flammis suspensos is reminiscent of the hanging
punishments in the Visio Sancti Pauli.

8Though Gregory catalogues six kinds of dreams and Macrobius
only five, the Gregorian classification could easily be reduced
to five if the first two categories were collapsed into one. A
nightmare or insomnium is a dream caused by “mental or physical
distress,” and the latter cause encompasses dreams caused both by
overindulgence in food and lack of it (Stahl 88).

9The vision must have fallen within the years 630 to 648.
Bede’s source is the Latin life of St. Fursa, which may be found
in the Acta Sanctorum Quotquot Toto Orbe Coluntur under January
16 (II: 399-419).

10Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. and trans.,
Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Oxford:

11Alan E. Bernstein, “Esoteric Theology: William of Auvergne

12Augustine, The City of God, trans. Henry Bettenson, (NY:

King II: 256 n 1.

Drythem's division of the otherworld into four parts may reflect the idea that sinners may be divided into the *mali*, the *non valde mali*, the *non valde boni*, and the *boni*. But see Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 115.

Van Os on *Poema Morale*.

The protagonist of the *Vision of the Monk of Eynsham* will also witness the arrival of a sinner besieged by a rout of demons.

A similar rescue will take place in Eynsham, where the rescuer first appears as a light but resolves into the Virgin Mary.


Chapter VII


Since I am particularly interested in the British reception of the Latin visions, the discussion that follows will be based on this English metrical version. The most readily available edition is that of Eileen Gardiner, "The Vision of Tundale: A Critical Edition of the Middle English Text," diss., Fordham University, 1980. All citations will be to this edition. Page references will also be provided to an edition of the Latin prose account that the poet is adapting. The edition referred to is that of Albrecht Wagner, *Visio Tnuodali: Lateinisch und Altddeutsch* (Erlangen: Von Andreas, 1882).


8 This endless destruction and reconstitution of souls is a common motif in visions of purgatory and hell. See Van Os 46.

9 See Van Os 3-4 on the "decline" of the vision.

10 The fifteenth-century translation of this revelation, published in 1482, was reprinted as no. 18 in Edward Arber's series of *English Reprints* (*The Revelation to the Monk of Eynsham* [London, 1869]). For the Latin source, see Herbert Thurston, ed., "Visio Monachi Eynsham," *Analecta Bollandiana* 22 (1903): 225-319, henceforth cited as AB. The vision has also been edited by P. Michael Huber (*Visio Monachi de Eynsham,* *Romanische Forschungen* 16 (1904): 641-733


Chapter VIII


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Abbreviations: see p. 213

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