3-27-1978

Piers the Plowman and the Building of Truth

Rose Cothren Anstine

PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH · ANSTINE

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH
Title

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PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH

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B.A., The University of New Mexico, 1975

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English
in the Graduate School of
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico
May, 1978

PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH

BY

Rose Cothren Anstine

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English
in the Graduate School of
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico
May, 1978

PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH

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Although some of the problems that Piers the Plowman presents for the twentieth-century reader--authorship, thought, and theology--have been elucidated, the structure of William Langland's fourteenth-century poem still puzzles modern readers and critics. The continuing concern with the structure of Piers the Plowman is evidenced by the works of T. P. Dunning, D. W. Robertson and B. F. Huppé, and Mary Carruthers which have appeared over a period of about forty years. Each of these works is concerned with structure; each uses the works of Augustine as a theoretical basis, but none of the works treats structure as separate from thought. Augustine's works have also provided theory for the study and appreciation of Gothic cathedrals. Erwin Panofsky and Robert Jordan have used architectural models for studying literature, both the religious Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas and the secular works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Here, parallels between the structure of the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest of Piers the Plowman and the more nearly contemporary English adaptation of the Gothic design, the Perpendicular, are explored. Both structures are shaped to the end of Truth, of pointing the mind of man to the contemplation of God and interesting structural parallels do exist.

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PIERS THE PLOWMAN AND THE BUILDING OF TRUTH

Piers the Plowman has presented many difficulties for the twentieth-century reader; for example, problems of authorship, structure, thought, and theology. The authorship controversy was finally laid to rest by George Kane in 1965;[1] the thought and the theology have both been elucidated; but the structure still presents problems for modern readers and critics. As A. C. Spearing says, "Piers Plowman is one of the most fascinating, and also one of the most difficult, of fourteenth century poems. Its difficulty does not lie primarily in individual passages . . .[but] in the problem of organization, dispositio."[2] Charles Muscatine agrees with this assessment of the problem:

> Thus in sharing the modern concern with the problem of the poet's art, we must nevertheless recognize that older questions--the questions of authorship, for instance, and the question of the "thought" of the poem--have now been subsumed in the problems of the poem's form, structure, and coherence, which virtually all modern critics recognize.[3]

Muscatine mentions three things which impose form on medieval literature: theology, genre, and the linear progression of the journey.[4] Although all three of these could be appealed to in order to make some sense of Piers, Muscatine appeals to them unsuccessfully, labels the work as the poetry of crisis, and sneers at "Langland's unorthodox form and genre--if form and genre they be. . . ."[5]

While Muscatine sneers, however, others continue to look for bases on which to construct a successful explanation of the structure of Piers. Three such attempts, which have appeared at about 20-year intervals over the past 40 years, are T. P. Dunning's Piers Plowman:An Interpretation of the A-text (London, 1937), D. W. Robertson and B. F. Huppé's Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition (Princeton, 1951), and Mary Carruthers' The Search for St. Truth (Northwestern, 1973). The chronological spread of these works is, in itself, an indication of the continuing and recurring concern with the structure of Piers the Plowman.

Although each of these works is concerned with structure, none of them deals with structure except as it is related to the thought of the poem. In fact, all of these critics expose an interrelationship between the structure and the thought, which find their ends in the concept of Truth. Taking these works as being chronologically representative of the continuing concern with the structure of Piers the Plowman, I would like to explore each for its theoretical basis, for its treatment of structure, and for its treatment of the relationship between structure and thought and their common endpoint of Truth. Perhaps such an exploration will yield some consensus as to what is helpful in explaining the structure of Piers. Then I would like to look at Erwin Panofsky's Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism (The Archabbey Press, 1951) and Robert Jordan's Chaucer and the Shape of Creation

(Harvard, 1967). Panofsky and Jordan deal with structure as a more nearly independent entity; they seem to view the structure of a work as distinct from, even though it is related to, its thought. Combining the useful elements of Panofsky's and Jordan's work with structure with the useful elements of Dunning's, Robertson and Huppé's, and Carruthers' studies of Piers the Plowman, I would like to explore the structure of the second portion of Piers, the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest, from a new perspective.

T. P. Dunning bases his exploratory work, Piers Plowman: An Interpretation of the A-text, on the writings of the Church Fathers--particularly Augustine and Gregory. He chooses these two because both "are mentioned in the A-text by name."[6] Dunning also quotes Aquinas. However, he recognizes that Aquinas' system had been seriously modified by Langland's time and only quotes him on matters which were not under dispute. Dunning establishes the great degree of influence which the Fathers had on the Middle Ages:

> The Bible in the Middle Ages was invariably furnished with critical apparatus, and on of the commonest features of medieval literature were the Catenae, or Commentaries on the various parts of the Bible, consisting entirely of long strings of quotations from the homilies and other works of the early Fathers on the particular texts.[7]

Dunning also establishes a relationship between Piers and medieval preaching by quoting G. R. Owst: "Piers Plowman represents nothing more or less than the quintessence of English medieval preaching gathered up in a single metrical

piece of unusual charm and vivacity."[8] Dunning mildly reproaches Owst for not entering "upon the interpretation of any version of the poem" and remarks confidently that if Piers the Plowman is "the quintessence of English medieval preaching," then "it must be at the same time a faithful summary of the doctrines of the medieval Church, as expounded by the Fathers and theologians. And, if this is so, the interpretation of the poem cannot be difficult."[9] So Dunning uses the doctrines of the Fathers as enunciated by fourteenth-century preachers to explicate the thought of Piers, including the meaning of Truth, and to show that the thought matches the structure of the work.

Early in his book, Dunning makes an intriguing remark about the structure of Piers: "It is . . . primarily a work of edification, and everything in it is shaped to this end. . . . In this the poem is strictly of its time. . . . But, in a wider sense, it is characteristically medieval."[10] The end to which the A-text of Piers is shaped is Truth.

Although Dunning is concerned with the shaping of the structure of Piers, which leads to Truth, the structure he exposes is little more than an outline which he finds recurring in different sections of Piers to expound the same subject matter in a different form. This structure does not seem to be intimately related to the search for Truth.

In matters of structure, as in matters of thought, Dunning is primarily concerned with the Visio. He does think

that the Vita is related to the Visio by the frequent mention of Dowel in the last lines of the Visio. He considers the Vita as a sequel and as a finished poem. However, it does not seem to mark for him any "definite progression towards the knowledge of Dowel," and his comments on its structure are limited to the observation that it maintains the "essential debat-form . . . throughout."[11]

It is the structure of the Visio that most interests Dunning:

> It was this external unity of structure that so struck Manly; but as Jusserand has noticed, Manly in his Summary of the Visio in the Cambridge History (II.,i.) fails to show a corresponding unity of thought. . . . Now I feel confident that a detailed analysis of the poet's line of thought and an attempt to interpret it in accordance with fourteenth century ways of thinking will reveal a unity of thought exactly corresponding to the external structural divisions, and in striking contrast to the usually received view of Piers Plowman as a whole.[12]

So, Dunning explicates a portion of the Visio. Then he summarizes it in tabular form to show the unity of structure and thought. He contends that the Visio "falls into four main and well-defined divisions. . . . Externally, the unity is perfect: there is a beginning, a middle and an end, and an external causal connection between the several parts."[13]

Dunning explains Passus I as the "philosophical exposition of the theme, which has been expressed in tableau form in the Prologue."[14] He even uses a table to show how the exposition matches the expression in form. The next major section that Dunning treats consists of Passus II-IV, the

Vision of Lady Meed. Again, he points out "two main stages in the development of the theme . . . [and traces] the progress of the action through each of these two stages in turn."[15]

In beginning his discussion of Passus V-VIII, 131, the Vision of Repentance and Piers Plowman, Dunning says, "Just as the Vision of Meed [the second section] is an elaboration . . . of the first part of Passus i., so this third section of the Visio is mainly the allegorical exposition and development of the second part."[16] Dunning sums up his view of the structure of the Visio: "It seems to me that the remaining sections of the poem are simply the allegorical exposition of the ideas set down by Holy Church in the two parts of Passus i."[17]

Although Dunning does not show how the structure of Piers the Plowman builds toward the end of Truth to which the whole work is shaped, he does recognize the important position of Truth in the work, though he limits Truth to only one of its aspects. Dunning says that "the entire first passus may be said to be taken up with a single idea, namely Truth."[18] But "throughout the passus, and especially in i.129-39, [Langland] makes it clear that he is really considering only a particular aspect of truth, which, in its full connotation, is the entire Christian moral law. . . ."[19] The aspect of Truth which Langland considers, fraternal charity, is constituted of two elements, denoted by the two texts Deus caritas est

and Reddite Caesari, etc.: "the use of food, drink, clothing, and the money with which these things are purchased . . . [and] the use of temporal goods in the Chirstian scheme of things."[20] Dunning says:

> It is to be noticed that in the Epistle from which the Lady [Holy Church] quoted in her first answer to the dreamer, St. John confines himself to one element in the love of God, namely, the love of the neighbour; this is inseparable from the love of God . . . and is considered by the Fathers the way to the love of God.[21]

Speaking of a state in which Truth would be king, Dunning says, "in the ideal state of things to which Christian society must aspire, this human law, both civil and ecclesiastical, would finally give way to Love. . . . and Love [would] be Law."[22] It is such a kingdom that the people set out to find after the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins. Dunning quotes Augustine on the City of God: "Its King is Truth, its Law Love, and its duration Eternity."[23] Again, Dunning points out that Piers, in describing the way to Truth is aware

> that Truth can only be reached by an observance of the entire Christian law, as interpreted by the Church; his description . . . is designed deliberately, I think, to show that while the poet understands the place and importance of the bona spiritualia in the search after and attainment of Truth or God, these are not his particular concern in the present work.[24]

Dunning then comments on "the accuracy of this conception of the way to Truth leading through the Ten Commandments to the Church and culminating in the Gospel Law of Charity."[25] This concept is accurate because it is based in patristic writings.

Dunning also affirms Langland's use of the term Truth as being in accord with both the Fathers and the New Testament. When the dreamer asks Lady Holy Church the way to save his soul, she replies that it must be by means of Truth, which she identifies with "the law of the Gospel, which is in contradistinction to the law of the flesh."[26] In Piers' description of the way to Truth, Dunning notes that "Truth is expressly identified with God."[27] Dunning says, "In his use of the word Truth, Langland is following the New Testament and the Fathers. In a number of places in the New Testament the word truth is put for the New Law, promulgated by Christ."[28]

> With regard to Langland's use of the Word "Truth" to designate God, it must be specially noted that St. Gregory all through the Moralia and the Liber Regulae Pastoralis makes veritas the usual name of Christ as Teacher--indeed, he scarcely refers to Christ by any other name. . . . the works of St. Gregory were influential for Langland--he even quotes St. Gregory by name in xi.201 (i.e. Vita, ii.201).[29]

Dunning bases his work with Piers the Plowman on the writings of the Fathers, particularly St. Augustine and St. Gregory. The work that he does with structure and Truth is useful within its limitations. These limitations may be inherent in the A-text with its embryonic Vita. The structure revealed does not satisfy the expectations raised by Dunning's remark on page seven that Piers is "primarily a work of edification, and everything in it is shaped to this end." Dunning's revealed structure seems imposed upon the poem; he constantly refers to the external unity of structure and

thought, to the external unity of structure. The structure is an imposed one rather than one which reveals the internal shaping necessary to a successful pointing of the whole work to a single end. Dunning's explication of that end, Truth, and his limitation of Truth to the aspect of fraternal charity, may also be inherent in the A-text; however, I find Dunning's notion of the identity of Truth with God and with the New Law of Christ helpful in elucidating the common endpoint of the thought and the structure of Piers the Plowman.

D. W. Robertson and B. F. Huppé also use the writings of the Fathers to explicate the thought structure of the B-text in Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition. Their stated purpose is "to present a coherent account of the thought structure in the B-text of Piers Plowman in light of medieval interpretations of Scripture."[30] The authors modestly claim that "the reader will discover . . . a few striking similarities between our materials and those employed by Father Dunning, but because of differences in both method and subject, our general results are usually different."[31]

Although they do not clearly show how the structure of the work builds toward Truth, Robertson and Huppé do note "the order and clarity of the structure" in Passus II-IV:

> Lady Meed's journey to Westminster with her entourage is balanced by the journey of Reason with his entourage. As Lady Meed confesses to the Friar at the beginning of her attempt to reestablish herself, so the false confessors are introduced at the end of the episode in a final attempt to defend Meed. . . . This section explains

> the general state of affairs in the Prologue and at the same time illustrates the basic principles outlined by Holy Church.[32]

This sounds much like Dunning's comments on these same passus in the A-text. Robertson and Huppé also note a structural relationship between the Visio and the Vita: "The Visio shows generally in what life of perfection consists, but Will must do more than learn general principles; he must initiate and carry on his own practical work of charity," and this he does in the Vita.[33] The Vita is, thus, an individualized rendition of the general account of the Visio. One other structural comment they make is that "the level of discourse [of the end of the last passus] is that of the Prologue, so that in effect the passus describes once more but from a new point of view the manner in which the Field of Folk became corrupted."[34] So, Robertson and Huppé describe the poem as being complete or as having a circular structure.

Other than a few such comments, Robertson and Huppé are concerned only with the thought structure of Piers the Plowman as revealed by the application of the levels of Scriptural exegesis. They term the three levels of the sentence of the Bible as tropological, allegorical, and anagogical, then assert:

> The Scriptural quotations in Piers Plowman should be examined in the light of the exegetical tradition. . . . Moreover, throughout the poem, even in passages unsupported by direct quotations from the Bible, the author had the sentence of Scripture constantly in mind.[35]

And they're off, explicating on three exegetical levels not only the Scriptural quotations in the text, but the text of the poem itself, at times even reaching to Scriptures not quoted by Langland in order to be able to explicate the structure of the thought of his poem.

Morton Bloomfield says that it is a

> serious misunderstanding [to] attempt to read the so-called four symbolic levels into Piers Plowman. Piers is essentially an allegorical; not a symbolic work. . . . In actual practice, the authors do not succeed in finding a fourfold meaning although in the introductory chapters, they imply that it is present everywhere.[36]

Robertson and Huppé explicate the thought structure of the B-text in seriatum, so that the resultant four-levelled exegetical structure is no more coherent than the surface of the poem, if not less so. Robertson and Huppé use patristic writings as their theoretical basis, but they do not take adequate account of fourteenth-century modifications of those writings.

Robertson and Huppé recognize, as does Dunning, that Langland treats Truth in the aspect of Charity, and in Charity's opposite, Cupidity, but the incidental nature of their comments on Truth makes Truth seem less central to the poem than it is. Some comments on structural contrasts or balances of thought are made, but the thought structure in which Robertson and Huppé are mainly interested, that of fourfold Scriptural exegesis, is external to the work.

Rather than treat Charity as one aspect of Truth, Robertson and Huppé treat the two as equals:

> Charity is thus an informing principle of medieval thought, providing the inspiration for and controlling the bent of all written attempts to set forth truth. For truth is charity, and like charity must be approached through faith and hope, as St. Paul reveals.[37]

They quote St. Augustine's De doctrina to show that medieval Christianity thought perfect charity "to be the ultimate sentence of the Bible" and conclude that "passages in the Bible which do not literally promote charity must be interpreted figuratively."[38] Robertson and Huppé repeatedly insist on charity as the end of the poem:

> Will has himself seen the identity of charity and Christ. . . . When charity has no need of riches, but receives spiritual food from God, he is Dowel. When he prays, goes on pilgrimage, and feeds God's prisoners, he is Dobet. Finally, when he washes away the sins of mankind, he is Dobest. The last embraces the other two . . . [and] Charity . . . is the culmination of the poem

as explained in the image of Christ jousting for mankind.[39]

Although they hint at a relationship between Law and Love--"What is a commandment in the Old Law is promise and Hope in the New"[40]--Robertson and Huppé only once mention how the two come together: "So Christ, in his sorrowful death on the cross fulfilled the old law by making manifest the two parts of the New Law: Dilige, Deum et proximum tuum."[41] Although I agree that the end of the poem is Truth--the unity of Love and Law--and am pleased that Robertson and Huppé recognize this relationship, this very recognition seems to undermine their earlier limitation of Truth to Charity or the New Law alone.

Robertson and Huppé seem to be echoing Dunning when they recognize that in Passus I, "the problem which naturally arises is that of how the folk must handle temporalia so that they may become pilgrims on the way to Truth."[42] Along these lines, Robertson and Huppé also concern themselves with the recurrent images of food and drink, clothing, and money mentioned by Dunning, but they try to endue these images with the multiple exegetical levels of meaning. They, too, recognize, if only summarily, that "Christ . . . is veritas."[43]

Basing their exegetical perspective on Augustine, who "is undoubtedly the fountainhead of the medieval exegetical tradition," Robertson and Huppé also claim to use "quotations or paraphrases from the later writers . . . to show the continuity of the doctrinal tradition which is evident in Piers Plowman."[44] As stated, this theoretical basis is strikingly similar to Dunning's. However, Robertson and Huppé have been criticized by both Morton Bloomfield and Father T. P. Dunning for their actual practice. Bloomfield asks,

> Assuming that part of Piers can be explained by the scriptural tradition of the Middle Ages, is it permissible to ignore almost all the commentaries of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and to rely almost exclusively on the commentaries of St. Augustine, Bede, the Glosa Ordinaria, St. Bruno Astensis and Peter Lombard? Some most important changes in exegetical approach occurred during the twelfth century.[45]

Robertson and Huppé justify themselves for not making "frequent allusions to the theological works of St. Bonaventura, of Occam, of Scotus, of Albertus Magnus, and, most

important, of St. Thomas Aquinas" because of the "antifraternal attitude" which they detect in Piers Plowman. However, they hastily add that "the antifraternal attitude in the poem does not limit the scope of Piers Plowman any more than the Dominican attitude of St. Thomas, for example, limits the scope of the Summa Theologica."[46]

Dunning also criticizes Robertson and Huppé for their misunderstanding of fourteenth-century Scriptural tradition:

> Though they mention the standard works on medieval Scriptural tradition . . . Robertson and Huppé seem unaware that the "spiritual" interpretation of Scripture was greatly in decline from the end of the twelfth century onwards. It cannot be said that the Fathers had established "the essential meanings" of Scripture.[47]

Dunning further notes that Robertson and Huppé's emphasis on the allegorical sense of Scripture is out of line with that of the fourteenth century, which

> sought above all else to determine the literal meaning, on which the spiritual sense . . . and any just moral application must be firmly based. . . . To take for granted, therefore, that Langland's Scriptural quotations may be interpreted according to an extreme form of "spiritual" exposition is surely to ignore the Scriptural tradition of the age in which he wrote.[48]

Dunning deplores the inductive leap that Robertson and Huppé have made from the exegetical interpretation of the Scriptural quotations in Piers to the interpretation of the poem itself:

> More dangerous, however, is to assume, as the authors seem to do, that because Langland quotes Scripture liberally--in the tradition of the popular moral teaching of his time--his poem

> itself may be interpreted in this fourfold fashion. . . . Langland's poem is not Sacred Scripture.[49]

Although Robertson and Huppé have weakened their own theoretical basis considerably, their ultimate base is patristic, particularly Augustinian, writings.

Mary Carruthers also bases her approach to the structure of the B-text of Piers the Plowman on an Augustinian concept. As the title of her book, The Search for St. Truth, indicates, she does realize that the ultimate purpose of the structure of the poem is to find Truth. She defines Truth in Biblical terms, and with a somewhat different emphasis from that of either Dunning or Robertson and Huppé. Carruthers notes the development of the Augustinian tradition of right rhetoric as apparent in the twelfth century and continuing into the fourteenth. Then she uses this tradition of right rhetoric to expose an exploratory development of a new rhetoric in Piers the Plowman. This rhetoric progresses through four different modes of meaning until it does, indeed, reach Truth.

Since she is dealing with rhetoric and language, Carruthers identifies Truth with Christ as Logos. Piers the Plowman is an epistemological search whose end is the knowledge of Truth: Logos is the ultimate significator of verbal signs. "Doing well depends on knowledge. . . . This view . . . is venerably orthodox: 'Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.'"[50] Carruthers regards corrupted language as symptomatic of a corrupted society:

> Passus II-IV demonstrate plainly that language is as much in need of redemption as society and suggests, moreover, that the two can only be accomplished together. For without understanding, there can be no reform, no change in human society, no development of man's relationship with God.[51]

Society's search for transcendental Truth is couched in terms of discovering a new rhetoric, but "only God 'of his goodnesse' can redeem the unchanging pattern of the Fall and open the way to Truth. . . .Truth's response to . . . Will is the pardon he sends at the beginning of Passus VIII."[52] According to Carruthers, the pardon presents a problem in reading, a misunderstanding between literal and spiritual meanings. It is the movement from literal language through personification allegory and speculum to the mode of figural language which constitutes the pilgrimage to St. Truth:

> Langland evidently regarded language, properly used, as a truthful sign of divinity, and, in the tradition of Augustine, he was conservative in his understanding of verbal signs and their relationship to their ultimate significator, Christ. The search for St. Truth is conducted in terms of a search for and an analysis of the signs that truly express him.[53]

Carruthers poses the problem of finding meaning and structure in Piers in terms of grappling with the extremely slippery littera of the text. She reproaches those who jump to "read the allegory" of Piers before dealing with the littera:

> Piers Plowman is an allegory which devotes its primary energies to redeeming its own littera. Poetry is a cognitive art, "in the service of wisdom," but the verbal medium in which it is conducted is full of traps, and to assume that

> the words of this poem are not inherently problematical is the mark of a fool--

particularly of the poem's biggest fool, Will.[54]

Carruthers bases her theory on Augustine's "search for a new Christian rhetoric to replace the false rhetoric of the Latin schools, which had blinded him to the truths of God," traced in his Confessions.[55] In the Confessions, "Augustine attached a cognitive value to language. . . . Without a true rhetoric reflecting a true intelligence . . . of the revealed Word there can be no salvation."[56] Carruthers mentions Isidore of Seville's and Thomas Aquinas' concern with "right reading" and the correct "reading [of] the Truth concealed in the outward signs of God's revelation," including language.[57] She includes Langland with those who believe that

> the purpose of language is to teach or rather remind the listener of the truth. Words themselves do not teach, as Augustine tells Adeodatus in De magistro, but are known to be truthful by being referred to the Truth which dwells within both the speaker and the listener, which is Christ.[58]

Then Carruthers reveals a structure of Piers the Plowman by taking the reader through four progressive modes of meaning in the poem. The first mode is literal language, which fails to communicate. Will mistakes Holy Church's words about Truth. For example, when she refers to Truth as being the truest treasure on earth, Will understands a literal earthly treasure. These cross-references of words lead to a lack of communication: the more Holy Church explains to Will

about Truth, the more questions he asks and the less he understands. The instability of literal language, or the gap between it and Truth, is exemplified by both Lady Meed and False. They are prime corrupters of the usual referents of words and are granted such license in their marriage charter.

The next mode of language that the poem moves into is that of personification allegory. This mode is exemplified by such figures as Conscience and the Seven Deadly Sins. This mode is still far removed from Truth; so the descriptions of the Seven Deadly Sins have none of the spiritual resonance one might expect. Instead of seeing "the hidden nature of avarice . . . what we see vividly is a threadbare coat and a desperate louse."[59] This tendency towards literalness is not only true

> of the language used of the sins [it] is also true of the language they use. Avarice' conversation with Repentance . . . reveals his constant bent toward completely literal concerns and literal understanding, away from abstract, or spiritual, or metaphoric language.[60]

So, in this conversation, words are still being used at cross-purposes, as they were used by Will and Holy Church.

Carruthers labels the third mode of language as <u>speculum</u>:

> from the twelfth century on, grammar is frequently analyzed as an allegorical mirror, like the mirror of nature and the mirror of history, a real correspondence to the processes of man's mind and to man's relationship with the things around him, including God.[61]

Of course, the best example of this mode of language is the

"infamous 'grammatical metaphor' of Passus IV of the C-text, in which [Langland] develops the relationship of God, man, and Christ in terms of the grammatical accord between an antecedent and its adjective. . . ."[62] This mode is evident in the B-text, too; it is introduced in Passus XI and

> provides Will with a whole new image of himself, in a context that is simultaneously human and spiritual. It is thus a mode of self-perception that is a radical alternative to the overly rational, piecemeal, and personified self-images that Will meets earlier in the Vita de Dowel. This change of perception on Will's part is vital to the poem's progress, for it must occur in order to enable the poem to break out of the deadening, self-limited circularity of the debates in Passus VIII-X and to prepare for the vision "face to face" of Passus XVIII.[63]

In the speculum mode of the poem, Will sees his own life in Fortune's mirror and a vision of Kynde or the speculum naturae which Imaginatyf, "a kind of talking version of the mirror," explains to him.[64] Imaginatyf

> has cleared up one form of Will's cognitive problem, only to leave him with a more mysterious one. The terms in which Will's search is recast by Imaginatyf are not the misleading abstractions of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest, but the living figures of Trajan and Piers the Plowman. This shift of mode signals the next major development in the cognitive structure of the poem, which occurs in Passus XIII.[65]

The function of Imaginatyf and the speculum mode is to make Will "understand the relationship between the image and its creator that is embodied in the speculum."[66]

The final mode of signification is that of figurally significant action, which is initiated by Patience in Passus

XIII. The difference between literal understanding and figural is pointed out at Clergy's dinner: "The doctor eats earthly dishes, stews, soups, meats of more cost. Patience and Will also eat, but the food they consume is spiritual and penitential."[67] Carruthers explains the figura as a Biblical concept essential to the true life of the Christian as implied in

> the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. . . . Charity is Christ, and to embody charity is to mirror Christ. Thus, the man of Christ and of his saints, as Augustine shows himself to be in the Confessions; he mirrors God's charity and shows himself to be part of his redemptive pattern for man in all that he does, by deliberately invoking the figural meaning of his life and conversion.[68]

The figural mode is initiated by Patience, as noted in the difference between the two dinners; it becomes evident in the change in the Tree of Charity from a static emblem as described by Anima to a continually moving symbol as beheld by Will; and it is the end of Haukyn's resignification that takes place before Will's very eyes. Thus the figural mode coexists with others until Will meets Abraham, who "must be figurally understood."[69] Then, "with the advent of the Good Samaritan . . . Will enters a world whose reality is wholly the figural pattern. He takes part in a parable."[70]

So, Carruthers traces the search for St. Truth through three progressive modes of meaning in order to arrive at the fourth, the figura, wherein Truth is found. This cognitive structure is theoretically based in patristic writings and

seems to be intuitively right and internal to the poem. However, Carruthers' emphasis on Haukyn's place in the poem, since his position is changed radically in the C-text, seems to weaken her argument. Carruthers claims that "Haukyn justly climaxes the Vita de Dowel" because he is "seen first as a wholly earthly character and then in a manner more and more spiritual in its reference. Haukyn's resignification recapitulates that of the poem, from literal character to personification to speculum and figural type."[72] The importance placed on Haukyn's place in the poem is undermined by his placement among the Seven Deadly Sins in the C-text, thus weakening Carruthers' argument somewhat.

Throughout her book, Carruthers adamantly rejects the use of the word "level" to indicate the different modes of signification because the term seems

> deeply misleading for Piers Plowman. The change in allegorical mode from personification to figural allegory is not a matter of adding (or subtracting) "levels"; it is a matter of a whole new kind of narrative mode. . . . "Level" seems to imply a basic sameness in the narrative structure; the concept is thus too limited and too static to be of any real use in this poem.[73]

She also denies that the "various forms of personification, figuralism, fable, metaphor, exegesis, social satire, and sermon are . . . the building blocks of a cathedral. . ."[74] Then she denigrates John Lawlor's attempt to reconcile the presence of "both a formidable simplicity of main design and a degree of minor graphic representation in which the eye

loses itself in detail" in defending Piers the Plowman's often haphazard movement.[75] Yet Piers is an attempt to find Truth, to point man toward God, as is the Gothic cathedral.

Dunning, Robertson and Huppé, and Carruthers all begin with the writings of Augustine in their explications of the thought and structure of Piers the Plowman. Augustine's writings do seem to be a good beginning, but the effects of the passage of time between Augustine and Langland must be taken into account. Later and influential thinkers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, modified the teachings in Augustine's writings, and these men's teachings had undergone even further modification, e.g. by Scotus and Occam, by the time Langland wrote Piers the Plowman in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Although Dunning, Robertson and Huppé, and Carruthers all begin with Augustine's writings, their emphases differ with their choices of different Augustinian writings. Dunning uses Augustinian works which are concerned with truth and theology; Robertson and Huppé use Augustinian works in which the exegesis of Scripture is foremost; and Carruthers uses the Confessions, which contains Augustine's search for a right rhetoric. Each concentrates in one area of Augustine's writings, excluding the remainder of the corpus. But there does seem to be some consensus that Augustine's writings provide a good theoretical basis for studying Piers the Plowman as well as other medieval literature. Perhaps in the matter of structure, however, other Augustinian concepts would be more helpful.

The writings of Augustine espouse an allegorical and hierarchical world view in which the "idea of analogy was . . . the only epistemological method considered valid."[76] Three elements of this world view--proportion of structure, luminosity, and analogical purpose--particularly as described in the writings of Augustine and the Platonists of Chartres, have provided a theoretical basis not only for the construction and appreciation of the Gothic cathedral but also for the study and appreciation of the structure of medieval literature. Both cathedrals and literary works are a harmonizing of parts built toward the same end: the pointing of man toward God; divine illumination of the human mind; Truth. Erwin Panofsky, working with St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica, and Robert Jordan, exploring Geoffrey Chaucer's two major works, both use the building of a Gothic cathedral, according to Augustinian principles, as a metaphor for the construction of literary works.

The same harmony of parts necessary to produce the single end found in a cathedral has been found by Erwin Panofsky in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas. Panofsky says that the end of both the High Gothic cathedral and the end of the High Scholastic Summa is totality: both aimed at "one perfect and final solution."[77] In the thirteenth century, both the architectural embodiment and the scholastic continuance of the theory of Augustine were built on the same structural principles and shared the same purpose. "The cathedral

was the intimation of ineffable Truth," says von Simson;[78] Panofsky says, "The very raison d'etre of Early and High Scholasticism . . . is to establish the unity of truth."[79]

As the appearance of the Gothic cathedral reflected its structure and permitted man "to re-experience the very processes of architectural composition [so] the membrification of the Summa permitted him to re-experience the very processes of cogitation."[80] Panofsky says that a man imbued with the medieval allegorical world-view would not have been satisfied had not the structure of the cathedral and the Summa permitted him to re-experience those very processes. Such a man, imbued "with the Scholastic habit, would look upon the mode of architectural presentation, just as he looked upon the mode of literary presentation, from the point of view of manifestatio."[81]

Panofsky calls manifestatio, or rhetorical clarification, "the first controlling principle"[82] of both Early and High Scholasticism and Gothic, and he calls "arrangement according to a system of homologous parts and parts of parts" the second requirement.[83] The second requirement "is most graphically expressed in the uniform division and subdivision of the whole structure" of Scholastic writing[84] and can be clearly seen in the divisions marked off by the piers in the arcade and triforium, and in the subdivisions between the piers in the triforium and in the clerestory. The primary purpose of the many elements that compose a cathedral and the Summa, to

insure stability and validity, would have been taken for granted from the point of view of manifestatio.[85]

Panofsky's area of study is the era of High Scholasticism in the thirteenth century, but he incidentally remarks that "the shift from High to Late Scholasticism is 1340. . . . By this time the energies of High Scholasticism . . . had either been channelled into poetry and, ultimately, humanism . . . or into antirational mysticism."[86] Perhaps taking this hint from Panofsky, Robert Jordan recognizes a common purpose and an analogous method of construction in the Gothic cathedral and the Troilus and Criseyde and The Canterbury Tales of Langland's contemporary, Geoffrey Chaucer. In Chaucer and the Shape of Creation, Jordan says that "Chaucer was a builder in this very literal sense, and . . . he expressed his feelings for life--this life and the other--through the inorganic materials and structures of Gothic Art."[87] Both a Gothic cathedral and the Troilus and Criseyde are made up of inorganic building blocks, and both ultimately point toward God; but Jordan does not press the analogy any further, saying that "beyond this basic orientation to principles of structure the analogy cannot be drawn."[88]

After rescuing the term "structure" from its post-romantic pejoration, Jordan traces elements of medieval aesthetic theory from the Timaeus of Plato through the writings of the Christian Fathers, particularly St. Augustine, into the quantitative aesthetics of the Gothic cathedral and the literary theory of

medieval humanism. The elements he traces are "the divine principles of hierarchy, analogy and measured structure from theology and cosmology into art" as translated by the Gothic builders and serious literary artists.[89] Then Jordan discusses Troilus and Criseyde as "Chaucerian Gothic," pointing out its vertical, horizontal, and cosmic structure.

The vertical structure is two-levelled, consisting of the narrator's running commentary and the love story of Troilus. The love story is not only a complete entity known by the narrator, but it is foretold to the reader, and so the main concern is the disposition of parts. As a Gothic cathedral is conceived as a totality and then the totality is achieved by additive and reduplicative principles of the disposition of inorganic units, so Troilus and Criseyde is a preconceived whole, achieved by the same principles.

The narrator also "articulates the sequential or horizontal" structure. His exhortations at the beginning and end of each book make the structure explicit, explicitness of structure being a Gothic characteristic: "The function of line in the Gothic interior, dividing the whole into parts and parts of parts is approximated in Troilus by the voice of the narrator."[90] The cosmic structure is found with the abrupt appearance of the envoi and the suddenly serious voice of the narrator. The change in tone reflects a change in perception and a redefinition of love in "the context of universal Christianity."[91] The final stanza is the pinnacle

which completes the vertical structure: "What Dante said of the Commedia in the Epistle to Can Grande is true of Troilus and Criseyde: 'the work ends in God himself.'"[92]

Of Troilus and Criseyde, Jordan concludes that although

> Chaucer did not deliberately set about to "build" theology in the manner of the Abbot Suger . . . he does . . . dispose the elements of his poem according to the pattern of a rational, preconceived structure whose apex is divine truth and whose base is sentient life.[93]

Chaucer's art is an analogue of theology.

In discussing the Canterbury Tales, Jordan talks of concepts of unity. The Tales articulate a relationship between whole and parts which neither robs "the parts of integrity and completeness" nor distracts "from the integrity of the whole."[94] But, in order to achieve this unity, "Chaucer's art must pay [the] price . . . [of] hard outlines, imperfect resolutions, and exposed seams."[95] Using Wolfflin's terms, Jordan calls the result "not a 'unified unity' but a 'multiple unity' which allows each element its full play and autonomy yet holds them together within a controlling outline."[96]

So, Panofsky and Jordan also begin with Augustinian principles, and they, too, have their own emphasis: the harmonizing of parts to reach a single end in the structures of both cathedrals and literary works. Panofsky applies theological structural principles to theological writings; Jordan advances one step and applies those principles to "secular" writings. However, Jordan may be criticized on the same grounds on which

Dunning and Bloomfield criticized Robertson and Huppe: Jordan does not take account of the modifications in Gothic architecture that occurred during the two hundred years between the High Gothic era and the era of Chaucer and Langland. Gothic architecture had become so modified in England by Langland's time as to merit its distinction as the Perpendicular style.

If Troilus and Criseyde and the Canterbury Tales are constructed in such a manner as to have their apex in God, making it instructive to compare their construction to that of a Gothic cathedral, surely it would be even more instructive to discover analogues between the more contemporary Perpendicular adaptation of the Gothic and Piers the Plowman, whose purpose is much more explicitly to find Truth. Truth and structure in Piers the Plowman are concerns of Dunning, Robertson and Huppe, and Carruthers. Taking a cue from Panofsky and Jordan and shifting the emphasis from concerns with theological content, exegetical levels of meaning, or right rhetoric, to the hierarchical, analogical principles at the heart of the cathedral, I would like to advance one more step by exploring structural parallels in two works which are shaped to the end of Truth: the Perpendicular cathedral and the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest of Piers the Plowman.

There seems to be general agreement that the purpose of Piers is to find Truth, but there is some disagreement about exactly what Truth is. Although Dunning, Robertson and Huppe, and Carruthers give different definitions of Truth, they all

recognize the definition of Truth that I find in Piers the Plowman. As defined by the poem, Truth is the equation that Love equals Law and that equation is embodied in the person of Christ. But the problem of how Piers reaches Truth remains. I would like to consider the poem as a structure in intellectual space as parallel to a cathedral which is a structure in physical space.

The Vita is composed of three main visions: the Vision of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest; the Vision of the Tree of Charity; and the Vision of Abraham, Moses, and the Good Samaritan. Although these visions are not at all identical in physical space (i.e., in the number of lines or passus devoted to each), each vision does cover exactly the same amount of intellectual space. Each vision begins on the level of a question posed by the dreamer; each then enters an explanatory level which progresses steadily upward toward Truth; each finds Truth on a third and common level of intellectual light. The levels of these visions are not marked, and all three visions culminate in the same entity, unifying the disparate elements in such a way that the third level is not a clearly distinct level, but an extension, giving the illusion of only one level.

Intellectual light is present immediately after the base question and gradually increases until it floods in at the top. This structure leaves only one small level without light: the level of the opening question. I would like to go through each vision, pointing out the comparable levels in each and

how each does rise from a base through increasing intellectual light to the level of Truth. Although these visions must be read in a chronological order, they are not chronologically or sequentially related. I say this because the first two visions break off abruptly before reaching the uppermost levels and because all three visions culminate in the person of Christ at approximately the same time. Therefore, these visions seem to be much more analogous to three sections of the nave wall of a cathedral being constructed simultaneously and reaching the clerestory level at the same time.

The first vision, or section, of the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest begins with Will asking what manner of man Dowel is. There is no intellectual light present in this base-level question. Will is completely in the dark, as he readily admits:

> Thus robed in ressett ich romede a-boute
> Al a somer seson for to sek dowel,
> [And] frainede ful ofte of folke that ich mette,
> Yf eny wiht wist wher dowel was at ynne,
> And what man he myghte be of meny man ich askede.[97]

The first "man" Will asks about Dowel is Thought. Thought defines Dobet and Dobest as well as Dowel, indicating that Will has no idea who or what Dowel represents since he has shown no knowledge of Dowel's two intimates. With this definition, the vision immediately enters the explanatory level and begins the upward progress to the level of Truth. Since Truth is the Unity of Love and Law in the body of Christ, each step towards that level should be a step toward unifying seemingly disparate concepts. Thought defines the three Do's:

"Dowel and dobet," quath he "and dobest the thridde
Beth thre fayre vertues and beeth nauht ferr to fynde.
Who-so is trew of hys tonge and of hus two handes,
And thorw leel labour lyueth and loueth his emcristine,
And ther-to trewe of hus tail and halt wel his handes,
Nouht dronkelewe ne deynous dowel hym folweth,
Dobet doth al this ac 3ut he doth more;
He is lowe as a lombe and loueliche of speche,
And helpeth herteliche alle men of that he may aspare.
. . . . . .
And is ronne in-to religion and rendreth hus byble,
And precheth to the puple seynt poules wordes;
. . . . . .
Dobest bere sholde the bisshopes croce,
And halye with [the] hoked ende ille men to goode,
And with the pyk putte adoune preuaricatores legis,
Lordes that lyuen as hem lust and no lawe a-counten;
For here mok and here meeble suche men thynken
That no Bisshop sholde here byddings with-sitte.
Ac dobeste sholde nat dreden [hem] bote do as god hihte,
Nolite timere eos qui possunt occidere corpus.
Thus dowel and dobet diuinede, and dobest,
And crounede on to be kyng to culle with-oute synne
That wolde nat don as dobest diuinede and tauhte.
Thus dowel and dobet and dobest the thridde
Crounede on to be kyng and kepen ous alle,
And reulen alle reaumes by here three wittes;
Bote other-wise ne elles nat bot as thei three assented."
(C,xi,78-105)

So Thought translates Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest, aiding understanding and initiating the lifting of the mind's eye until it can behold Truth. The reader and Will can now make some sense of these entities as being related to setting an example by true-living, teaching about true-living and being charitable, and practicing what one preaches. This is more meaningful and more readily applicable to daily experience than the unexplained concept of the three Do's, but not meaningful in the context of the search for Truth until one understands that these definitions (and all that follow) are pointing toward the apical level of Truth, or the Unity of Love

and Law. Somehow, Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest must merge into unity at the culmination of the section, just as Love and Law are to be merged.

Will continues his intellectual journey, searching not only for Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest, but for the unifying relationship among them. As he questions more "men," the answers he receives seem to move steadily toward a more unifying vision, approaching ever more closely to the Light at the top--physical light in the cathedral, intellectual light in the poem.

The next explicator of the three Do's is Wit, who replies to Will's inquiry:

> "Syre dowel dwelleth," quath wit "nat a daye hennes,
> In a castle that kynde made of foure kyne thynges;
> Of erthe, of aire yt is made medled to-gederes,
> With wynd and water wittyliche en-ioyned.
> Kynde hat closed ther-ynne craftilyche with alle
> A lemman that he loueth wel lyke to hym-selue;
> Anima hue hatte to hure hath enuye
> A prout prikyere of fraunce, princeps huius mundi;
> And wolde wynne hur away with wiles, yf he myghte.
> And Kynde knoweth this wel and kepeth hure the betere,
> And dooth hure with syre dowel, duk of thes marches.
> Dobet ys here damesele syre doweles douhter,
> To serue that lady leelly bothe late and rathe.
> Dobest ys aboue bothe, a bisshopes peer,
> And by hus lerynge is ladde that ilke lady Anima."
> (C,xi,127-41)

This is one step in the unification of the three Do's. They inhabit one castle, guarding the lady Anima. Not only are the three Do's enclosed in one body, allegorically speaking, there is also a familial relationship expressed between Dowel and Dobet. However, Dobest remains aloof.

After this definition of the three Do's, Wit makes a brief statement about Dowel that hints at the Light of Truth and provides an image that will be recalled later as an associative link between this section and the second section in which the dreamer is searching for the meaning of the Tree of Charity. Wit says that married people do well because marriage combines both law and love: "'Ho so lyueth in lawe and loue doth wel / As thes weddid men!'" (C,xi,202-203).

Further defining the three Do's, Wit's explanation reaches even closer to Truth when he says:

> "And thus ys dowel, my frend, to do as lawe techeth,
> To louye and to lowe the and no lyf to greue.
> Ac to louye and to lene leyf me, that is dobet;
> Ac to 3eue and to 3eme bothe 3onge and olde,
> Helen and helpen is dobest of all.
> For the more a man may do by so that he do hit,
> The more is he worth and worthi of wyse and goode
> ypreised."
>
> (C,xi,304-10)

At the level of Truth, this section will end with the finding of a man who is worthy and has proven his worth by earning the names of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest. This is the ultimate unity to which each successive definition brings us closer.

The next person the dreamer meets and questions about the three Do's is Clergy. Clergy's definition has the closeness to Truth that Wit's had:

> "By cryst," quath clergie, "yf thow coueyte dowel,
> Kep the ten commaundemens and kep the fro synne;
> And by-leyf leelly how godes sone atyghte
> On the mayde marie for mankynnes sake,
> And by-cam man of that mayde with-oute mannes kynde.
> . . . . . .
> Thus by-leyue and leaute and loue is the thridde,
> That maketh men to dowel, dobet, and dobest."
>
> (C,xii,142-46,
> 161-62)

Searching further, the dreamer inquires of Recklessness, who does not define the three Do's but makes some remarks related to the ultimate unity in Christ:

> "For lawe with-oute leaute leye there a bene!
> Other eny science vnder sonne the seuene ars and alle,
> Bote loue and leaute [hem] lede y-lost is al the tyme
> Of [hym] that traveleth ther-on bote treuthe be hus lyuynge.
> Lo, loue and leaute been oure lordes bookes,
> And cristes owen cleregie he cam fro heuene to teche hit,
> . . . . . .
> For-thi lerne we lawe of loue as oure lord taugte."
> (C,xiii,92-97,119)

Te next encounter is with Imaginatyf, who both defines the three Do's and makes related explanatory remarks. Imaginatyf speaks of Moses and Christ, both important images which will recur in later contexts where their relationship to one another will be explained and then linked to the Truth:

> "Ac for to louye and lene and lyue wel and by-leyue,
> Ys ycallid caritas, kynde loue in english;
> And that is dobet, yf eny suche be a blessed man, that helpeth
> [That] pees be and pacience and poure with-oute defaute;
> . . . . . .
> Ac comunliche connynge and vnkynde rychesse,
> As, loreles to be lordes and lewede men techers,
> And holy churche horen help auerous and coueytous,
> Droweth vp dowel and distruyeth dobest.
> Ac grace is a gras ther-fore to don hem eft growe;
> . . . . . .
> For moyses wittnesseth that god wrot in stoon with hus fynger,
> Lawe of loue oure lorde wrot longe er crist were.
> And crist cam and confermede and holy [kirke] made,
> And in sond a sygne wrot and seide to the Iewes,
> 'That seeth hym-self synneles cesse nat, ich hote,
> To stryke with stoon other with staf this strompet to dethe.'"
> (C,xv,13-16,19-23, 37-42)

At a banquet, the dreamer hears two definitions of the three Do's which are essentially identical and which clearly point to Truth. The doctor defines the three:

> "Bote do as doctours telleth for dowel ich hit holde;
> That traueileth to teche othere for dobet ich it holde;
> And he that doth as he techeth ich halde hit for a dobest."
>
> (C,xvi,125-27)

And Clergy quotes Piers the Plowman's definition:

> "Quath peers the plouhman '*pacientes vincunt*.
> By-for perpetual pees ich shal preoue that ich seide,
> And a-vowe by-for God and for-sake hit neuere,
> That *disce*, *doce*, *dilige deum* and thyn enemye.'"
>
> (C,xvi,138-40)

Also at the banquet, Patience adds his own definition:

> "And send ous contricion to clanse with oure soules,
> And confession, to culle alle kynne synnes,
> And satisfaccion, the whiche fulfulleth the fadres will of heuene.
> And these been dowel and dobet and dobest of alle."
>
> (C,xvii,25-28)

This final progressive definition of the three Do's occurs in the last passus of the seven belonging to the Vision of Dowel. It seems that the dreamer has completed one section of the search for Truth, for in the second passus of the four belonging to the Vision of Dobet, Will's search returns to the base level, to the beginning of a new section, as he questions Liberum Arbitrium as to the whereabouts of the Tree of Charity. This seems to be an abrupt change in direction in the progress toward Truth as the dreamer inspects the Tree and Liberum Arbitrium describes it for him.

The base question of this vision is comparable to the

base question of the first vision. There, Will asks the nature of Dowel; here, Will asks the nature of the Tree of Charity:

> . . . bote thenne took ich hede,
> Hit had shoriers to shoue hit vp thre sides of o lengthe,
> And of o kynne colour and o kynde, as me thouhte,
> All thre yliche longe and yliche large.
> Muche meruailede me on what more thei growede;
> And efte askede of him of what wode thei were?
> (C,xix,19-24)

Here, again, there is no intellectual light present. Will's question shows the same lack of knowledge that his question about Dowel showed: At the time of his first question, Will was not aware of the existence of Dowel's two counterparts; now, he sees three supports at the base of the Tree of Charity, but instead of learning from the relationship developed between the three Do's, Will begins completely anew by asking the nature of the wood of which the props are made, rather than asking the nature of the relationship between the three. As in the first vision, intellectual light is present with the first answer. Liberum Arbitrium does not answer Will's simplistic, unprofitable question, but starts the process of illumination over again by explaining the unifying relationship between the three props:

> "Thees thre shoryeres," quath he, "that bereth vp
> this plonte,
> Thei by-tokneth trewely the trinite of heuene;
> Thre persons in-departable perpetuel were euere,
> Of o wyl, of o wit and here-with ich kepe
> The frut of this faire tree fro thre wykkede wyndes,
> And for fallyng of stok hit faille nouht of hus myghte.
> The worlde is a wykkede wynde to hem that wolde treuthe;
> . . . . . .

And with the ferste plaunke ich palle hum doune
  potencia-dei-patris.
Thanne is flessh a fel wynde in flouryng-tyme;
. . . . . .
And al for-bit caritas to the bare stalke;
Thanne sette ich the secunde plaunke, sapiencia-dei-
  patris,
The which is the passion and penaunce and the par-
  fytnesse of ihesus,
And ther-with ich warde hit other-whyle til hit wexe
  rype.
Thenne fondeth the feende my frut to destruye,
. . . . . .
. . . ne were hit vnder-shored certes hit sholde nat
  stande.
. . . . . .
Thenne palle ich a-downe the pouke with the thridde
  shoryere,
The whiche is spiritus-sanctus and soth-fast byleyue,
And that is grace of the holy gost; and thus gat ich
  the mastrye."

(C,xix,25-31,34,
35,39-43,
47,50-52)

This description of the Tree of Charity introduces trinitarian images which are reminiscent of the trinity of the Do's and which will be recalled in the third vision or section of the poem, but it is not until Liberum Arbitrium describes the three degrees of fruit on the Tree that the image which associates this second section with the first is recalled. Thus, though the sections are not identical, they are similar. When the lower level of fruit is defined as the fruit of matrimony, it seems only natural to recall that Dowel was defined in the same terms as part of the progress toward Truth and the concept of unity of disparates in that vision. The association of such images links the three sections, making them comparable and showing that they are all built toward

the same end. Liberum Arbitrium articulates this associative image for us in response to Will's question about the fruit on the Tree:

> "Whi groweth this frut in thre degrees?" "for a good skyle," he seide;
> "Her by-neothe ich may nyme, if ich neode [hadde,]
> Matrimonye, a moiste frut that multiplieth the peple.
> Thenne a-boue is a betere frut, ac bothe two ben goode,
> Wedewehode, more worthier than wedlok, as in heuene.
> Thanne is virginite, more vertuous and fairest as in heuene,
> . . . . . .
> In kynges court an knyghtes the clennest men and fairest
> Shullen serue for the lord selue so fareth god almyghty."
> (C,xix,84-89, 95-96)

Not only does the image of matrimony recall the search for Dowel, but here also the fruit of matrimony is part of a triad--the "inferior" third, which is yet intimately related to the two "superior" thirds. This unifying relationship between three entities is reminiscent of the relationship between the three Do's. Images of kings and knights, which will be picked up in the resolution of Christ as the embodiment of Truth, along with the Dowel and marriage images, are also mentioned in this passage.

As the Vision of the Tree of Charity develops, more intellectual light is present. This increase in light is, again, a result of the disparate images becoming increasingly more unified. The three levels of fruit become unified when the dreamer identifies the fruit of the Tree of Charity with mankind:

"This is a propre plonte," quath ich, "and pryueliche
hit bloweth,
And bryngeth forth faire frut, folke of all nacion,
Bothe parfit and imparfit. . . ."
(C,xix,101-103)

In the lines that follow these, allegory resurfaces with Old Age shaking the Tree and the devil gathering the fallen fruit and placing it in limbo. In order to defend the Tree, Liberum Arbitrium seizes the second prop, or the Son of the Trinity, which links directly both with the level of Truth where the resolution is the Son and with the next section which allegorically concerns the Trinity and its unity.

One can easily see that these two sections are not identical. This second vision does not have nearly the number of steps toward unification before it breaks off as the first vision has. However, both do make comparable progress toward the concept of unification before breaking off abruptly. These sections are also comparable in the images which appear. In this second vision, the dreamer tells us that Liberum Arbitrium teaches leech-craft to the Son:

Ac liberum arbitrium leche-crafte hym tauhte,
Til plenitudo temporis hih tyme a-prochede,
That suche a surgeyn setthen yseye was ther neuere,
Ne non so faithfol fysician; for, alle that [hym]
bysouhte,
He lechede hem of here langoure, lazars and blynde
bothe;
. . . . . .
And comune wymmen conuertede and clansede hem of synne.
(C,xix,138-43)

This image links the second vision with both the first and the third, because leech-craft is the means by which the Son

earns the name of Dobet and the Good Samaritan in the third vision is a type of the Son as he gives medical aid to the injured man.

The third section begins with a return to the level of a question at which there is no intellectual light. When Will meets Abraham, the question he asks is: "'Of whennes art thow?'" (C,xix,185). This question parallels the two which open the other two visions in that it is misdirected. It shows that Will is completely in the dark intellectually. Instead of asking Abraham's identity, which should be the first step, Will asks where Abraham is from. In like manner, Will inquired what kind of wood the shoriers were made of and what kind of man and where Dowel lived instead of asking the purpose of the props or the relationship among the three or asking what Dowel is. Again, intellectual light begins to come in with the first response to Will's misdirected question. The answers which permit light are answers to the questions Will should have asked, not direct responses to the questions he did ask.

Abraham is an Old Testament figure associated with the Trinity who, representing Faith, himself forms a trinity with Moses representing Hope and the Good Samaritan representing Love. The concern in this vision is, again, the unity of three disparate entities. When the dreamer meets him, Abraham is searching for one whose cognizance is the Trinity, looking for Christ who is Truth, the Unity of Love and Law, and

the unity of the Trinity. In answer to Will's misdirected question, Abraham discourses on the role of faith in the comprehension of the unity of the Trinity:

> "Ich am with faith," quath that freek, "hit falleth nat me to lye,
> An heraude of armes er eny lawe were."
> "What is hus conysaunce," quath ich, "in hus cote-armure?"
> "Thre persones in o pensel," quath he, "departable from other;
> O speche and o spirit spryngeth out of alle,
> Of o wit, of on wil, were neuere a-twynne;
> And sondry to seo vpon solus deus he hoteth."
> "Siththen thei ben surlepes," quath ich, "thei han sondry names."
> "That is soth," saide he, "the syre hatte pater;
> And the secunde is a sone of the syre, filius;
> The thridde is that halt al a thyng by hym-selue,
> Holigost is hus name and he is in alle."
> "This is merk thyng for me," quath ich, "and for meny other,
> How o lord myghte lyue a thre ich leyue hit nat," ich seyde.
> "Must not to muche ther-on," quath faith, "tyl thow more knowe,
> Ac looke thow leyue hit leelly al thy lyf-tyme,
> That thre by-longeth to on lorde that lygaunce cleymeth,
> Mighte, and [a] mene to seo hus owen Mighte,
> Of hym-self and of hus seruant and [what] suffreth hem bothe.
>
> (C,xix,186-204)

This situation of question and answer is analogous to the situation in the first and second visions. In the numbers of questions and answers, it is more analogous to the first; however, it differs in that Will is gaining his information from only three sources in this vision, as contrasted with more sources in the first vision and only one source in the second. The end of the questioning remains the same: Each vision progresses steadily toward the concept of unity, most

notably the unity of three different entities. Toward this end, Abraham makes further remarks:

> Eue was of adam and out of hym ydrawe,
> And abel of hem bothe and alle thre of kynde;
> . . . . . .
> . . . in god, fader of heuene,
> Was the sone in hym-selue in a simile, as eue
> Was, whanne god wolde out of the wye y-drawe.
> And as abel of adam and of hus wif eue
> Sprang forth and spak a spire of hem tweyne,
> So out of the syre and of the sone the seynt espirit of bothe
> Ys, and ay [was] and worth with-outen ende.
> . . . . . .
> In matrimonie aren thre and of o man cam alle thre,
> And to godhede goth thre and of o god is alle thre;
> Loo, treys encountre treys," quath he, "in godhede and in manhede."
>
> (C,xix,218-19, 228-34,238-40)

The amount of intellectual light is increasing, but the level of total illumination has not yet been reached. Will's next question to Abraham indicates that he is still off the track:

> "Hauest thow seyen this?" ich seide, "alle thre, and o god?"
> "In a somer ich syh hym," quath he, "as ich sat in my porche,
> Where god cam goynge a-thre ryght by my gate; Tres uidit et unum adorauit.
>
> (C,xix,241-43)

Will has made some progress; Abraham does answer his question directly. But Will is not yet illuminated enough because he is concerned with sight rather than with faith. Abraham's explanation uses the image of marriage that we are familiar with from a definition of Dowel and from the fruit on the Tree of Charity. And, of course, we have been prepared for

the concern with the Trinity and its unity by the interrelationships between the three Do's and by the three levels of fruit on the same tree.

Will is more personally confronted with the problem in unifying disparate entities when he and Abraham meet Moses--the second figure in the allegorical trinity, representing Hope. Moses, too, is searching, but the object of his search is a knight--an image introduced in xix,95--who gave him the Law:

> "Ich am spes, [a spye]," quath he, "and spire after
> a knyght,
> That tooke me a maundement vp-on the mounte of synay,
> . . . . . .
> "Ys hit a-seled?" ich seide, "may men seo the letteres?"
> "Nay," he seyde, "ich seke hym that hath the seel to kepe,
> The whiche is criste and cristendome and a croys
> ther-on to honge.
> Were hit ther-with a-seeled ich wote wel the sothe,
> That lucifers lordshup ligge sholde ful lowe."
> "Leet se thi letteres," quath ich, "we myghte the lawe
> knowe."
> He plyghte forth a patent, a pece of an harde roche,
> Wher-on was write two wordes in this wise glossede;
> Dilige deum & proximum [tuum].
> This was the tyxt treweliche ich toke ful good gome;
> . . . . . .
> "Ys her al thy lordes lettere?" quath ich. "3e, [leue
> me," he] sayde,
> "And ho so worcheth after this write ich wold vndertake,
> Shal neuere deouel hym dere ne deth in soule greue.
> For thauh ich seye hit my-self ich haue saued with this
> charme
> Of men and of wymmen meny score thousend."
> (C,xx,1-2,6-14,
> 16-20)

Will's questions are still somewhat off base. He is still asking for ocular proof and understanding, asking to see Moses' law rather than to understand the importance of Moses himself. Moses' statements seem to contradict those of

Abraham. Abraham confirms Moses' statements, but the dreamer cannot reconcile for himself the seemingly disparate views of Abraham and Moses. So he chooses Abraham's law as being easier and dismisses Moses.

The difficulty the dreamer is having in finding any relationship between Abraham and Moses, or between Faith and Hope--much less any unity--is comparable to the problem he has in discovering the interrelationships between Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest. This is, in effect, the same search, serving the same purpose; now the search is on a slightly different basis and progresses closer and closer to the completion of all three sections in the shared, uppermost level of ultimate Truth.

However dissatisfied with Moses, the dreamer continues in company with both him and Abraham. The three of them meet the Good Samaritan, the third person of this allegorical trinity, who represents Love. Here is a retelling of the familiar parable from the Gospels in which Moses and Abraham, Hope and Faith, pass by a wounded man, but Love turns aside to help. Some of the wording in this passage recalls the three Do's and implies a comparison between Abraham/Faith and Dowel, between Moses/Hope and Dobet, and between the Good Samaritan/Love and Dobest:

> Faith on hym hadde furst a sight ac he fleih a-syde,
> And wolde nat neyhle hym by nyne londes lengthe.
> Hope cam hippyng after that hadde so ybosted
> Hou he with moyses maundement hade meny men holpen;
> And whanne he hadde siht of this sike, asyde he gan drawe,

And dredfulliche with-drow hym and dorste go no nerre.
Ac as sone so the samaritan hadde sighte of that syke,
He alyghte a-non of lyarde and ladde hym in hus hondes,
. . . . . .
He vnbokelede hus boteles and bothe he a-tamede;
With wyn and with oile hus wondes he can lithe;
Enbaumede hym and bond hu heuede and on bayarde hym sette,
And ledde hym forth to lauacrum lex-dei, a graunge,
Is sixe myle other seuene by-syde the newe markett,
And lefte hym there a lechinge to lyuen if he myghte.
And took two pans to the hosteler to take kepe to hym,
"And that goth more for hus medicine, ich make the good a3enwarde,
For [ich] may natelette," quath [that] ede, and lyarde he bestrydeth,
And rapede hym to ryde the righte wey to Ierusalem.
(C,xx,57-64, 68-77)

Perhaps Faith's lack of action suffers in comparison to Thought's definition of Dowel as setting an example by true-living, but Hope's reliance on his teachings does match up with Thought's definition of Dobet as teaching about true-living, and the Good Samaritan's actions combine teaching and doing, recalling the definition of Dobest as practicing what one preaches in xi,78-105.

Love, in the guise of the Good Samaritan, takes the wounded man to a grange called lex-dei. This is one more step towards the unification of Love and Law.

The dreamer is impressed with the Good Samaritan's action and, still unable either to reconcile Abraham's and Moses' teachings or to choose between them satisfactorily, follows him in order to question him about whether Moses' or Abraham's view of the way to Truth is the right one:

"A! syre," ich seide, "shul nat we by-leue
As faith and hus felawe spes enformede me bothe,

> In thre persones, a parceles departable from other,
> And alle thre bote o god? Thus abraham me tauhte.
> And hope afterwarde of god more me tolde,
> And lerede me for hus loue to louye al man-kynde,
> And hym abouen alle and hem as my-selue;
> Nother lacky ne alose ne leyue that ther were
> Eny wickeder in this worlde than y were myself,
> And most imparfit of alle persones and pacientliche suffre
> Alle manere of men and thauh ich myghte me venge,
> I sholde tholie and thonken hem that me vuel wolde."
> (C,xx,94-105)

To the dreamer's surprise, the Good Samaritan tells him not to separate the two points of view, but to follow them both. The Good Samaritan unifies the trinity of which we perceive him to be a part. As Love, he also unifies that trinity of virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love. Perhaps we are to recall that Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest are three fair virtues, also.

Representing Love, which includes and is the Law, the Good Samaritan points directly to Truth where Christ embodies both Love and the Law. In order to help the dreamer understand the unity of the Trinity, the Good Samaritan launches into illustrations of the unity of the Triune God. He compares the Trinity to the hand, which incorporates the fist, the palm, and the fingers. Then he compares the unity of the Trinity to the unity of wax, wick, and fire in a torch. As the fist is the hand, the palm is the hand, the fingers are the hand, the wax is the torch, the wick is the torch, and the fire is the torch, so the Father is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and Christ is God.

With these pronouncements, the development of this third

section breaks off, apparently short of completion, as did the other two sections. These three visions or sections are definitely not identical to each other; they are composed of varying elements. However, they do have similar elements, some identical elements, and a common end in the figure of Christ, whose position in the poem is analogous to the light which floods into the cathedral from the clerestory. Although completion of these three visions in the figure of Christ is not simultaneous and the third vision is not as explicitly completed in Christ as are the other two, all three do end on the same level of Truth.

Before he is able to experience the full intellectual light of Truth, the dreamer, in separate dreams, makes two intuitive leaps--the first:

> On was semblable to the samaritan and somdel to peers plouhman,
> Barfot on an asse bak, bootles cam prykye,
> With-oute spores other spere, and sprakliche he lokede,
> As is the kynde of a knyghte that cometh to be doubed,
> To geten hus gilte spores and galoches y-co[u]ped,
> Then was faith in a fenestre and cryde, "a! filij dauid!"
> As doth an heraud of armes when auntres cometh to Iustes.
> . . . . . .
> Thenne ich fraynede [at] faith 'what al that fare bymente,
> And he sholde iusten in ierusalem?' "iesus," he seide,
> "And fecche that the feond cleymeth, peers frut the plouhman."
> "Ys peers in this place?" quath ich, and he preynkte vpon me,
> "Liberum dei arbitrium," quath he, "for loue hath vndertake
> That this iesus of hus gentrise shal Iouste in peers armes,
> In hus helme and [in] hus haberion humana natura;

> That crist be nat knowe for consummatus deus.
> In peeres plates the plouhman this prykiere shal ryde;
> For no dint shal hym dere as in deitate patris."
> (C,xxi,8-14,
> 16-25)

Here Faith declares that Christ shall fetch the fruit that the devil has claimed from Piers the Plowman. Following this, Christ does indeed descend to Hell and rescue the fruit that the devil gathered when Old Age shook the Tree of Charity. Thus, the second vision, or section, reaches its level of completion, culminating in Christ:

> "Lo, me her," quath oure lorde, "lyf and soule bothe,
> For alle synful soules to saue oure beyere ryght.
> Myne thei were and of me ich may the beter hem cleyme.
> Al-thauh reson records and ryght of my-selue,
> That yf thei eten the appel alle sholden deye,
> Ich by-hihte hem nat here helle for euere."
> (C,xxi,373-78)

In the lines preceding and following these, Christ refers to himself as both the king's son and the king of kings, both alluding to the unity of the Trinity and uniting the images of kings that occur in the three visions.

In the first intuitive link, the dreamer identifies the Good Samaritan with Piers the Plowman; in the second, he identifies Piers the Plowman with Christ, thus equating the Good Samaritan/Love with Christ and completing the third vision, or section:

> Ich fel eft-sones a slepe and sodeynliche me mette,
> That peers the plouhman was peynted al blody,
> And cam yn with a croys by-fore the comune peuple,
> And ryght like in alle lymes to oure lord ihesu;
> And thenne calde ich conscience to kenne me the sothe.
> "Is this ihesus the Iouster?" quath ich, "that duden
> to dethe,

Other is hit peers plouhman? ho peynted hym so rede?"
Quath conscience, and kneolede tho, "these aren cristes armes,
Hus colours and hus cote-armure, and he that cometh so blody,
Hit is crist with his crois, conquerour of crystine."
(C,xxii,5-14)

This completion of the third section prepares us for the completion of the first. Someone enclosed in armor recalls the lady Anima enclosed in a castle with Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest. So, lastly, the first section reaches the level of Truth and full intellectual light as Christ earns the names of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest:

In hus Iuuente this Ihesus at [the] Iuwene feste
Turned water in-to wyn as holy writ telleth,
And ther by-gan god of hus grace gretliche to dowel.
. . . . . .
And whenne he was woxen more in hus modres absence,
He made lame to leepe and 3af light to blynd,
And fedde with two fisshes and with fyve loues
[Sore] a-fyngred fele folke, mo than fyf thousand.
Thus he comfortede careful and cauhte a grettere name,
The whiche was dobet wher that he wente.
. . . . . .
For-this the contreye ther ihesu cam cald hym <u>fili dauid</u>,
Nempnede hym of nazareth and no man so worthi
To beo caiser other kyng of the Kyngdom of Iuda.
. . . . . .
And when this dede was don, dobest he thouhte,
And 3af peers power and pardon he grauntede
To alle manere of men, mercy and for 3yuenesse,
And 3af hym myghte to asoylye men of alle manere synnes,
In couenant that thei come and knewe liched to paye
To peers pardon [the] plouhman. . . .
(C,xxii,108-10,
124-29,136-38,
182-87)

Not only is Christ the end of each of the three visions, or sections, he also unifies several images introduced in the search for Truth. But, Truth is not the resolution into

unity of the three Do's or any of the trinities introduced; Truth is the unity of Love and Law (xxii,100-102). All of the gradual, step-by-step, building up of the concept of unity is building support for the ultimate unity: Truth as the unity of Love and Law and the embodiment of this unity in one person, Christ. This is the ultimate goal of the work; each vision gradually enlarges Will's ability to receive intellectual light until he is capable of receiving the full intellectual light of Truth.

Another structure whose purpose is to let in light and lift the mind of man to the contemplation of Truth is the Perpendicular cathedral. The Perpendicular is a peculiarly English modification of the Gothic and is contemporary with Langland and Piers the Plowman. Although the Perpendicular retains its predecessor's purpose of admitting light and pointing man to Truth, there are three structural features of the Perpendicular which make interesting parallels to the structure of Piers that I have exposed.

The theory for the construction of the Gothic cathedral--particularly the elements of proportion of structure, luminosity, and analogical purpose--is described in the writings of Augustine and the Platonists of Chartres. Later medieval thinkers, even those "who differ as widely as do Hugh of St.-Victor and Thomas Aquinas [,] . . . ascribe to the beautiful two main characteristics: consonance of parts, or proportion, and luminosity."[98] "To the medieval thinker, beauty was not

a value independent of others, but rather the radiance of Truth, the splendor of ontological perfection, and that quality of things which reflects their origin in God."[99]

Beauty--of proportion, of luminosity, and of purpose--is to be found in the Gothic cathedral. Actually, the three are intimately related, both in theory and in practice: structural modifications which yielded the Gothic style of architecture were designed in order to increase the amount of light--both physical light and intellectual--and intellectual light is the actual purpose of the cathedral. Von Simson says, "Two aspects of Gothic architecture . . . are without precedent and parallel: the use of light and the unique relationship between structure and appearance."[100] Francis Bond notes,

> In a Gothic as compared with a Romanesque church or part of a church, there is usually a considerable increase in height. . . . The parts that rise are the pier arcade and the clerestory; the triforium tends to diminish in height, as its roof is flattened more and more. . . . A satisfactory elevation is one that allots one-half of the total height of the interior to the pier arcade, one-sixth to the triforium, and one-third to the clerestory.[101]

Bond continues, "The primary reason for the greater height of Gothic pier arcade and clerestory is a practical one; it is due to the desire to have taller windows and more light."[102] Von Simson speaks of the stained-glass windows of the Gothic as being "structurally and aesthetically not openings in the wall to admit light, but transparent walls. . . .[The windows] seem to merge, vertically and horizontally, into a continuous sphere of light."[103]

Thus, the structure of the Gothic is designed to a physical and an intellectual end, which are conflated in light. According to Platonic medieval light metaphysics, "light is the most noble of natural phenomena, the least material, the closest approximation to pure form" and "the principle of order and value."[104] There is a definite connection between the "aesthetics of light" and the "metaphysics of light," and if one is to understand the medieval mind, Von Simson says that the distinction between physical and transcendental light must be disregarded. The divine splendor not only penetrates the universe according to its dignity, thus allowing man to determine the value of a thing or its place in the hierarchy of beings by the degree to which it partakes of light, but it also "unifies those of His creatures that accept it."[105]

The Gothic cathedral was, "mystically and liturgically, an image of heaven."[106] Structure and physical luminosity in the Gothic cathedral are unified in the purpose of lifting the mind and the heart of man to the contemplation of God. The physical light that entered the sanctuary in greater abundance, because of the structural changes that Bond mentions, seemed to make mystical reality palpable to the senses.

All of this concern with light and purpose is retained in the Perpendicular cathedral. In fact, Bond characterizes the distinguishing features of English Gothic between c. 1330 and 1538 as movements toward the presence of more light, more apparent unity of structure, and more variety in the design

of piers.[107] Perpendicular cathedrals retained the ultimate purpose of pointing man to Truth, as conflated with light, so that "nothing was too precious to sacrifice to bigness of windows, to floods of light and acreage of stained glass."[108] "In late Gothic design the window was all important."[109] The apparent unity of structure was a result of the disappearance of the triforium and the patterning of mullioned walls which give "the impression . . . that the interior is one of a single story. Unity was the ideal of late Gothic design."[110]

Another characteristic of English Perpendicular, which might have interesting implications for the structure of Piers the Plowman, is the variety in the design of piers. In the Gothic, piers were designed identically; Bond recognizes three varieties of Perpendicular piers and then comments that "in Sherborne Choir and in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, the piers are entirely unsymmetrical masses, their form being wholly regulated by their functions."[111]

These structural distinctions of the Perpendicular style are remarkably paralleled in the structure of the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest which I have exposed. Both are ultimately concerned with light and Truth. Each vision of the Vita is apparently unified: There are three levels, as there were in the Gothic, but they are intimately related to give the appearance of unity just as the disappearing triforium gives the appearance of unity to the Perpendicular cathedral. The first level in each vision is so brief as to be almost non-existent:

it consists of a single inquiry of the dreamer, and admits of no intellectual light. Immediately after this question, each vision moves into the intermediate or explanatory level, and intellectual light begins to be present. The explanatory level consists of varying numbers of questions asked by Will and responses from various personages. The third level is that of unity, where all of the important multiple concepts are unified in the person of Christ and full intellectual light floods in. This level is comparable to the clerestory level of the cathedral. The vertical structure of the poem parallels the vertical structure of the Perpendicular cathedral: There are multiple levels, but they are disguised to give the appearance of one; light is present throughout except for the very brief opening level questions which may be seen as parallel to the brief bases of the piers.

The visions of the Vita are far from symmetrical or identical; the piers in the Perpendicular cathedral are varied; so the adjacent sections of the pier arcade are not symmetrical or identical. These three visions are further parallel to three contiguous sections of nave wall in that they are not sequential or chronological visions, but are synchronous structures, being constructed simultaneously and reaching the apical level of construction at the same time.

Of course, the elements of the visions that I have abstracted in order to expose the structure are not the whole of the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest. The visions are replete

with digressions, and the last passus concerns the building of the Church of Unity. Although not integral to the structure, these digressions also have a parallel in the Perpendicular cathedral and other late fourteenth-century art. George Henderson notes that "from around the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, many self-conscious innovations and tricks of style were introduced [into Gothic architecture], all tending towards more lavish ornamentation but also towards a disquieting formal equivocation."[112]

Henderson says that artists of the late Middle Ages struggled unsuccessfully to give coherence to their works. Thus, the tops of piers in cathedrals are decorated with naturalistic leaves and vines. And religious documents, like the Ormesby Psalter, are decorated with vivid and life-like hunting scenes. As Henderson says,

> These illuminations are executed with marvellous assurance, and they bear witness to the vitality and visual appetite of their designers. But fundamentally they represent the struggle of artists, unequipped with any intellectual foundation for their art, to give coherence to the world of visual phenomena. . . . A hundred years later, the lush ornamentation of the Ormesby Psalter offered what was evidently a welcome distraction from the religious function of the manuscript.[113]

So, in being unable to keep his mind solely on the religious function of his work, Langland is evidently of his time.

The Perpendicular cathedral does provide some interesting parallels for the structure of the _Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest_ of _Piers the Plowman_. The theory for such construction can be traced to the writings of Augustine which have been

variously appealed to in order to explicate the structure of Piers. Dunning, Robertson and Huppé, and Carruthers all appealed to different writings of Augustine's to enhance their studies of Piers the Plowman, its structure and its thought. In this paper, I hope I have shown that these attempts to expose a structure were too closely tied to the thought of the poem and that the applications of the Augustinian theory of beauty--of consonance of parts, of luminosity, and of purpose--as found in the Gothic cathedrals and paralleled in literature provide a more satisfactory view of the structure of Piers the Plowman. Panofsky and Jordan explored parallels between Gothic construction and the works of Aquinas and Chaucer. However, since the Perpendicular modification of the Gothic is peculiarly English and more contemporary with Chaucer and Langland, it seems more interesting and profitable to explore parallels between the structures of the Perpendicular cathedral and the Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest of William Langland's Piers the Plowman.

NOTES

[1] George Kane, Piers Plowman:The Evidence for Authorship (London:The Athlone Press, 1965).

[2] A. C. Spearing, Criticism and Medieval Poetry (London: Edward Arnold Publ. Ltd., 1972), pp. 107-108.

[3] Charles Muscatine, Poetry and Crisis in the Age of Chaucer (Notre Dame:Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1972), p. 73.

[4] Muscatine, pp. 73-74.

[5] Muscatine, p. 87.

[6] T. P. Dunning, Piers Plowman:An Interpretation of the A-text (London, 1937), p. 14.

[7] Dunning, p. 12.

[8] G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933), p. 549.

[9] Dunning, p. 8.

[10] Dunning, p. 7.

[11] Dunning, p. 170.

[12] Dunning, pp. 24-25.

[13] Dunning, p. 24.

[14] Dunning, p. 32.

[15] Dunning, p. 71.

[16] Dunning, p. 113.

[17] Dunning, p. 65.

[18] Dunning, p. 32.

[19] Dunning, p. 63.

[20] Dunning, p. 63.

[21] Dunning, p. 51.

[22] Dunning, pp. 109-10.

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