

Late Second Temple Judaism

**An assessment of
the visionary experiences recorded in the writings
of Ellen G. White
in the context of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature
by Conrad Vine.**

I hereby certify that the attached is my own work and conforms to the College's policy on academic honesty as outlined in the College prospectus.

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Introduction

Focal theory

The ministry of Ellen G. White (EGW) faced challenges during her lifetime, challenges which have continued by critics within and without the Seventh-day Adventist church¹. F. D. Nichol provided a rebuttal of many such criticisms², but in the author's experience scepticism remains concerning EGW's ministry and prophetic validity³.

¹ EGW faced challenges throughout her ministry from her first visions onwards, and these challenges raised serious difficulties for the early Seventh-day Adventist movement. Defections such as those by D. M. Canright, L. R. Conradi and Dr J. H. Kellogg were in part based on theology, and also on the role, ministry and authority of EGW within the early Seventh-day Adventist movement. In more recent times allegations have focused on the literary borrowings of EGW, and on the concept that her visions were the result of a form of epilepsy following a childhood accident. For further information please see Schwarz, R. W. and Greenleaf, F., *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventy-Day Adventist Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, revised edn., 2000), pp. 69-311, 607-55, and Rea, Walter T., *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M&R Publications, 1982), pp. 19-36. It should be noted that Rea's central allegation of literary borrowing has to a large extent been refuted by SDA scholars, and that his polemical style does not encourage the necessary balanced consideration of the issues being dealt with. It should also be noted that Damsteegt does not dwell on the opposition to, and criticism of, EGW in his major review of Seventh-day Adventist theological and organizational history. See Damsteegt, P. Gerard, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1977).

² See Nichol, F. D., *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Takoma Park, Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951). Nichol provided a robust defense to a number of criticisms, including *inter alia* the charge that EGW's visions were the result of epilepsy or some other form of nervous disorder, charges of inaccuracies in EGW's astronomy and 1856 visions, claims of theological errors and suppression of earlier and newly heretical materials, allegations of plagiarism, impropriety in financial affairs, self-contradictions, and of improper attitudes to Negroes and slavery. In more recent times, Delbert H. Hodder in 1981 alleged that EGW's visions were 'consistent with what is now known as partial-complex or psychomotor seizures', and Molleurus Couperus in 1985 wrote that her visions were the result of 'temporal lobe epilepsy'. See Petersen, Donald I., *Visions or Seizures: Was Ellen White the Victim of Epilepsy?* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), pp. 1-20.

³ This scepticism remains both within and without the SDA church, amongst current, potential and ex-members. Within the Bible there are a number of tests enumerated for evaluating whether a prophet is a true or a false prophet. In brief these are as follows: 1) the test of whether predictions have been fulfilled (Jer. 28.9); 2) the test of whether the utterances of a prophet are consistent with the Scriptures (Isa. 8.20); 3) the test of the kind of fruit a prophet and his or her ministry bear (Matt. 7.15-20); and 4) the test of how a prophet views the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ (1 John 4.1-3). Physical manifestations of being in vision or ecstatic experiences alone do not signify divine inspiration, purely supernatural influences, which may be either of God or of Satan. See Douglas, Herbert E., *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1998), pp. 26-40.

Purpose of the paper

Given the scepticism in the author's experience concerning the ministry of EGW, the paper will provide an assessment of the visionary experiences recorded in the writings of EGW in the context of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature. The paper's hypothesis is that a full understanding of the visionary experiences within the corpus of the EGW writings⁴ is not possible without an appreciation of phenomenological characteristics of comparable Second Temple Jewish writings.

Significance of the paper

The paper is significant because through understanding the phenomenological consistency which the EGW corpus demonstrates with comparable Second Temple Jewish writings, the author believes that readers may gain a fuller appreciation for the validity of ministry of EGW. This fuller appreciation will thereby challenge the validity of modern scepticism concerning the validity of the visionary⁵ experiences and subsequent writings within the EGW corpus⁶.

⁴ For the purposes of this paper, the author will refer to a range of EGW writings and visionary experiences contained therein, referred to as the EGW 'corpus'. This approach will be taken rather than conducting direct comparisons of individual EGW visionary or mystical experiences or writings because the body of literature with which EGW's work is being compared is itself a broad compilation of different materials written at different time and by different authors, a compilation which nevertheless demonstrates a remarkable unity of key characteristics of form, theme and modality.

⁵ The use of the term 'visionary' is to be understood in the sense of the actual experience of a vision involving supernatural elements, rather than that of a 'visionary person', i.e. someone who demonstrates remarkable foresight within a purely human and non-supernatural framework. The author recognizes that within this context, 'mysticism' is a very difficult topic to define, particularly because any definition of mysticism invariably defines those materials which are then themselves defined as having a mystical element. McGinn defines mysticism (Christian) as being 'the mystical element in Christianity is that part of its belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, and consciousness of, and the reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God'. This definition does not allow for the actual union of the mystic and God, but retains the individuality of the mystic when coming into the presence of God. See Laansma J., 'Mysticism' in C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter (eds.), *The*

Method and methodology

The paper will utilize the following method (the outline of the paper's structure): a) introduction (parameter setting); b) identification of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature; c) identification of phenomenological characteristics of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature; d) assessment of EGW's corpus of writings against the above mentioned characteristics; and e) conclusions.

The paper will use the above method because any valid conclusions about the EGW's ministry and prophetic calling requires a systematic comparison of her corpus against phenomenological characteristics of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature.

Dictionary of New Testament Background (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2000), pp. 725-37. However, Scholem takes a different view to mysticism in the context of his studies of Jewish mysticism, arguing essentially for an evolutionary process whereby mysticism is an attempt to bridge the gulf between God and mankind that formal religion is not fully able to bridge. For Scholem, mysticism is 'a definite stage in the historical development of religion and makes its appearance under certain well-defined conditions. It is connected with, and inseparable from, a certain stage of the religious consciousness'. See Scholem, Gershom G., *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1946), p. 7. The above definitions of mysticism seem to focus on different aspects of mysticism, the first on the practice of coming into the presence of God and the second on the time and place of mystical experiences within an evolutionary perspective on religion, but both definitions may be seen to be valid within the life and ministry of EGW when EGW's ministry is set in the context of the Great Awakening in the USA in the early 19th century in general and the theological and personal turmoil experienced by many in the Millerite movement after the so-called Great Disappointment.

⁶ A good example of a visionary experience followed by a literary output is EGW's book *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press, 1995), which followed a visionary experience on 14 March 1858 in Lovett's Grove, Ohio, during a funeral service.

Limitations and delimitations

The paper will not engage in a systematic analysis of the characteristics of all Second Temple Jewish literary genres⁷, neither of the Dead Sea Scrolls⁸, early Christian apocalyptic literature, nor of individual EGW visionary experiences. Furthermore, the paper will not seek to define whether the EGW corpus, or elements thereof, should be classified as being within the apocalyptic genre, or whether EGW's religious *weltanschauung* may be described as an apocalyptic eschatology⁹.

The paper will however provide a brief outline of the main characteristics of the comparable Second Temple Jewish literature, and seek to provide a broad phenomenological comparison and assessment of such characteristics within the EGW corpus against the comparable literature.

⁷ The paper will however recognize the diversity of literature genres within late Second Temple Judaism. The definition of 'genre' being used is 'a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing'. A genre is therefore 'identified by the recognizable similarity among a number of texts', and it is important to note that 'phenomenological similarity' does not necessarily imply 'historical derivation'. See Collins, J. J., 'Preface', *Semaia* 14 (1979), p. 1.

⁸ The Qumran sect preserved copies of Daniel and *I Enoch*, but produced very few apocalypses of their own, even though their worldview was apocalyptic. The *Rule of the Community* contains a dualistic outlook, and the *War Scroll* includes details for how the final conflict between good and evil will be conducted. However, Qumran theology argued for the concept that the community of the righteous, i.e. themselves, could participate in fellowship with God and the angels in the present rather than in a putative future life after any resurrection. This theology was mediated not through visions but through the teachings of the Teacher of Righteousness and his inspired *peshet* exegesis. See Aune, D. E., Evans, C. A. and Geddert, T. J., 'Apocalypticism' in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 43.

⁹ It is important to maintain the distinction between the literary genre of apocalyptic, which is primarily a literary analysis of certain recurring features and characteristics, and the approach to religious thought and outlook which may be described as being 'apocalyptic eschatology'. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the issue of how EGW understood her role and function, and what her dominant theological worldview was, but is seeking primarily to address the phenomenological similarities and dissimilarities between her corpus and that of comparable Second Temple literature. Any such equivalence or convergence does not prove historical derivation, but a means is provided for addressing modern skepticism concerning the validity of her visionary experiences in a non-medical manner.

Identification of Comparable Second Temple Jewish Literature

As I have written elsewhere¹⁰, ‘the Second Temple period¹¹ was a time of intensive and extensive interaction with Scripture within Judaism¹². During the Second Temple period, canonical books were written (e.g. Ezra and Nehemiah), pseudepigraphia (some apocalyptic in nature) and the books of the Apocrypha were produced, the Qumran sectaries wrote extensive commentaries and developed the *peshet* genre¹³, Philo wrote (allegorical) commentaries with a strong Hellenistic influence, the LXX and its rescensions were produced, there may have been proto-MT Hebrews texts (as witnessed in the Qumran discoveries), Aramaic *targums* were produced for synagogue use, there were extensive rabbinic writings and developments of ‘oral Torah’¹⁴ (often in the

¹⁰ See Vine, C. A. R., ‘An exploration and assessment of the hermeneutical techniques and underlying assumptions displayed by the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 1. 5-14’, pp. 10-11, a paper submitted to Newbold College as part of the MA in Religion, BIST 501 course requirements, November 2003.

¹¹ This paper takes as the definition for the Second Temple period as being the period between ‘the return from the Babylonian exile and the building of the second temple in 516 BC to its destruction in 70 AD’. See Enns, P., ‘Biblical Interpretation, Jewish’ in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 159.

¹² The study of Jeremiah by Daniel whilst in captivity, as recorded in Daniel 9, shows that there was serious study of Scripture being conducted even during the captivity, with the purpose of understanding God’s word within the current context.

¹³ There is debate as to whether *peshet* interpretation is a distinct genre or a sub-genre of Midrash. The position of this paper is that *peshet*, whilst offering some distinctive interpretative principles and approaches, e.g. the eschatological emphasis in interpreting Scripture, use of highly symbolic language, and self-understanding as being inspired interpretations of divine revelations, is still nevertheless part of the *Midrash* genre, being above all else an exegetical commentary on Scripture with a current application.

¹⁴ The ‘oral Torah’ was believed to be the verbal instructions given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai which provided the authoritative framework within which the ‘written Torah’ could be interpreted. Whilst the ‘written Torah’ was fixed and a closed canon, the ‘oral Torah’ was viewed as being open-ended, with rabbis passing down through the generations the principles and understandings contained within the ‘oral Torah’, and providing for each generation normative interpretations of the ‘written Torah’. Stegner argues that it is interesting to note that whilst the Sadducees rejected the ‘oral Torah’, the Pharisees accepted the ‘oral Torah’, and Paul, being by training a Pharisee, would have also accepted the ‘oral Torah’ concept. In Gal. 1.14, Paul writes that he was ‘extremely zealous...for the traditions of the elders’. The Greek used is *παράδοσις*, a technical term for the ‘oral Torah’, so we may understand that Paul understood himself to be a member of the scholarly classes who could teach and expound both

form of *midrash*), and the earliest writings that were later redacted into the *Talmud* may have been formulated during this period¹⁵.

Given the sheer variety of Jewish Second Temple thought and writings¹⁶, a careful approach is required to assess the EGW corpus within a valid framework, and whilst recognizing the breadth of writing and vigorous oral culture, for a wide variety of stylistic, hermeneutical and content related reasons it is the Jewish apocalyptic writings which are most relevant to the present study¹⁷, and it is to these that we now turn.

the 'written' and the 'oral' Torah. See Stegner W. R., 'Jew, Paul the' in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 504.

¹⁵ The Talmud comprised the *Mishnah* and *Gemara*. The *Mishnah* was a code of Jewish law, and the *Gemara* contained discussions on the *Mishnah* and the Torah. These were compiled around 200 AD in Palestine and Babylonia, and although redacted at this time, they have their roots in the events of 70 AD and the rise of rabbinic Judaism, and further back to the Pharisaic writings and hermeneutical principles as witnessed in late Second Temple Judaism. See Weitzman, M.P., 'Talmud' in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *The SCM Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 667-71.

¹⁶ The sheer scope and breadth of Jewish writings reflect partly the sectarian nature of Second Temple Judaism, the diaspora and rise of influence of rabbis at the expense of the central cultus, and Greco-Romano thought.

¹⁷ As I have stated elsewhere (Vine, C. A. R., 'An exploration and assessment of the hermeneutical techniques and underlying assumptions displayed by the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 1. 5-14', pp. 10-14), Philo's writings were heavily influenced by Alexandrian Hellenism, and introduce allegorical hermeneutics to Jewish thought. However, whilst important, and undoubtedly part of the religious culture, Philo's writings are not a distinct genre of their own, neither do they offer distinctive visionary, mystical or apocalyptic approaches against which the EGW corpus may be directly evaluated... the *talmudic* writings, although of great value, and having their roots in much the same milieu as the comparable literature, are not directly comparable to the EGW corpus and the records of her visionary experiences (these writings were completed c. 200 AD in Palestine and Babylonia, and reflect the rise in rabbinic Judaism and changes in Jewish thought and cultic practice following the trauma of 70 AD. For further information, see Weitzman, M.P., 'Talmud' in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *The SCM Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 667-71.)... *Targums* were Aramaic translations of the Hebrews Scriptures, and were necessitated by the Persian and Greek dominance in Second Temple times, when many Jews no longer spoke or understood Hebrew. Used primarily in synagogues and schoolhouses, the *Targums* 'mixed metaphrases with paraphrases...used Aramaic cognate terms for translation...clarified metaphors in paraphrases...reflected contextual embellishments in paraphrase...contextually related theological points in a non-conspicuous manner...employed Hillel's exegetical rules' (data summarized from Herbert W. Bateman IV (Bateman, Herbert W., IV, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5-13* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1997) pp. 117-18). Although important witnesses for textual criticism, neither *Targums* nor the *targumic* process will be used to evaluate the EGW corpus because the *Targums* were primarily

Phenomenological Characteristics of Comparable Second Temple Jewish Literature

Following the discovery and publication of *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*¹⁸, there came the realisation that there was a whole genre of literature in ancient Judaism similar to Revelation and *Daniel*. With the discovery of other pseudepigraphical works¹⁹, diverse avenues of study were opened for Biblical scholars²⁰.

The exact roots of the Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic writings are difficult to determine, and this is reflected in the relevant literature, which argues *inter alia* for roots in Wisdom literature²¹, the Prophets and their decline in post-

translations rather than visionary, apocalyptic or visionary in nature... *Pesher* commentaries, as developed at Qumran, whilst a sub-genre of *Midrash* (Gunter Stemmerger argues that *Pesher* commentaries are a sub-genre of *Midrash* due to similarities in structure and technique. See Stemmerger, Gunter, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 2nd edn., 1996), pp. 235-237), are themselves not directly related to the EGW corpus as although they had an eschatological emphasis, they primarily sought to directly interpret prophecy within a local and defined context, characteristics which the EGW corpus does not primarily exhibit... *Midrash*, from the verb root *darash*, 'to study', has come to mean early Jewish exegesis and commentary. Given the breadth of *midrash*, it is difficult to clarify or provide definite definitions, but *midrash* is sometimes described as being either *halakha* (a commentary on the law) or *haggada* (a commentary on the non-legal or narrative components of Scripture), or as being exegetical or homiletic (expounding a text in accordance with the synagogues' liturgical calendar). Furthermore, *midrash* as a genre may be delineated according to outcome, or as a process with distinctive hermeneutical techniques, and as such is not directly comparable to the EGW corpus, although much of EGW's writings contain materials similar to *haggada* and *halakha*, particularly her devotional writings and those written after the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis.

¹⁸ *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* was found by James Bruce in 1769 in Ethiopia who collected disparate MSS during his travels throughout the horn of Africa, and upon his return to Europe he deposited copies of the various MSS at Paris and Oxford. *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* was written in Ethiopic, and it was translated and published in English in 1821 by R. Laurence. See Charles, R.H., *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. ix-cx.

¹⁹ For instance, *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*

²⁰ For example, in areas such as textual criticism, inter-testamental studies and the study of the Jewish background to primitive Christianity and apostolic theology

²¹ According to D. E. Aune, T. J. Geddert and C. A. Evans, G. von Rad rejected the view that apocalyptic writings had their primary roots in Israelite prophecy. Von Rad described apocalypticism as 'consisting in a clear-cut dualism, radical transcendence, esotericism and gnosticism', concluding that apocalypticism arose out of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. See Aune, D. E., Evans, C. A. and Geddert, T. J., 'Apocalypticism' in Craig A.

exilic times²², despair at foreign oppression, Persian dualism²³, Canaanite mythology²⁴, pharisaism²⁵, *merkavah* mysticism and speculation based on texts such as Ezekiel 1, Isaiah 6, and the Mosaic ascents alluded to in Exodus 38 and Psalm 68²⁶.

Even given the uncertainty over Jewish apocalyptic's exact origins, the Jewish apocalyptic writings are understood diachronically in terms of their role both in the development of later Jewish mysticism, and of early Christianity. Writers

Evans and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 47.

²² This view is maintained by Paul D. Hanson, who argued that apocalyptic was 'a development out of prophecy abetted by the bitter experiences arising in visionary circles that Israel's sin was so deeply ingrained as to necessitate a radical break with the past and a new beginning initiated by Yahweh'. See Hanson, Paul D., 'The Relevance of Apocalyptic Literature Today' in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), pp. 1-14. A slightly modified version of this perspective is held by D. S. Russell, who argues that whilst apocalyptic had its roots in the prophetic era, the apocalyptic writings developed in the vacuum created by the decline in the role and acceptance of the prophetic office in post-exilic times. See Russell, D. S., *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 73-103.

²³ According to Paul D. Hanson, Julius Wellhausen in his book *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh, 1885) regarded the apocalyptic writings as falling 'on the post-exilic side of his division between the age of the spirit and the age of the law...they were regarded as the products of epigons borrowing alike from prophetic writings and Persian sources, signifying very little of theological value'. See Hanson, Paul D., 'The Relevance of Apocalyptic Literature Today' in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), p. 4.

²⁴ According to Paul D. Hanson, Aage Bentzen 'pursued Mowinckel's cultic line of approach further, especially in examining Canaanite motifs which, through the mediation of the Jerusalem temple cult, reemerged in later Jewish apocalyptic writings'. See Hanson, Paul D., 'The Relevance of Apocalyptic Literature Today' in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), p. 6.

²⁵ According to D. E. Aune, T. J. Geddert and C. A. Evans, 'W. D. Davies has argued that there are several links between apocalypticism and pharisaism: (1) both share a similar piety and attitude toward the Torah; (2) both share similar views on such eschatological topics as the travail of the messianic era, the gathering of exiles, the days of the Messiah, the New Jerusalem, the judgment and Gehenna; (3) both have populist and scholastic tendencies'. See Aune, D. E., Evans, C. A. and Geddert, T. J., 'Apocalypticism' in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 48.

²⁶ According to C. R. A. Morray-Jones, the term *merkavah* mysticism 'is used to refer to an esoteric, visionary-mystical tradition centered upon the vision of God seated on the celestial throne or Merkavah'. See Laansma J., 'Mysticism' in C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter (eds.), *The Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2000), p. 727.

such as Ernst Muller²⁷, Joseph Dan²⁸, Ithamar Gruenwald²⁹, and Gershom G. Scholem³⁰ emphasize the role of the Jewish apocalyptic writings in transition from the pre and post-exilic prophets to later development of Jewish mysticism, as evidenced in the *merkavah* mysticism, *hekhalot* mysticism, the German *Hasidim*, Spanish Kabbalism, Sabbatianism and the modern *Hasidim*, whilst writers such as E. Kasemann³¹, D. E. Aune, T. J. Geddert and C. A. Evans³², M

²⁷ Muller, Ernst, *History of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford, UK: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1946), pp. 13-60.

²⁸ Dan, Joseph, *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History* (New York, NY: New York University, 1987), pp. 38-76.

²⁹ Gruenwald argues for an essential continuity of thought and experience from the apocalyptic writings of the late Second Temple period, through to the *merkavah* mysticism that is evidenced in the writings from the late 1st century AD onwards (focused around such rabbinical luminaries as Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakkai and Rabbi Akiba), the *Ma'aseh Bereshit* ('the works of the creation of the world' – Jewish cosmology), the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* ('the works of the chariot' – Jewish speculation on the chariot vision of Ezekiel 1), and then on to the *Hekhalot* writings which were produced from the time of the Talmud and the beginning of the Ge'onic period (c. 200-700 AD), and included such writings as *Re'uyot Yehezkel*, *Hekhalot Zutreti*, *Hekhalot Rabbati*, *Hekhalot Rabbah*, *Hekhalot Fragments*, *Sefer Hekhalot* (otherwise known as *3 Enoch*), *Masekhet Hekhalot*, *Shi'ur Qumah* and *Sefer Ha-razim*. The *Hekhalot* writings in general were technical discussions for how one might ascend or descend to the throne of God, and included extensive discussions on the fastings, liturgical practices, ablutions and other activities required in preparation for an attempt to reach the *merkavah*, and also the extensive incantations, recitations, hymns and other sayings required when on the journey through the supposed seven heavens to ensure safe passage. Unlike the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* whose study was prohibited in public in *Mishnah Hagigah ii,1*, there was no express prohibition on the study of the various *Hekhalot* writings, but the stringent preparations and real dangers outlined served to dissuade casual or unprepared study of the texts. See Gruenwald, Ithamar, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden, Germany: E. J. Brill, 1980).

³⁰ Scholem provides in a series of lectures a brief outline of Jewish mysticism, including providing a working evolutionary context for mysticism in general as being the means by which persons try to bridge the gulf that has arisen in the development of historical religions between mankind and God, and focuses on identifying the unifying themes and patterns that are witnessed throughout Jewish mysticism from the late Second Temple period's apocalyptic writings through *merkavah* and *hekhalot* mysticism through history to the modern *Hasidim*. His work is recognized as being seminal in the field of Jewish mysticism, and shows how Jewish apocalyptic played an important role in providing a bridge between the pre and post-exilic prophets, across the centuries of foreign oppression to the rabbis at Jamnah and the reformed rabbinic Judaism that came into existence after the fall of Jerusalem and the Hadrianic revolt. See Scholem, Gershom, G., *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1946), pp. 1-79.

³¹ E. Kasemann famously stated that, 'apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology'. See Kasemann, E., 'The Beginnings of Christian Theology', *JTC* 6 (1969) p. 40.

³² These authors argue for linkages between the Jewish apocalyptic writings and the gospels, Pauline epistles, Christ's self-designation as 'Son of Man', and later Christian writings such as Revelation. See Aune, D. E., Evans, C. A. and Geddert, T. J., 'Apocalypticism' in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 51-57.

Baker³³, and N. Perrin emphasise the continuity in form and motifs³⁴ evidenced in early Christian canonical, extra-canonical and apocalyptic writings.

Despite the breadth of research on Jewish apocalyptic, no consensus has been reached as to the defining characteristics of Jewish apocalyptic, with a number of *schemas* being proposed³⁵. One of the most comprehensive studies into apocalyptic was conducted under the aegis of the Society of Bible Literature

³³ M. Barker presents a case for the influence of the book of *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* on early Christianity, stating that ‘the study of the pseudepigraphia (*1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* and similar works) is the fastest-growing area of Biblical scholarship, and a knowledge of *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* is now a necessary preliminary to any responsible study of the New Testament’. In particular, *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*’s motifs of heavenly ascents and descents are allegedly mirrored in the New Testament (e.g. the Johannine Christ’s self-understanding of one who is coming down from heaven and who is to return to heaven), the Son of Man motif provides an eschatological background and context for the Son of Man sayings of Christ (or those sayings later imputed to him by the primitive church as they developed their Christology), and the visions of God on His throne in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* provide an ecstatic and mystical background for the ecstatic experiences of Christ (transfiguration), Paul’s experience in the ‘third heaven’, Phillip being ‘caught up in the spirit’, and the book of Revelation. See Barker, M., *The Lost Prophet* (London, UK: SPCK, 1988), pp. 1-113.

³⁴ N. Perrin argues that ‘Christianity began as an apocalyptic sect within ancient Judaism and that apocalypticism was a constant element of much of New Testament Christianity, resurging especially at times of catastrophe or persecution’. He further argues that the synoptic source ‘Q’ was essentially an apocalyptic document, and that this inherent apocalypticism worked its way through into the so-called ‘Apocalyptic discourses’ of Mark 13, Matthew 24-25 and Luke 21, whilst Revelation is ‘the one complete apocalyptic text in the New Testament’ which ‘seeks to stun its readers by the power of its visions so that the reader loses his fear of the present and is caught up in hope for the future it presents’. See Perrin, N., ‘Apocalyptic Christianity’ in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), pp. 121-44.

³⁵ D. S. Russell argues that whilst apocalyptic writings have many common characteristics, they are most distinguishable from their prophetic ancestors by their ‘religious mood or temper’. When discussing the actual characteristics of apocalyptic, he argues that it is essentially esoteric in nature, literary in form, symbolic in language, and pseudonymous in authorship. Klaus Koch argues that whilst defining apocalyptic is difficult, it is nevertheless possible to identify distinct characteristics, including the use of ‘discourse cycles’, i.e. long dialogues between the seer and his heavenly counterpart, spiritual turmoil on the part of the seer before, during or after a visionary experience, paraenetic discourses, use of mythical images rich in symbolism, and the presence of a composite character, pointing to a long literary development behind the current works. J. J. Collins rejects such characteristics, and argues instead that the ‘transcendence of death by the attainment of a higher, angelic form of life’ is the dominant and defining characteristic of apocalyptic, a characteristic that recognizes the different emphasis on eschatology, apocalyptic eschatology and eschatological apocalypticism that is found in different writings. See Russell, D. S., *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 104-39, Koch, Klaus, ‘What is Apocalyptic? An Attempt at a Preliminary Definition’ in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), pp. 16-36, and Collins, J. J., ‘Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death’ in Paul D. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (London, UK: SPCK, 1983), pp. 61-79.

(SBL) in 1979³⁶, which produced the following definition of ‘apocalyptic’:
“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world³⁷.

Under the terms of this definition, certain works were excluded from the apocalypse genre³⁸, and others were included, both Jewish and early Christian³⁹. Within this systematic study, the phenomenological characteristics of apocalyptic writings⁴⁰ were identified as outlined below⁴¹:

³⁶ This study attempted to ‘provide a comprehensive survey of all the texts which might be or have been classified as apocalypse...with the purpose of establishing how far they can purposefully be regarded as members of one genre...the argument that it is in fact possible to recognize a coherent genre “apocalypse” does not then rest on the assumption that selected works are typical, but on the cumulative weight of the entire survey’, see Collins, J. J., ‘Preface’, *Semaia 14* (1979), p. iii.

³⁷ See Collins, J. J., ‘Preface’, *Semaia 14* (1979), p. 9.

³⁸ Under the terms of the above stated definition, works such as oracles, testaments and revelatory dialogues are excluded from the apocalyptic genre, because they ‘lack some aspect of the apocalyptic manner of revelation’ (oracles are not mediated by another being, being rather utterances on the part of a seer, testaments are from human and not other-worldly figures, and revelatory dialogues do not include descriptions of the process of revelation. See Collins, J. J., ‘Preface’, *Semaia 14* (1979), p. 10.

³⁹ Within the terms of the above stated definition, according to the SBL study the following Jewish works are classified as being within the apocalyptic genre: *Daniel 7-12; Animal Apocalypse; Apocalypse of Weeks; Jubilees 23; 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch; Apocalypse of Abraham; 1 Enoch 1-36; Heavenly Luminaries; Similitudes of Enoch; 2 Enoch; Testament of Levi 2-5; 3 Baruch; Testament of Abraham 10-15; and the Apocalypse of Zephaniah*. Furthermore, within the terms of the above stated definition, according to the SBL study the following Christian works are classified as being within the apocalyptic genre: *Apocalypse of Sedrach; Apocalypse of James; Apocalypse of the Mother of God; Zosimus; Testament of Jacob 5; Testament of Isaac 5-6; Apocalypse of Mary; Apocalypse of Esdras; Apocalypse of Paul; Ascension of Isaiah 6-11; Testament of Jacob 1-3a; Testament of Isaac 2-3a; Testament of the Lord 1.1-14; Apocalypse of John the Theologian; Elchasai; Hermes; Apocalypse of Peter; Revelation; Jacob’s Ladder; Ascension of Isaiah 4.1-18; Didache 16; Penitences of Adam; Testament of Adam; Apocalypse of Thomas; Apocalypse of Elijah; 5 Ezra; Sibylline Oracles 1, 2, 7 & 8; and Mark 13.*

⁴⁰ As noted in *Semaia 14*, ‘it is apparent that no one apocalypse contains all the elements noted...again, not all of these elements are equally important...the less significant elements are noted here because they recur with notable frequency and may be of significance for more detailed study of particular works’, however, ‘there is always a narrative framework in which the manner of revelation is described...the content always involves eschatological salvation

which is temporally future and present otherworldly realities...is marked by some form of afterlife...which ensures the definitive and transcendent character of that eschatology...the spatial, otherworldly realities always involve the activity of otherworldly, angelic or demonic beings...the existence of another world beyond what is accessible to humanity by natural means is a constant element in all the apocalypses'. See Collins, J. J., 'Preface', *Semaia* 14 (1979), pp. 8-9. Based on the above, it is clear that not all the works identified above (see Footnote 35) contain each and every characteristic outlined in the following table, but there are certain characteristics which appear often, e.g. the notion of an otherworldly reality, afterlife and eschatological irruption into history, and other characteristics which appear not so often, e.g. paraenetic discourses or descriptions of the reaction of the recipient upon receiving a given revelation. Any assessment of the EGW corpus against the phenomenological characteristics outlined therefore must take this variability in occurrence and importance of the various characteristics into account, and not attribute undue significance by the absence or presence of a particular characteristic.

⁴¹ The following table (see below) is taken and slightly paraphrased to save space from Collins, J. J., 'Preface', *Semaia* 14 (1979), pp. 6-8.

Manner of revelation		
	Vision	Where the content of the revelation is seen, or
	Epiphanies	Where the apparition of the mediator is described
	Discourse	Uninterrupted speech by the mediator, or
	Dialogue	Conversation between the mediator and recipient, often as Q&A
	Otherworldly journey	Visionary travels through heaven, hell, other remote regions
	Writing	Where the revelation is contained in a document / heavenly book
	Otherworldly mediator	Communicates the revelation, often an angel or Christ
	Pseudonymity	Recipient identified as a venerable figure from the past
	Disposition of recipient	The circumstances and emotional state when revelation is received
	Reaction of recipient	The reaction to the revelation, normally awe and/or perplexity
Content: temporal axis		
	Cosmogony	Matters dealing with the beginning of the world
	Primordial events	Events with paradigmatic significance for history, e.g. Adam's fall
	Recollection of past	History is recounted as if it were a specific recollection, or
	<i>Ex eventu</i> prophecy	History disguised as prophecy, often with eschatological prophecies
	Present salvation	Through knowledge, significant in Gnostic texts
	Persecution	An eschatological crisis, often witnesses persecution, or
	Other eschat. upheavals	Other events that denote the eschatological crisis
	Judgement of wicked	Eschatological judgement on wicked, or
	Judgement of world	Eschatological judgement on or involving the natural elements, or
	Judgement of otherworldly beings	Eschatological judgement on the forces of Satan or Beliar and fallen angels
	Cosmic transformation	The whole world is renewed
	Resurrection	This is in bodily form, or
	Other forms of afterlife	In another manner, e.g. exaltation to heaven with the angels
Content: spatial axis		
	Otherworldly regions	Described, especially in otherworldly journeys, and are evaluated
	Otherworldly beings	These are either demonic or angelic
Paraenesis by revealer		
	Paraenetic content	Revealer to recipient, relatively rare, but in some Christian works
Concluding elements		
	Instructions to recipient	After paraenesis, e.g. to seal up or conceal or publish the revelation
	Narrative conclusion	Description of return to earth, awakening etc. of the revealer

Using the above genre definition of apocalyptic, and because of the comprehensive scope of the SBL study and the subsequent phenomenological characteristics outlined, this paper will now turn to an assessment of the EGW corpus against the above mentioned characteristics.

Assessment of the EGW Corpus Against Apocalyptic Phenomenological Characteristics

Manner of revelation

Within the Second Temple writings, revelations came by a variety of means: if visual, through visions or epiphanies⁴²; if auditory (which normally provided clarification following or during a visual revelation), through either a discourse by the mediator or a dialogue with the recipient.

Within the EGW corpus, there is a consistency of manner of revelation: EGW writes of receiving verbal visions and corresponding verbal communications from her earliest writings onwards⁴³, when she was seeking to ‘give a brief sketch of my experience and views’⁴⁴. The phrases ‘I was shown’ or ‘it was shown to me’ or ‘I saw’ appear regularly throughout her writings and letters,

⁴² *Dan.* 8.1-27 records a vision followed by an epiphany by one ‘with the semblance of a man’ (*Dan.* 8.15), who provides a discourse, an uninterrupted speech in which the previous visual revelation is explained. In the *Testament of Levi* 2.5-5.2 we read of a general vision that comes to Levi in which there is a description of the seven heavens, at the climax of which the angel ‘opened to me the gates of heaven, and I saw the holy temple and the Most High upon a throne of glory’ (*Testament of Levi* 5.1). During this vision, the recipient not only experiences a visual revelation, but there is an accompanying angel who provides an auditory explanation of what the recipient is seeing. The auditory explanation is in the form of a dialogue, with the recipient asking a question, and the angel providing an explanation. Visual revelations are a common feature of almost of the comparable Second Temple apocalyptic literature, and particularly where there is an epiphany by an otherworldly being, there is almost always an accompanying auditory clarification of the visual, either in the form of discourse or dialogue.

⁴³ EGW writes of her first visions in *Early Writings*, recounting a vision in pp. 13-20 and others in the subsequent pages. Her vision on pp. 13-20 was originally published in May 1847 in a pamphlet issued between the Great Disappointment (October 1844) and the Sabbath conferences of 1848. See White, E. G., ‘To The Remnant Scattered Abroad’, A Word to the “Little Flock” (1847) pp. 14-18, and White, Ellen G., *Early Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882), pp. 13-20.

⁴⁴ White, E. G., *Early Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1882), p. 11.

referring to her visionary experiences⁴⁵, and she refers on numerous occasions to her angel interpreter, her ‘guide⁴⁶’, who whilst in vision provides clarifications to the visions, guidance and direct instructions⁴⁷.

Her clearest statement on the manner of revelation is as follows: ‘As inquiries are frequently made as to my state in vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus

⁴⁵ For example, in the foreword to *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan*, she claims to have seen ‘the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages’. See White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press, 1995), p. xii. EGW recounts what are now viewed as being major visions (e.g. the first vision in December 1844, the ‘Randolph’ vision of winter 1845-46, the heavenly sanctuary vision of April 1847, the ‘Rappings’ vision of March 1849, the ‘Train of Cars’ vision of August 1850, the ‘Great Controversy’ vision of March 1858, the ‘Civil War’ vision of January 1861, the ‘Otsego’ vision of June 1863, the ‘Nathaniel Davis’ vision of August 1897, the ‘Balls of Fire’ vision of July 1904, and the ‘Moving into Line’ vision of 1913), and throughout her corpus there are constant references to visions she has seen to do with a wide range of matters, including personal exhortation, guidance to the nascent SDA movement, eschatological prophecies, and moral guidance. See Coon, Roger W., *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1992), pp. 11-149.

⁴⁶ EGW refers often to her angelic interpreter or mediator or accompanying entity on her visionary experiences as her ‘guide’, e.g. White, Ellen G., *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 26.

⁴⁷ For example, in Letter 5, 1851, she writes as follows: ‘I have seen in vision that tobacco was a filthy weed, and that it must be laid aside or given up. Said my accompanying angel...’ (see White, Arthur L., *Ellen G. White: The Early Years* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), p. 224). Alternatively, she records in Letter 8, 1850 a vision as follows: ‘...I saw the powers of darkness were rising....said the angel...I asked the angel why there was not more power in Israel. Said he, “Ye let go of the promises of God too quickly”...’, (See White, Arthur L., *Ellen G. White: The Early Years* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), p. 181. Furthermore, she records in *Early Writings* a vision, which includes the following words, ‘I asked my attending angel for an explanation off what I saw. He told me that I could see no more then, but he would shortly show me what those things that I then saw meant...’, (see White, Ellen G., *Early Writings* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), pp. 36-38. Another example of an instruction from the angelic being is referred to as follows: ‘but the light of duty did not change, and the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears, “make known to others what I have revealed to you”’ (see White, Ellen G., *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 65). Throughout the EGW corpus there are repeated references to an angelic interpreter, often referred to as her ‘guide’, who provides clarifications, explanations and instructions to EGW throughout her visions.

and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me...'⁴⁸.

Throughout the comparable literature⁴⁹, otherworldly journeys⁵⁰ occur consistently, although with some variation⁵¹. Within the EGW corpus, otherworldly journeys and descriptions of ascents are not prominent⁵², but there are a number of visions in which EGW is taken into heaven, and into the temple of God Himself⁵³.

⁴⁸ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages Book One* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p. 36.

⁴⁹ Please note that I am referring to Second Temple Jewish literature which has been classified as belonging to the apocalyptic genre under the terms of the SBL survey referred to above.

⁵⁰ These are journeys in which the recipient 'travels through heaven, hell or remote regions beyond the normally accessible world'. See Collins, J. J., 'Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre', *Semaia* 14 (1979), p. 6.

⁵¹ There is some variation in the number of heavens which are traveled through, with some literature referring to five heavens (*2 Enoch*), but most of the literature refers either to seven heavens or to a direct ascent into the throne-room of God, e.g. *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* contains a detailed description of an ascent through seven heavens, whereas *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* refers in the Book of the Watchers to an ascent direct to the throne-room and presence of God, the 'Great Glory'. Travels may take the recipients through the seven heavens in greater detail, to regions of glorification for the righteous, to regions of punishment for fallen angels and humans, to the storehouses of the universe in which the elements are stored, to the temporary abode of fallen angels, to the temporary abode of righteous and exalted persons such as Enoch, and across the firmaments. Revelations in the course of these journeys is primarily through a visual medium, although there is often an angelic interpreter who provides a running commentary to the recipient, or answers questions from the recipient.

⁵² There are relatively few visionary experiences recorded in which an otherworldly journey is narrated that refers to a journey to another world, e.g. in *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, we read in pp. 97-99 as follows: 'The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious...the inhabitants of the place were of all sizes...I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, "We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth"...then I was taken to a world which had seven moons...I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again...' (see *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), pp. 97-99). However, the overwhelming majority of EGW's visionary experiences are recorded in terms of events relating to earth or to heaven.

⁵³ EGW's corpus includes a number of visionary experiences in which she records ascents into heaven, into the heavenly temple, or into the Holy of Holies within the heavenly temple. Some of the recorded visions correspond closely with the *merkavah* visions of Jewish *merkavah* mysticism, e.g. in Letter 1, 1846, we read as follows: 'I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and did sit...I saw a cloudy chariot with wheels flaming like fire. Angels were all about the chariot as it came to where Jesus was; He stepped into it and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat...' (see White, Arthur L.,

Throughout the comparable literature, there are instances in which the revelation is given in written form, though itself not a defining characteristic of the apocalyptic genre⁵⁴. Within the EGW corpus, the concept of a written revelation is subordinate to the visual and auditory revelation, but EGW did face instructions in vision that she must write and publish her visions, most notably after the ‘Great Controversy’ vision of 1858⁵⁵.

Throughout the comparable literature, an otherworldly mediator consistently communicates the revelation. This may take the form of a direct speech, or

Ellen G. White: The Early Years (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), p. 78). However, there is not a systematic speculation concerning the chariot of God in the EGW corpus, rather the focus seems to be on aspects of heaven or the heavenly temple which relate to theological, organizational or moral issues relating to the nascent SDA movement, e.g. in ‘A Word to the “Little Flock”’ there are recorded two visions (pp. 14-18, 18-20) in which EGW records heavenly visions which directly relate to the spiritual and theological needs of the then nascent SDA movement, namely encouragement to keep their faith after the Great Disappointment, and visionary support for the theological stance taken on the seventh-day Sabbath. See White, E. G., ‘To The Remnant Scattered Abroad’, *A Word to the “Little Flock”* (1847) pp. 14-20.

⁵⁴ Throughout the comparable literature, the primary revelatory mode is visual with auditory support rather than in literary form. However, there are instances in which heavenly books or records are referred to, and their contents described, e.g. in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* 71 the recipient receives a revelation of the contents of the ‘Book of the course of the luminaries of the heaven’, or in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* 93, where we read that, ‘According to that which appeared to me in the heavenly vision, and which I have known through the word of the holy angels, and have learnt from the heavenly tablets’. Heavenly scrolls play a greater role in Ezekiel, Revelation and the *hekhlot* literature of 200-700 AD than in the comparable literature, where the rolls are seen alternatively as being representative of a message from God to a seer, the key to history, and as the means by which an adept may rise through the doors at each of the heavens whilst on a heavenly ascent into the throne-room of God (in the *hekhlot* literature the scrolls each require seven seals, one for each door through which the adept must pass, and each containing a magical name and formula to ensure the adept can overcome the opposition of the angels posted to the left and right of the heavenly doors). See Charles, R. H., *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1921).

⁵⁵ See Coon, Roger W., *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1992), p. 72.

guiding the attention of the recipient to the vision, and ensures an otherworldly interlocutor for the recipient in the place of direct speech from God⁵⁶.

Within the EGW corpus, as stated above, there is also consistent reporting of a heavenly mediator in the visions. However, unlike the comparable literature (which is Jewish), but as in *Revelation* or early Christian apocalyptic works, there are instances where the otherworldly mediator is Christ⁵⁷. This appearance of Christ as EGW's otherworldly mediator does not however detract from the phenomenological significance of the presence in her corpus of an otherworldly mediator, reflecting merely the Christological emphasis found in the post-Christ event apocalyptic literature⁵⁸.

The comparable literature is all pseudonymous⁵⁹, whereas the EGW corpus is not. Pseudonymity was a common phenomenon in both Jewish inter-testamental

⁵⁶ The otherworldly mediator is generally represented in the form of an angel, e.g. Uriel in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, Michael in *Testament of Abraham*, 'a glorious angel' in *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, and 'two huge men...their faces were like the shining sun; their eyes were like burning lamps; from their mouths fire was coming forth; their clothing was various singing; their wings were more glistening than gold; their hands were whiter than snow' in *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* (ch. 1.4-6, rescension A). See Knibb, M. A., 'Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 143-76) and Andersen, F. I., '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 1* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 91-222.

⁵⁷ For instance, the first vision recorded in *Early Writings* records Jesus coming in a 'small black cloud', speaking to the struggling saints, commanding the dead in Christ to rise from their graves, and then welcoming the risen righteous into the heavenly city (see White, E. G., *Early Writings* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), pp. 14-17).

⁵⁸ It is not surprising that EGW records Christ as being an otherworldly mediator in her visions, whereas in the comparable literature God is normally presented as conversing with the angels, e.g. the Archangel Michael converses with God in *Testament of Abraham* before descending to earth to converse with Abraham, who in turn then converse with the recipients of the visions. It should be noted that in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, the recipient is directly addressed by the 'Lord' (ch. 14.24), although throughout the rest of this work the recipient is communicated to by angelic mediators rather than by the Lord Himself.

⁵⁹ That is the majority opinion amongst modern scholars, although there are strong arguments for *Daniel* being written in the time of the late Babylonian and early Medo-Persian empires, a

writings and amongst early Christian apocalypses, and may reflect a Hebraic mindset which allowed for a current writer to write in the tradition of a respected figure from Jewish history, or provided a means to gain acceptance for an author whose work may not otherwise be accepted⁶⁰.

As several of EGW's early major visions happened in public meetings, and the accompanying physical phenomena were recorded by those present, pseudonymity was not a viable option for EGW⁶¹. However, given the experience of the Great Disappointment and the need for validation of her ministry to a sceptical audience, the immediate and visible manifestation of

position taken by the historicist school of prophetic interpretation and by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

⁶⁰ Russell provides an interesting analysis of the phenomenon of pseudonymity, arguing that within the Hebrew worldview such a device would have been accepted as being valid, particularly given the Hebrew concept of time, contemporaneity and working within and being faithful to an existing tradition. Such a worldview was also evidenced by the *midrashic* scholars (*darshanim*) who from generation to generation did not seek a high profile for themselves as individuals, but sought rather to work within an existing tradition, the 'oral Torah', identifying current applications of timeless principles, and passing these on to the next generation. See Russell, D. S., *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 73-139.

⁶¹ EGW's visions happened at a range of times, from during her sleep to during moments of personal despondency or private devotions, to public gatherings for religious or social occasions. During the 'Randolph' vision in winter 1845-46, skeptics within the audience tried to 'destroy the effect of the vision', singing loudly, reciting Scripture, making loud noises and doing everything possible to distract EGW whilst in vision, all to no avail (see Coon, Roger W., *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1992), pp. 30-32. The physical phenomena accompanying her visions were also recorded on a number of occasions, and even excited considerable debate, particularly as EGW did not seem to breathe whilst in vision, sometimes for up to four hours at a time. James White, her husband, recorded her condition whilst in vision as follows: 'she is utterly unconscious of everything around her...she does not breathe...as has been repeatedly proved by pressing upon the chest, and by closing the mouth and nostrils...her muscles become rigid, and joints fixed...and can not be hindered nor controlled by the strongest person...oncoming out of vision...all is total darkness...her power to distinguish even the most brilliant objects, held within a few inches of the eyes, returns but gradually...'. These physical phenomena were particularly prevalent during EGW's early visionary experiences, but over the years they became less and less as her ministry was accepted within the SDA movement. See Davenport, Glenn Goldman, 'The Work of Mrs. E. G. White in the Light of the Biblical Greek and Hebrew Words for Prophet, Seer, and Priest', paper submitted to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Washington D. C. in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, pp. 41-42.

visionary experiences would seem to have been more important than adopting a pseudonymous approach.

In the comparable literature, the disposition of the recipient before and their reaction after their revelatory experience is often recorded⁶², and generally involves physical awe or emotional perplexity⁶³. The reactions form part of the narrative framework within which the revelation occurs, but in themselves do not carry significant (genre definitive) weight, being rather a phenomenological trait within the genre.

Within the EGW corpus, EGW's disposition before, during or after a given visionary experience is often recorded in the narrative framework. Her physical reactions are strikingly similar to those recorded in *Daniel* and *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*⁶⁴, although these physical reactions are generally recorded

⁶² In general it is the reaction of the recipient during and after a given visionary experience which is recorded, with the recipient's disposition before the visionary experience in question being rarely given.

⁶³ In *Daniel* we read of the recipient's awe, terror, fear, obeisance, failure of strength, sickness, and perplexity upon receiving a revelation. In *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* 14.24 we read that, 'and until then I had been prostrate on my face, trembling...'. In *Testament of Levi* 2.4 we read that the recipient 'felt grief for the sons of men, and I prayed to the Lord that I might be saved', whilst in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10.1-3 we read that 'and it came to pass that when I heard the voice proclaiming such words to me that I looked this way and that. And behold there was no breath of man. Any my spirit was amazed, and my soul fled from me. And I became like a stone, and fell face down upon the earth, for there was no longer strength in me to stand up on earth. And while I was still face down on the ground, I heard the voice speaking...'. See Hollander, H. W. and De Jonge, M., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Leiden, Germany: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 1-200, Charles, R. H., *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 42, and Rubinkiewicz, R., 'Apocalypse of Abraham' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 681-706.

⁶⁴ In ch. 6.10-13 we read as follows: '...and while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of them all, he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him, and he did not see the men who were standing before him. His eyes indeed were open, but his mouth was silent, and the mind in his body was taken up from him. But his breath was still in him, for he was seeing a vision...'. See Knibb, M. A., 'Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), p. 159.

by witnesses, whereas EGW herself is more concerned to relate her spiritual and emotional state before or after a visionary experience⁶⁵. Although the recording of this phenomenological trait per se is not genre significant per se⁶⁶, what is significant is the remarkable similarity both in physical and emotional response to a visionary experience between her writings and the comparable literature.

Based on the above evidence, it would appear that the EGW corpus exhibits the main phenomenological traits of the comparable literature concerning the manner of revelation⁶⁷.

Content: temporal and spatial axis

In the comparable literature, protology⁶⁸ and cosmogony⁶⁹ form are an important component, seeking to provide a theodicy which vindicates the actions of God in the context of the Jewish experience of foreign oppression. Furthermore, paradigmatic primordial events, most notably surrounding the

⁶⁵ EGW's spiritual and emotional state seems to be of more concern within the corpus than her physical reaction, which is primarily recorded by witnesses to her visionary experiences. She commonly records her struggles in prayer for another person or for the SDA movement, or her personal despondency brought about by circumstances such as poverty or lack of belief or opposition to her ministry, and then records a vision which addresses her then spiritual needs. Her response during and after visions was alternately perplexity, rapture, despondency, and awe, all of which responses are well attested in the comparable literature, perhaps most clearly in *Daniel*.

⁶⁶ By this I mean that the recording or the lack of recording of the disposition and reaction of the recipient of a visionary experience does not constitute a defining characteristic of the apocalyptic genre as per the above SBL definition.

⁶⁷ The corpus records visual (visions and epiphanies) and auditory (discourse or dialogue) revelations, otherworldly journeys, an otherworldly mediator (albeit Christo-centrally at times), and the disposition and reaction of the recipient, all in manners remarkably similar to that in the comparable literature. The least significant trait in the comparable literature (revelation via heavenly books) is also relatively insignificant within the corpus, and the EGW corpus differs markedly only in terms of the lack of pseudonymity, although this is understandable given the circumstances of her ministry.

⁶⁸ This is the study of matters which deal with the beginning of history, or pre-history.

⁶⁹ This is the study of matters which deal with the origin of the world.

introduction of sin to the world and the fall of man, are outlined through differing traditions⁷⁰.

Within the EGW corpus, there is a corresponding focus on cosmogony and paradigmatic primordial events. EGW explicitly outlines the origin of sin with Lucifer in heaven before the creation of the world, the creation of the world by God, and the fall of mankind at the instigation of Satan⁷¹. The explicit explication of paradigmatic primordial events is foundational for the corpus' apocalyptic eschatological *weltanschauung*, providing a framework within which history and individuals may find their place and purpose, without which EGW's *weltanschauung* and that of the corpus becomes meaningless.

In the comparable literature, history is reviewed either as explicit recollection or as *ex eventu* prophecy⁷². This serves to provide a framework within which the

⁷⁰ A classic example of the focus within the comparable literature on the paradigmatic primordial events may be found in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, chs. 6-11, in which two separate traditions regarding the introduction of sin to the world and the fall of mankind are narrated: the first tradition referring to the sexual liaisons between the 'beautiful and comely daughters' of men and a company of angels led by Semjaza; and the second tradition relates how angels led by Azazel taught mankind prohibited and secret knowledge and skills. Because of these actions by the angels, there is 'much blood being shed upon earth, and all lawlessness being wrought upon the earth' (ch. 9.1). Alternatively, *Apocalypse of Abraham* records in chs. 23-24 the temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden by 'a dragon in form, but having hands and feet like a man's, on his back six wings on the right and six on the left...and I saw, as it were, Adam, and Eve who was with him, and with them the crafty adversary and Cain, who had been led by the adversary to break the law'. The creation by God of the world is implied throughout the comparable literature, but the paradigmatic primordial events receive much more explicit attention as the writers seek an explanation for the evil they experienced in their lives that was consistent with their understanding of God. See Charles, R. H., *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 34-36, and Rubinkiewicz, R., 'Apocalypse of Abraham' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 698-01.

⁷¹ See White, Ellen G., *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), pp. 13-66, and White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press, 1995), pp. 492-10.

⁷² Within the comparable literature, *Daniel* chs. 7-12, the 'Animal Apocalypse' and 'Apocalypse of Weeks' within *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and Jubilees all include 'historical' apocalypses. The *ex eventu* recollection of history in the form of prophecy was a means by which the authors sought to gain the confidence of their readers that history really was moving towards the final great eschatological events as predicted

current readers might understand their (tenuous) situation, and provides hope for the imminent irruption into history of a glorious eschatological event and personal vindication / salvation.

Within the EGW corpus, there is extensive review of history, from primordial times, throughout the history of Israel, the Christ event, and then history until the mid-19th century⁷³. There is no pretence at *ex eventu* prophecy, but the overall purpose of the corpus' main historical overview is clearly stated: 'to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially so to present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of the future...it is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events'⁷⁴. The EGW corpus therefore corresponds closely both in use of 'historical' review and purpose of such a review with the comparable literature.

Within the comparable literature, salvation is not primarily to be found through esoteric knowledge, a much more common feature within Gnostic writings. However, 'both the manner of revelation and the eschatological content point beyond this world to another, which is at once the source of revealed knowledge

in the writings. Interestingly, Revelation as an early Christian apocalyptic writing does not include a review of history as such, but includes a cosmic and political eschatology that is forward looking, basing its authority not on an historical review in the form of *ex eventu* prophecy but on the person and cosmic authority of the person of Jesus Christ as witnessed in chs. 4-5.

⁷³ These events are recorded in the 'Conflict of the Ages' series (including *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, and *The Acts of the Apostles*).

⁷⁴ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), pp. v-xii.

and of future salvation...the revelation conveyed by the apocalypses is presumed to be conducive to salvation for those who accept it⁷⁵.

Within the EGW corpus, a knowledge of the revelations within the visionary experiences is not viewed as being a necessary precursor for salvation. However, there is extensive material which relates revelations given for particular circumstances, providing guidance or warning concerning contemplated or current actions in order that personal salvation might not be endangered⁷⁶. Beyond the individual warnings and exhortations within the corpus, the introduction to the *Great Controversy* relates a salvific purpose, ‘...and to show the holy, unchanging nature of his law, is the purpose of this book. That through its influence souls may be delivered from the powers of darkness, and become “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” to the praise of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, is the earnest prayer of the writer⁷⁷. There is therefore within the corpus a strong salvific purpose, in both personal and public revelations, but as in the comparable literature, the knowledge per se is not viewed as necessary for salvation.

⁷⁵ Although salvation does not depend explicitly on the acquisition of some esoteric knowledge revealed within a revelation within the apocalyptic literature, nevertheless ‘in all the apocalypses the expectation of salvation is based on otherworldly revelation’. See Collins, J. J., ‘Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre’, *Semaia* 14 (1979), p. 11.

⁷⁶ A good example of this kind of revelation relating to an individual’s personal salvation is found in the letter from EGW to Canright in 1888. Canright was a forceful preacher and had considerable talents, but found it difficult to cope with criticism or reproofs. EGW narrates a vision in which she saw Canright on a ship’s deck in stormy weather, and contemplating leaving the ship, but the Captain of the ship warned against leaving the ship during the stormy weather, and remaining onboard until the ship came safely to harbour. She includes in her subsequent letter to Canright the phrase as follows: ‘Close the door to unbelief, and make God your strength...if you yield to impressions you will lose your soul, and the soul is of great value with God’. See White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), pp. 571-73.

⁷⁷ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), p. xii.

Within the comparable literature, there is a strong emphasis on a coming eschatological crisis, with persecution of the righteous, before the final judgement on sinners, the natural elements, and fallen otherworldly beings⁷⁸.

Within the EGW corpus, as stated above, there is a strong eschatological *weltanschauung*. Beyond the revelations given for individual guidance, the ‘Conflict of the Ages’ series is written primarily because ‘the great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity...as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power...and all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety...will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict’⁷⁹. The conviction that history is building to an ineluctable climax occasioned by the final crisis and eschatological irruption of Christ into earth’s affairs is fundamental for the EGW corpus, a conviction akin to that in the comparable literature.

The positive counterpart to the eschatological judgement motif is that of eschatological salvation for the righteous, and this motif, as with eschatological judgement, is strong within the comparable literature, whether it be individual⁸⁰,

⁷⁸ The hope of an eschatological climax within history that involves final and eternal judgement upon the sinners, recreation of the elements, and judgement for Satan and the fallen angels is a strong theme that runs throughout the comparable literature. This hope is particularly strong in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch, Daniel, Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, Apocalypse of Abraham, and 2 Baruch*.

⁷⁹ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), p. ix-xi.

⁸⁰ *The Testament of Abraham* relates the events leading up to the death of Abraham, including Abraham’s dealings with the archangel Michael and Death as he (Abraham) tries to avoid death. Cosmic judgement for all sinners is referred to in the heavenly journeys of Abraham, but the focus of the work is the individual salvation of Abraham, arguing for a universal and cosmic Judaism in which good works are decisive in determining whether one faces eternal judgement

national⁸¹, or cosmic⁸². The eschatological salvation can be either through resurrection in bodily form, or exaltation to heaven with the angels.

Within the EGW corpus, there is a corresponding strong counterpart to the concept of eschatological judgement: that of eschatological salvation. EGW's first published vision notes that, '...then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves were opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality...in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air...' ⁸³, and in *Great Controversy* the concluding chapters deal with the deliverance of God's people, their clothing with immortality, and ascension in glory to heaven in language very similar to that used in *merkavah*, *hekahalot*, and the comparable literature⁸⁴. Furthermore, there is a strong notion of cosmic transformation, as the natural world and cosmos is renewed following the final victory over sin⁸⁵.

or salvation. See Sanders, E. P., 'Testament of Abraham' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 1* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 871-02.

⁸¹ A good example of eschatological salvation coming to the righteous is found in the 'Animal Apocalypse' in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*. In this pericope, the righteous are represented as white sheep, and they are rewarded after the Great Judgement with a personal transformation into white bulls, the state of mankind before the fall as depicted within the 'Animal Apocalypse'.

⁸² A cosmic transformation of individuals who have been faithful to God is represented within the apocalyptic genre in *Daniel* 12.1-2, the 'Apocalypse of Weeks' in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham* 31.1, and in *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* 4.14-21.

⁸³ White, E. G., 'To The Remnant Scattered Abroad', A Word to the "Little Flock" (1847) p. 15.

⁸⁴ In *Great Controversy* we read as follows: 'On each side of the cloudy chariot are wings, and beneath it are the living wheels; and as the chariot rolls upward, the wheels cry, 'Holy', and the wings, as they move, cry 'Holy', and the retinue of angels cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'. And the redeemed shout, 'Allelulia!' as the chariot moves onward towards the New Jerusalem'. See White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press, 1995), p. 645. This chariot imagery is taken originally from the chariot vision of Ezekiel 1, imagery which was very common throughout the comparable literature.

⁸⁵ See White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press, 1995), pp. 662-78.

The comparable literature is replete with examples of otherworldly regions and beings, either angelic or demonic: indeed, this is characteristic of the entire genre⁸⁶. The EGW corpus likewise contains a spatial dimension running throughout the visionary experiences, including heavenly realms, other worlds, and otherworldly beings (including Christ), although there is not the same complexity in the descriptions of the otherworldly dimension as in the comparable literature.

There is however a striking self-awareness of the spatial, otherworldly dimension within the corpus, with EGW writing as follows: ‘There are those who say, “someone manipulates her writings”. I acknowledge the charge. It is One who is mighty in counsel, One who presents before me the condition of things’⁸⁷. Furthermore, ‘I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them’⁸⁸. This self-awareness of the spatial dimension to the corpus stands firmly within the

⁸⁶ The entire apocalyptic genre is based on the concept that there are otherworldly regions, and that there are otherworldly actors, demonic or angelic, who participate in life on earth, form a bridge between God’s throne room in heaven and earth, and perform various functions, be they salvifically orientated for angels or otherwise for demonic beings. A striking example of this kind of spatial dimension is *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, chs. 1-36, but examples may be found in almost the entire apocalyptic corpus. There is some variation within the spatial dimension, notably concerning the number of heavens (one, five, seven or up to ten even), the role of the fallen angels, the number and function of archangels, and the opposition to, or support, by angelic beings to human heavenly ascents through the seven heavens. Notwithstanding the variations within the spatial element, this spatial dimension is essential for creating the ‘mood’ within the apocalyptic genre, building the credibility of the revelations along the temporal dimension through the explication of a spatial, otherworldly dimension.

⁸⁷ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages Book Three* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), p. 64.

⁸⁸ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages Book One* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), pp. 36-37.

apocalyptic consciousness of the comparable literature, even though it may not be reflected in the narrative framework of each visionary experience within the corpus.

Based on the above evidence, it would appear that the EGW corpus exhibits the main phenomenological traits of the comparable literature concerning the visions' spatial and temporal contents⁸⁹.

Paraenesis and concluding elements

Within the comparable literature, paraenesis is comparatively rare during the course of the revelation, but there are instructions to the recipients after the revelations⁹⁰ and narrative conclusions to the visionary experiences⁹¹. In the

⁸⁹ The only phenomenological characteristic which does not occur to any extent is history as *ex eventu* prophecy.

⁹⁰ A very good example of the instructions to the recipient after a vision is found in *Daniel* 12.4, where after a visionary experience, the narrative framework relates the final instructions to the recipient as follows: 'But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and seal the book till the time of the end. Many will be at their wits' end, and punishment will be heavy'. Likewise in Christian apocalyptic literature, we find final instructions within the conclusion to a narrative framework that includes visionary experiences. In *Revelation* 22.10-11 we read as follows: 'Then he told me, "do not seal up the words of prophecy in this book, for the hour of fulfillment is near. Meanwhile, let the evildoer go on doing evil and the filthy-minded wallow in his filth, but let the good man persevere in his goodness and the dedicated man be true to his dedication"'.

⁹¹ Generally the visionary experiences are contained within narrative frameworks that include concluding elements after the visionary experience, often after the recipient has returned to earth following their otherworldly journey or ascent to the throne room of God. In *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* ch. 13.7-10, we have the narrative framework for the following visions clearly laid out as follows: 'And I went off and sat down at the waters of Dan, to the south of the west of Hermon: and I read their petition till I fell asleep. And behold a dream came to me, and visions fell down upon me, and I saw visions of chastisement, and a voice came bidding me to tell it to the sons of heaven and reprimand them. And when I awaked, I came unto them, and they were all sitting gathered together, weeping in Abelsjail, which is between Lebanon and Seneser, with their faces covered. And I recounted before them all the visions which I had seen in sleep, and I began to speak the words of righteousness, and to reprimand the heavenly Watchers'. See Charles, R. H., *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 40. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* concludes with three chapters which narrate the events which took place when 'I found myself on earth, and I said, "Eternal, Mighty One, I am no longer in the glory in which I was above, and all that my soul desired to understand in my heart I do not understand"...'. This narrative framework serves to provide the structure within which a discourse can take place between the mediator and the recipient, providing clarifications and instructions to the recipient

EGW corpus, paraenesis within a given visionary experience is also relatively rare, but there are instructions given to EGW both during and after her visionary experiences within the narrative frameworks⁹². The instructions to EGW either come within the visions themselves⁹³, or after the visions, when there is a particular need⁹⁴. Indeed, visions were presented afresh when required so that EGW could continue her literary endeavours⁹⁵, so one may infer that the EGW

who is now focussed on earthly realities. See Rubinkiewicz, R, 'Apocalypse of Abraham' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (London, UK: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), pp. 705-06. The narrative framework itself is a defining characteristic of the apocalyptic genre according to the SBL definition (see above), and provides an important means by which concluding instructions, exhortations and warnings are provided to the recipient.

⁹² An example of such a narrative framework within the EGW corpus is as follows: 'I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said, "not now". Those who eat of the fruit of this land, go back to the earth no more. But in a little while, if faithful, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the fountain"; and He said, "you must go back to the earth again, and relate to others what I have revealed to you". Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I cannot stay here any longer, all things of earth look so dreary – I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. O, that I had the wings of a dove, then I would fly away, and be at rest'. See White, E. G., 'To The Remnant Scattered Abroad', A Word to the "Little Flock" (1847) pp. 17-18.

⁹³ For example, we read as follows: 'I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in the place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God'. See White, Ellen G., *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 99. Another example is as follows: 'My guide now opened the door, and we both passed out. He bade me take again all the things I had left without. This done, he handed me a green cord coiled up closely. This he directed me to place next to my heart, and when I wished to see Jesus, take it from my bosom, and stretch it to the utmost. He cautioned me not to let it remain coiled for any length of time, lest it should become knotted and difficult to straighten. I placed the cord near my heart, and joyfully descended the narrow stairs, praising the Lord, and telling all whom I met where they could find Jesus'. See White, Ellen G., *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 27.

⁹⁴ Instructions and applications concerning prior visions often came to EGW in the night, or in the form of fresh visions which opened to her the current application of her previous visionary experiences. In this regard, she writes as follows: 'The words have been spoken in a charge to me, "Write in a book the things which thou hast seen and heard, and let it go to all the people"...I have been aroused at one, two or three o'clock in the morning with some point, forcibly impressed upon my mind, as if spoken by the voice of God'. See White, Ellen G., *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1953), p. 128.

⁹⁵ 'The book *The Great Controversy*, I appreciate above silver or gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people. While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind'. Letter 56, 1911. See White, Ellen G., *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1953), p. 128.

corpus does exhibit these phenomenological traits as in the comparable literature.

Based on the above (brief) evidence, it would appear that the EGW corpus exhibits the main phenomenological traits of the comparable literature concerning the visions' paraenetical and concluding elements' characteristics.

Conclusion

Given the purpose of the paper⁹⁶, the paper's hypothesis is that 'a full understanding of the visionary experiences within the corpus of the EGW writings is not possible without an appreciation of phenomenological characteristics of comparable Second Temple Jewish writings...'.

Within the Second Temple Jewish literature there was a wide variety of literary works, e.g. Philo's allegoricalism, *peshet*, *targumic*, *midrashic* and *talmudic* writings, but for a wide variety of stylistic, hermeneutical and content related reasons it is the Jewish apocalyptic writings⁹⁷ which relate most closely in phenomenological terms to the EGW corpus⁹⁸.

The EGW corpus exhibits remarkable phenomenological consistency with the Jewish apocalyptic writings: in terms of manner of revelation, through visual⁹⁹ and auditory¹⁰⁰ revelations, otherworldly journeys and mediators, and the disposition and reaction of the recipient; in terms of content, including cosmogony and primordial paradigmatic events, historical reviews, revelatory knowledge contributing towards salvation, eschatological crises¹⁰¹,

⁹⁶ '...the paper will provide an assessment of the visionary experiences recorded in the writings of EGW in the context of comparable Second Temple Jewish literature...'.

⁹⁷ As defined by the SBL Genres Project.

⁹⁸ See Footnote 16 above for a discussion of the 'stylistic, hermeneutical and content related reasons' referred to.

⁹⁹ In both the media of visions or epiphanies.

¹⁰⁰ In both the media of discourses and dialogues.

¹⁰¹ These may involve persecutions for the righteous and other eschatological upheavals, e.g. political chaos and economic collapse.

judgments¹⁰², salvation¹⁰³, and otherworldly elements¹⁰⁴; and in terms of paraenetical and concluding elements, through brief paraenesis, instructions to the recipient (EGW), and narrative conclusions.

The only areas of phenomenological divergence are the lack of pseudonymity in the EGW corpus, prophecy as *ex eventu* history, and appearance of Christ as an otherworldly mediator, none of which are defining characteristics according to the SBL definition, and which reflect the time and manner of the EGW visionary experiences¹⁰⁵.

Unless direct historical derivation is simultaneously proven as the cause of phenomenological convergence, modern scepticism concerning EGW's ministry in general, and the charges of nervous or epileptic causality for the visionary experiences in particular, must address the phenomenological convergence demonstrated, particularly in the area of revelatory manner, to remain credible.

¹⁰² These may be on the sinners, on the natural elements, or on otherworldly beings such as Satan or the fallen angels.

¹⁰³ This is the positive counterpart of the previous eschatological judgments, and includes personal salvation for the righteous, cosmic transformation whereby the world is transformed to its original Edenic state, resurrection from the dead for the righteous, and exaltation to heaven with the angels.

¹⁰⁴ This may include otherworldly regions such as heaven, other worlds, or hell, and otherworldly beings, e.g. angels, demons, Jesus Christ, and God.

¹⁰⁵ As stated above, pseudonymity was not a viable option for EGW as her visions often took place in public meetings, and her utterances whilst in vision were recorded by those present. Prophecy as *ex eventu* history was not a viable option because the public nature of her visions would disprove any subsequent attempt to claim that the writings were the product of a particular luminary in Christian or Jewish heritage who had foreseen the events of history following the death of Christ, and the presence of Christ as an otherworldly mediator is a characteristic of much Christian apocalyptic literature, and reflects the Christo-centric focus found in much Christian literature from the Christ-event onwards. None of the above characteristics are genre definitive in terms of the SBL genre definition given above, and given the variance within the comparable literature along each of these dimensions, e.g. the otherworldly mediator is at times Uriel, Michael, Jaol and Death *et. al.*, the EGW corpus' variance from the comparable literature along these three dimensions is not significant.

If this phenomenological convergence spanning over two millennia is not satisfactorily addressed, then such charges will lack credibility, and we are left with the self-understanding of the EGW corpus: ‘As inquiries are frequently made as to my state in vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth¹⁰⁶... for half a century I have been the Lord’s messenger, and as long as my life shall last I shall continue to bear the messages that God gives me for His people’¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages Book One* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages Book Three* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), p. 71.

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