

Julian of Norwich: Voicing the Vernacular

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JULIAN OF NORWICH: VOICING THE VERNACULAR

by

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ABSTRACT

JULIAN OF NORWICH: VOICING THE VERNACULAR

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Marquette University, 2015

Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), the subject of my dissertation, was a Christian mystic whose writings, *Revelation of Love* and *A Book of Showings*, are the earliest surviving texts in the English language written by a woman. The question that has puzzled scholars is how could a woman of her time express her vision in such innovative and literary language? The reason scholars have puzzled over this for centuries is that women had been denied access to traditional education. Some scholars have answered this problem through close textual comparisons linking her text to those in the patristic tradition or through modern feminist theory. The result has been that each scholar has interpreted her text in narrow constructs linked to his or her own theories. Yet, wider forms of education can account for her innovative language. I argue that she drew from a rich reservoir of rhetorical models readily available to her in Norwich in oral discourse and visual art. To examine this concept, I analyze oral and visual rhetorics available to any medieval person during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first chapter establishes Norwich as a vibrant cultural hub, filled with interconnected oral, visual, and textual rhetoric. The second chapter examines orally available rhetoric in sermons, mystery plays (*N-Town Cycle*), and religious prayer books (*Ancrene Wisse*). The third chapter examines the visual rhetoric of the passion in paintings, panels, sculpture, and manuscript marginalia. I examine the famous Despenser Retable, Norwich Cathedral's St. Andrew's Chapel, and the Gorleston Psalter. The fourth chapter examines art portraying the Last Judgment, namely in depictions of the apocalypse in Norwich Cathedral, the Holkham Bible, the Wenhaston Doom and the Stanningfield Doom, and in marginalia in the Ormesby Psalter, the Luttrell Psalter, and the De Lisle Psalter. In each chapter, memory devices, *ars memoria*, are examined as medieval literacy tools connecting rhetorical forms. These forms give strong evidence for her rich language, allowing her to describe time and space in altered frameworks, produce detailed portraiture in words, and develop concepts of "Mother Jesus" and "Forgiving Lord."

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Therese Novotny, B.A., M.A.

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Introduction

Julian of Norwich, the subject of my dissertation, wrote the two earliest surviving texts in the English language composed by a woman. A Christian mystic and anchoress, she wrote *Revelation of Love* and *A Book of Showings*, in which she articulates a vision she experienced at the age of thirty. No mere recording of an unusual experience, these texts wrestle with complex theological and epistemological issues. Their range is broad and bold: it includes redemption, salvation, forgiveness, divine knowledge, and free will. The question that has puzzled scholars is this: how could a woman of her time express her vision in such innovative and literary language? For one thing, women had been denied access to traditional education for centuries. Where and what, therefore, was her background and training? Despite a half-century of research almost nothing is known. Some scholars have answered this problem through close textual comparisons linking her text to those in the patristic tradition. Other scholars have examined her text through modern feminist theory, based in Lacanian psychology and concepts of embodiment. A third strand, prompted by Marion Glasscoe's Exeter Symposiums, has encouraged multidisciplinary studies, but these scholarly efforts tended to stress singular interests, such as historiography, manuscript studies or theology. Necessarily, these approaches compelled those interpreting Julian's texts to use narrow constructs linked to these individual theories. My research suggests that wider forms of education were available that can account for her innovative language. I argue that she drew from a rich reservoir of rhetorical models. Norwich, her hometown, a city second only to London in size, was a cultural pool of oral discourse and visual art. My research analyzes oral and visual

rhetoric available to any medieval person during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. My methodology includes modern social criticism (Carruthers, Bynum, Aers, Tanner, and Enders, among others),¹ with an emphasis on rhetorical theory (including Murphy, Copeland, Owst, Glenn, and Happé),² and art history (primarily Brown, Camille, Stanbury, Rose, Mâle, Pickering, and Marrow).³

¹ For an introduction to memory as a tool of invention in the ancient, classical, and medieval context, see two texts by Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For historical and social contexts of religious concepts, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). For a review and analysis of historical records and wills in Norwich, see Norman Tanner's *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich: 1370-1532*. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984.) For views of the suffering Christ, as they are wrapped in social contexts, see David Aers and Lynn Staley, *Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996). For a study of drama cycles and their social and political contexts, as well as their role in forming narratives held in communal memory, see Jody Enders, *The Medieval Theatre of Cruelty* (London and New York: Cornell University Press, 1999) 18-19.

² Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) provides explanations of medieval issues of translation and rhetoric. See Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, *Medieval Rhetoric and Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) for examples of medieval texts. For seminal discussions of rhetoric in the Middle Ages, see James Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). For discussion of rhetoric and detailed summaries of sermons see G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961). For representations of rhetoric, narrative genre and scripture in dramatic cycle plays, see Peter Hâppé, *Cyclic Form and the English Mystery Plays* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004). For a discussion of rhetoric from outside the traditional canon, see Cheryl Glenn, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997).

³ For insights into picture bibles, their production and purposes, see Michelle Brown's *The Holkham Bible: A Fascimile* (London: British Library Publishing, 2007). For a discussion of art and text together in psalters and cathedrals, see Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). Also see Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Making of the Luttrell Psalter* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1998). For discussions of iconography and symbols in medieval art see Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000). To understand how the texts and art of Early Middle English period influenced each other, see Sarah Stanbury, *Seeing the Gawain Poet: Description and Act of Perception* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991) and Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). For art in Norwich Cathedral,

The question of Julian's education has given rise to much critical debate, and still stirs discussions. Colledge and Walsh, editors of *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, claim that she had received some training in English and Latin along with some education in rhetoric and the language arts, but they do not give evidence of specific educational mentors, tutors or schools.⁴ The point of their edition was an attempt to use a lexicological and linguistic approach to link the syntax and diction of Julian's text to other patristic, theological or scriptural texts. Though they provide citations from Julian's texts that directly quote the Vulgate or that closely borrow Latin syntax and style, the place and manner of her instruction is unclear, as are her intellectual affiliations.⁵ Colledge and Walsh base their edition heavily on one of the four primary extant manuscripts, the Paris, MS BN Fonds anglais 40, a late copy which preserves the rhetorical and logical structures of Julian's style, but which provides inconclusive evidence of Julian's formal education.⁶ Tanner suggests that some of Julian's education

see Martial Rose and Julia Hedgecoe, *Stories in Stone* (London: Thames and Judson, 2007). For interpretations and evolution of passion iconography influenced by cyclic drama plays, see James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Belgium: Van Ghemmert Publishing Company, 1979).

⁴Julian of Norwich, *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich: Part Two*. Eds. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978), 43-59). I will use this edition for direct quotes of Julian's text. All subsequent quotes from Julian will be from the Colledge and Walsh edition and will be labeled as: (Julian, Rev. Ch/ll). For a detailed overview the various responses to this critical question of Julian's education, see Elizabeth Dutton, *Julian of Norwich: The Influence of Late Medieval Devotional Compilations* (Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 6-12.

⁵ *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 45-46.

⁶ The two main manuscripts used for modern editions are the Sloane (MSS BM Sloane 2499 and 3705) and the Paris (MS BN Fonds anglais 40), which are both late copies, and perhaps copies of copies. The Westminster, a third manuscript, is not as lengthy as the other two. The Additional, which may be the shortest of all because it contains the short account of Julian's sixteen visions found in *Showings*. Nicholas Watkins and Jacqueline Jenkins produced an edition that synthesizes these editions, uses consistent spelling, and explains the characteristics of each manuscript in terms of word choice, length, and dialect. Moreover, their edition is filled with a wealth of notes to compare the manuscripts to each other, especially in terms of omissions or inserts. They

could have been possible at the Benedictine priory for nuns at Carrow,⁷ but Power asks if the nuns there knowledgeable enough about Latin to teach her.⁸ Moreover, Leyser suggests that Latin was left exclusively to the clerics and monks in the late Middle Ages as part of their clerical authority, which led to the increased popularity of lay and secular texts being written in the vernacular English.⁹ Even without access to Latin or English texts, Brian Stock contends that the non-literate person could still participate in literate culture because texts were reread in parts or fragments and disseminated throughout a community.¹⁰ Watson and Jenkins look to Julian's writing to conclude that her text shows not only knowledge, but keenly "intuitive understanding" of medieval theology. Certain words and grammar suggest a formal education of language.¹¹ Still intrigued by Julian's insights, I asked what language skills could have guided and formed her writing. It prompted me to think about language that existed around her, but not necessarily inside the construct of written words.

My study offers a different approach to scholars - one which examines Julian of Norwich in the context of all the language surrounding her, available in both spoken and

attempt to remain true to a "base" text. I chose to use the Colledge and Walsh edition for this dissertation because my study required the longest and most consistent manuscript from which to trace the language shifts in Julian's prose. Sloane tends to be somewhat shorter than Paris and has "eyeskip," or lines the scribe missed, which makes my study difficult. All editions were invaluable to my analysis. See Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, and Julian, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and a Revelation of Love* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006)-26-27 for details.

⁷ Tanner, *Church in Norwich*, 27, 67.

⁸ Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries. C. 1275-1535*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 276-77.

⁹Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England: 450-1500* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), 104-127.

¹⁰ Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text*. (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 20-21.

¹¹ Watson and Jenkins, 10.

written words and in pictures. A full-fledged education was in the stones, paintings, sounds and performances around her. I search for an understanding of language and discourse in all its forms. My dissertation examines what can also constitute the education of a non-formally trained lay person, since that education creates a form of literacy. Any medieval person with eyes and ears lived in a sea of language. It was in sermons, cycle plays and liturgical rituals. It was painted on murals of cathedrals, carvings of wood doors, textiles for vestments, altar cloths and roodcreens. It was in prayer books, psalters and picture bibles. It was represented in crucifixes, statues of saints, and stained glass. All of these forms of narrative, and the depictions of such narrative in art, influenced the language during the fourteenth century. I specifically examine Julian of Norwich, since she lived in a city that was a cultural hub and a mercantile city on an active trade route. She gleaned some of the benefits of a traditional education available to men, but also pulled deeply from the loam of rhetorics heard in sermons, performed in dramas, and seen in the art surrounding her. Since she had entered her anchorhold at age thirty, it is very likely she was exposed to the benefits of multiple forms of language abundant in Norwich.

Some scholars may ask if she even saw or heard the objects, plays and sermons I describe in this dissertation. Even though she may not have seen these exact objects at a particular time and place, those objects represent a communally shared knowledge of rhetoric principles that I will demonstrate were interconnected. The rhetoric embedded in them were used for similar purposes and themes and were readily accessible to everyone. The scene of the crucifixion (the men stretching Jesus' body on the crucifix) was heard in

the *N-Town Play*,¹² but if not heard or seen there, it was represented in art (the Norwich Cathedral roof boss), or it was depicted in the folio page of a manuscript (Holkham Bible),¹³ or the folio page was used to make a rood screen, or to make a stained glass insert in a cathedral. The interconnected depictions of the same details of a narrative scene, a scene that originated in the text of scripture, and then, in the script of a play, appeared over again in various forms, all embedded with similar rhetorical concepts. Rhetoric supported the infrastructure to connect ideas across genres and media. It could accommodate this because in addition to its textual application, it also had well-established oral components. These rhetorical components, rooted in the Ciceronian education of the orator, had applications found in medieval art, drama, and text. If a person had not heard the exact words of a medieval play, they could see them depicted on the church walls or in the words of a prayer. Moreover, since medieval society relied heavily on memory of texts, these forms of language were transposed and carried in the mind.

Why was Julian chosen for this study? First, she provided two texts she revised over a period of twenty years. They reflect a growing and changing understanding of her vision. In its length and its content, the second text is more carefully developed than the first. Second, she crafted language, descriptions and theology that are still unusual for modern readers and that belie her humble background as an “unlettered” creature. Third, she lived in a thriving economic city that brought trade from other parts of England and

¹²“Fest on a rop and pulle hym long/And I shal drawe thee ageyn./ Spare we not these ropys strong/ Thw we brest both flesch and veyn.” *N-Town Plays*, ed. Douglas Sugano, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), 206, lines 65-69.

¹³ London, British Library, MS Add 47682 F. 31v.

Europe, that housed four mendicant orders, and whose merchants, clerics, craftsmen, journeymen, and artists were involved in a steady exchange of ideas.

Finally, her language is different in the degree to which it pulls the reader into a physically and emotionally compelling narrative of the Christ's passion. She has a talent for details (blood falling like herring scales; flesh dying and drying). Her descriptions are written in a way to alter time and space ("bringing forth" in a single action and "forthbringing" as a process). She uses allusion and metaphor to compare the image of Jesus' side wound (a sweet delectable place) to a womb (a space plentiful with blood and water) within several carefully crafted phrases. Her narrative scenes are told with cinemagraphic pauses and clarity. Although her language is connected to the rhetorics she must have heard and seen, she is keenly aware of her language and how to express herself. She generates new language and new ideas based on the degree to which she uses scriptural, visual and oral sources of language. Julian dwells upon a Jesus who physically shared a body with Mary before birth. This pre-birth connection between the two so strongly empowers Mary, that the church, even today, is uncertain about how to discuss that type of transformative space. For Julian, the connection between Jesus and Mary continued to grow in a reciprocal and interconnected evolution. Jesus became "our Mother Jesus" to take on the role of motherhood. Julian establishes the notion that women are more than a mere vessel to be filled by God, but rather are essential parts of a divine process. Julian describes a shared embodiment of Jesus and Mary. It is unlike any relationship available to men. She is not using different rhetoric, but is using it to a degree and purpose different from most writers – often to convey concepts that were unusual and memorable.

An effective tool for this analysis is rhetoric. It is sharp enough to make fine distinctions in rhetorical discourse and broad enough to cover a range of disciplines and genres. Rhetoric texts paved a common pathway through the monastic halls, scholarly libraries, preacher pulpits, drama cycle sets, psalters, prayer books and bible translations. Rhetorical models were studied in school as part of a rigid academic tradition extending from ancient times well into the twentieth century, essentially unchanged in those decades. During the fourteenth century, rhetoric trickled down from the most learned university scholar to the mendicant preacher. The average cobbler listening to a sermon in the Church Square heard rhetoric in familiar metaphors and syntax. It traveled from the abbot to his novices, and from there to lay men and women practicing the tools of meditation and preparing for confession. Rhetoric was the underpinning of communally shared texts, charts, crop cycles, healing treatments, and maps of all kinds, vital to a community and held in its collective memory.

Several pioneers clear a pathway for my project. James Murphy's work on Quintilian reminds scholars that rhetoric was taught with specific methods and texts, intended to educate the school boy and the seasoned citizen orator.¹⁴ Unlike modern rhetoric, which is primarily studied in texts, medieval rhetoric lived orally in spoken discourse. Its major components included elocution, delivery, and memory. The branch containing devices of memory provided tools (pictures, patterns, and images) crucial for people to store and organize encyclopedic amounts of information.

¹⁴ Quintilian and James J. Murphy, *Quintilian on the Teaching of Speaking and Writing: Translations from Books One, Two, and Ten of the Institutio Oratoria* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), xxxi.

Mary Carruthers, with her studies in the art of memory, reminds scholars of the tools used to foster memorization. These were essential skills in a culture where texts were rare.¹⁵ She studies how memory devices served two purposes; they were used to help preachers remember and deliver sermons in organized blocks of language, and were used to help listeners organize, sort through, and retrieve information for future forms of invention. Furthermore, she describes how pictures, though sometimes mere ornamentation, were pathways to storehouses of information. They performed roles beyond mere metaphoric/ memetic impressions of language; pictures actually helped early students, preachers, and farmers “track down,” store, and reorganize information. Furthermore, these tools of memory helped monastics develop their craft, which included generating materials for liturgies, including prayers, music, books, and prayer responses. With her work, Carruthers opened up a vein of scholarship exploring how texts and pictures worked together with specific purposes and patterns during ancient and medieval times.

Art history opened other veins of scholarship. Art and its forms offered a tutorial for thought and meditation. Michael Camille, with his studies in art history, examined marginalia in medieval manuscripts as a commentary upon text. Pictures in the Luttrell Psalter, for instance, subvert the text with naughty images of beastly behavior, pictures of virtues and vices, grotesque depictions of animal/human hybrids. Although he agrees with Carruthers that most images in the texts are ornamental, others juxtapose and subvert the message in text.¹⁶ The tension between images and text prompt a conversation

¹⁵ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 25-28.

¹⁶ Camille, *Mirror*, 45.

between the two and open fissures in the cultural assumptions about social order and church teachings. So too, Julian uses language and image in her text to open fissures and explore ambiguities in church teaching and scripture.

This dissertation will examine the rich resources of language surrounding Julian. It uses four categories to examine the terrain of medieval discourse. The first chapter establishes Norwich as a vibrant cultural hub, filled with interconnected oral, visual and textual rhetoric. The second chapter examines orally available rhetoric in sermons, mystery plays (*N-Town Cycle*) and religious prayer books (*Ancrene Wisse*). The third chapter examines the visual rhetoric of the passion in paintings, panels, sculpture, and manuscript marginalia. I examine the famous Despenser Retable, Norwich Cathedral's St. Andrew's Chapel, and the Gorleston Psalter. The fourth chapter examines art portraying the Last Judgment, namely in depictions of the apocalypse in Norwich Cathedral, the Holkham Bible, the Wenhaston Doom and the Stanningfield Doom, and in marginalia in the Ormesby Psalter, the Luttrell Psalter, and the De Lisle Psalter. The last two chapters, focusing on the passion and the Last Judgment, address two separate and dominant themes in medieval religion. The passion examines issues of sin and redemption through pain and suffering, whereas the theme of the Last Judgment addresses issues of justice, judgment, and remorse through the lens of pity, mercy, and love. In each chapter, memory devices, or *ars memoria*, are examined as medieval literacy tools connecting rhetorical forms. These forms give strong evidence for Julian's rich language, allowing her to describe time and space in altered frameworks, to produce detailed portraiture in words, and to develop concepts of "Mother Jesus," and in contrast to the period's punitive attitudes toward sin, a "Forgiving Lord."

Julian of Norwich had multiple forms of language and rhetoric available to her. In oral formats and in visual art, especially that of the passion and the Last Judgment, she gathered forms of language around her. Even if she had not heard the sermon or seen exact pieces of art, she would have been familiar with the common themes, pictures and narratives of Christianity in and around Norwich. Her innovative use of those forms, along with twenty years of meditation and reflection, produced works worthy of preservation, ongoing study, and new research.

I

Norwich

Julian was a woman, and she wrote. From those two facts come all the problems. Scholarship of her two texts, *A Book of Showings* and *Revelation of Love*, offers a range of approaches to her writings. Most scholars have struggled to understand how a woman of her time could master such literary and nuanced language. Scholars have discussed Julian's language in terms of her use of the feminine body and her feminine perspective of God.¹⁷ Others have focused on her negotiation of physical space,¹⁸ and of her place in the context of historically and culturally constructed society.¹⁹ Central to this discussion are feminist language theorists, who argue the male constructs in which she wrote were so disruptive, her writing could not be contained in prescribed categories of a male

¹⁷ For the representation of the feminist perspective, see Frances Beer, *Women and the Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992) and also Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe*. Vol. 5. *Studies in Medieval Mysticism* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004). See also Ellen M. Ross, "She Wept and Cried Right Loud for Sorrow and for Pain": Suffering, the Spiritual Journey, and Women's Experience in Late Medieval Mysticism" in *Maps of Flesh and Light*, ed. Ulrike Wiethaus (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 45-59.

¹⁸ For discussions of space, see Carmel Davis, *Mysticism and Space* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008) and Laura Saetveit, "Julian of Norwich and St. Bridget of Sweden: Creating Intimate Space with God," in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 127-141. For discussions of the body and the feminine Jesus, see Carolyn Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁹ See Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*. For a definition of mysticism as a conscious experience or reaction to being in the presence of God, see Bernard McGinn and Patricia Ferris, *Early Christian Mystics: The Divine Vision of the Spiritual Masters* (New York: Crossroad, 2003). Also see Steven Katz, *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For an overview of mysticism from several theoretical perspectives, see *Christian Mysticism*, eds. Elizabeth Nelstrop, Kevin Magill, and Bradley Onishi (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 1988).

dominant rhetoric.²⁰ Others find the very nature of her sacred experience was so resistant to the symbolic order of the male dominant religion, language failed to describe it.²¹ Chronologically, early scholarship traced the influence of patristic writings in her texts. This theological, rationalistic and intellectual approach to Julian's writing emphasized her knowledge of the patristic tradition, scripture, church teachings and mystical practices.²² Consequently, scholarship tends to divide loosely into two camps, with some staking her place in the patristic tradition, while the others place her in the center of feminist theory. In these two camps, the former relies heavily on rhetorical analysis, close reading of texts and linguistics. The later relies on the methods and terminology of psychology, historiography and social criticism. A third and rather intermediate camp drew from both. A third vein of scholarship, eager to use a multi-disciplinary approach to broaden the marginal status of the "mystics," urged for Julian and her contemporaries to be studied through theories from art, history, theology and literature, with an emphasis on the affective nature of her texts.²³

²⁰ Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference and the Demands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²¹ Julia Kristeva, "*Le Feminin et Le Sacre*," quoted in A. Bradley, "Mystic Atheism: Julia Kristeva's Negative Theology," *Theology and Sexuality*, 14/3, (2008): 279-292.

²² The Colledge and Walsh edition of Julian's text was devoted to presenting the rhetorical, theological and intellectual rigor of Julian's texts. The edition, which I use for my dissertation, provides detailed notes, sources, comparisons to texts of Julian's contemporaries and those preceding her. For use of sources including those who were Julian's contemporaries, see Denise Baker, "The Structure of the Soul and the 'Godly Wylle' in Julian of Norwich's *Showings*." *The Medieval Mystical Tradition: Exeter Symposium VII*. Ed. E.A. Jones (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 37-50.

²³ Medieval scholarship testifies to the value of such multi-disciplinary discourse. In the Exeter Symposiums, started in 1980, Marion Glasscoe carefully cultivated an interdisciplinary approach to devotional writers. The medieval mystical tradition at that time was a marginal pursuit, whether one's vantage point was history, literature or theology, but the symposiums encouraged scholars from other disciplines to talk to each other.

Her writing has a scope and depth visible through many lenses. Still, her writing draws upon well-established rhetorical patterns of logic, structure and metaphor. For all the cultural and educational obstacles she faced, she still utilized the male dominant rhetorical systems of her time and altered them to create her own innovations of language. Her innovations, necessary to articulate a vision that included women and sinners, produced a text which offered proto-feminine approaches to God and still remained within the bounds of male dominant orthodoxy. Her depiction of a “Mother Jesus” opened a new concept of Christ, as did the “Forgiving Lord,” who welcomed the marginalized sinner, despite the punitive attitudes of the period. The structure of rhetoric, at the core of her writing, provided her the agility needed for a female mystic using the vernacular.

Even though she lived in male-dominant constructs of social and cultural norms, she is still primarily a writer, a rhetorician and even a poet. She constructed a web of images to express relationships between contrary spiritual ideas of body and soul, human and divine, sin and forgiveness. Using the tools of classical argument commonly heard in sermons of her time, she deconstructed terms, looking to examine “synne” and “no synne.” The logical systems of classification and division lent themselves to binary opposites. So too, did the visual and verbal presentation of church teachings, with binaries of behavior presented as virtues and vices. Her vision, however, urged her to reconcile these binaries, and her intellectual tenacity kept her puzzling over them. Her intense interest in developing language, too, led her to articulate her broad theology of inclusion, one which sympathizes with the sinner, the woman, the “unlettered” and the lay person. She wrote to explain her vision, but also to be heard so others could

participate in, recall, and create new paradigms. In the process of understanding her vision and explaining it to others, she voiced a rhetoric of interiority to help herself and others as they examined their lives. To carve out her critical role as a vernacular writer crafting deliberately challenging language, yet still within the orthodoxy of the church, she was compelled to use the vernacular in innovative ways.

The key to her innovation springs from her broad range and agile use of rhetorical systems found in sermons, dramas and prayer books. She knew the discourse codes, and her readers and listeners did too, and would have recognized her deviations from the expected rhetorical patterns. From these sources, she learned and altered established rhetorical patterns, including devices like the exemplum, the metaphor, *repetitio*, *opposition*, and allegory. She used logical systems of division and enthymeme, as well as strategies of argument and proofs. Other rhetorical devices, such as the patterns of alliteration and rhyme, the commonplaces of everyday conversation, and the parallel expressions and sayings of religious instructional materials, most readily embedded in discourses like the *Ancrene Wisse*, colored her texts. Visual rhetorics, those depicted in religious scenes and those used as mnemonic devices, informed her style. Ultimately, her choice was not to remain silent, as was expected of a semi-cloistered anchoress, but rather to build upon the rhetorical strategies she knew, even though they could not accommodate everything she perhaps wanted to say, and even though she may not have applied them within the patterns prescribed in the rhetorical tradition.

As a woman in the fourteenth century, she would have had no direct access to formal education, and even if she had been trained as a Benedictine nun before she

entered her anchorhold,²⁴ she would have had limited access to structured scholarly practices. However unfamiliar she would have been with formal training, she was a natural inheritor of the rhetorical systems surrounding her. She could cobble together the rhetorical knowledge learned from informal exposure to it, and she applied it using her own, unstructured and fluid sensibility. They formed a rhetorical blueprint. Although she used the discourse codes within it, she also modified those codes to accommodate her challenging questions of the incarnation, the passion and redemption.

For these reasons, I am not examining Julian's rhetoric from the context of contemporaneous literary texts commonly the focus of medieval scholarly criticism. She may not have known or read the material now usually found in modern literature anthologies, but she knew the non-literary material familiar to most medieval people. The sermon, the mystery cycle drama, and the prayer book were delivered to an educated and non-educated audience alike.²⁵ These genres contained, applied, and disseminated the common conventions of rhetoric of the time from the pulpit, marketplace and church pews. The sermon and the drama were delivered or performed in public churches, streets or market squares, with the purpose of instruction and entertainment. Even if the medieval woman were not formally trained in systems of rhetoric and logic, she would

²⁴ Watson and Jenkins, 4. There is a strong possibility she was a nun at the Benedictine convent at Carrow, a mile from the Church in which she was enclosed, but there is no firm evidence of her residence before her enclosure.

²⁵ Wilburn Ross, ed., "Sermon 2," in *Middle English Sermons from the MS Royal*, Published for the Early English Text Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 12. A text states that everyone over the age of seven must know the Patre Nostre, Ave Maria and the Creed. In fact, the content of the sermon details seven major divisions of the major phrases of the Pater Noster.

have spent years observing the application of these paradigms in discourse practices surrounding her.

Norwich as Cultural Hub

Julian lived outside her anchorhold for approximately thirty years in Norwich before living as an anchorite.²⁶ Even though she lived a solitary way of life, the extent to which the enclosed anchoritic existence was practiced was complex. In England, anchorites were usually women, and if the *Ancrene Wisse* is an indicator of the audience to whom it was directed, they were usually lay women, who often lived outside a cloister prior to their enclosure.²⁷ English anchorholds, with early roots in rural areas, became an important urban phenomenon, and became “an integral element of the ecclesiastic topography of medieval towns.”²⁸ Anchorites did not fall under the direct oversight of religious orders, and did not receive financial support from them, so usually patronage arrangements were established to support them as part of the town or city. This connection indicates an engagement with the world outside the cell. Although they were formally enclosed in a cell adjacent to a church, passages in the *Ancrene Wisse* indicate that anchorites considered themselves part of a “community-in-separateness.”²⁹ Although

²⁶ She states that her vision occurred at age thirty, but the actual year she was enclosed is in dispute. Most scholars agree that she was born in 1342, had had her vision in 1373, and that she died in 1416. See *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 285-288.

²⁷ *Anchoritic Traditions of Medieval Europe*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 10-11.

²⁸ For an overview of medieval urbanization see *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540*, eds. R. Holt and G. Rosser (New York: Routledge, 1990). Also see Roberta Gilchrist, *Contemplation and Action* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1995), 183.

²⁹ Vincent Gillespie and David Bell admit that in the later Middle Ages, it was the religious houses, and particular the nuns, not only at Syon Abbey, who appeared to be a hub of literary material, writing, translating and learning, but elsewhere, in places where women, by choice or

they lived in solitude, their isolation did not remove them from a spiritual and even social context of community, which allowed for the sharing of ideas or an openness to the outside world.³⁰

Furthermore, Julian of Norwich's encounters with the secular and religious world outside her cell lasted throughout much of her lifetime. Her first text, the *Book of Showings*, which details the events of her sixteen visions, is dated 1373, but it is important to note she may not have been formally enclosed until the mid-1390s, when she would have been middle aged.³¹ And at some point, she would have been living in the secular world, perhaps as a woman with some moderate amount of status and some access to education. Once she was enclosed, she received bequests from donors through

necessity wrote about religious experiences. "The greatest interest in this vernacular literature" flourished among the nuns. "It was the nuns, not the monks, who stood at the fore-front of English spirituality." David Bell, *What Nuns Read* (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 75-76.

³⁰ See Cate Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse: Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008) for a discussion of the rhetorical techniques of *Ancrene Wisse*.

³¹ For a discussion of the dating of the texts, see Annie Sutherland, "Julian of Norwich and the Bible" in *The Mystic Tradition: Exeter Symposium VII*, ed. E. A. Jones (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), 3-5. Various scholars have explained Julian's intricate biblical knowledge and understanding. See Benedicta Ward and Kenneth Leech, *Julian Reconsidered*, (Oxford: Fair Acres Publications, 1998), 26. G. Jantzen posits the theory that Julian was never a member of a religious order and only became an anchoress after writing the Long Text in the 1380s or 1390s in *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000). It is considered a commonplace that Julian completed the Short Text in 1373, and that it preceded the writing of the Long Text. Colledge and Walsh suggest the Long Text was written in two versions, one in 1388 and the other in 1393, but they are conflicted about how recently after her illness in 1373 she actually composed the Short Text. Nicholas Watson's dating is radically different. For this discussion, see "The Composition of Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love" *Speculum* lxxviii (1993): 637-83, with the argument that the Short Text was written almost 15 years after supposed, which would place its composition in the mid to late 1380s. She may have retreated into her personal life to contemplate her visions before writing them down. If she did write the texts later in life, then she could have written them while living in the secular world, and would have been a devout laywoman, familiar with scriptures from preaching and her own devotions. Vincent Gillespie suggests she may have prepared her Long Text as part of a requirement for her enclosure. These complications about the dating of the texts indicate that Julian may have been exposed to the public discourse, rhetoric and art surrounding her in Norwich.

wills that serve as part of an individualized patronage arrangement,³² which suggests that she was admired and recognized by the contemporaries in her city. Her visit from Margery Kempe, a well-traveled and opinionated lay woman, suggests Julian maintained an authoritative spiritual and political status. Her anchorhold seems to have provided her with material and spiritual support, as well as a place from which she could interpret religious affairs within a worldly context. It not only allowed for her to be aware of the environment surrounding her, but it valued her insights about it.

Norwich was the second wealthiest and most populous city besides London.³³ Living in Norwich gave Julian potential access to the exchange of goods, language and ideas available to anyone living in an active urban center. Norwich was the center of one of the most advanced regions in the England, resting only one hundred fifty-one miles from the coast of the Netherlands. In many ways, merchants had quicker and easier access to Antwerp and Bruges than to York.³⁴ With such well-established international trade networks, Norwich gave rise to rich and influential merchants, many of whom expanded their business interests in the textile industry. Its ports received and sent shipments of cloth, books, grain and a variety of cargo from continental Europe.³⁵ Merchants, and the craftsmen, journeymen, and artists who traveled on commercial

³² Tanner, *Church in Norwich*, 200, n.29, Tanner acknowledges that Julian said her mystical experiences occurred in 1373, but there is no evidence that she was an anchoress in that year. The “only conclusive evidence that her anchorage was attached to the parish church of St. Julian in Norwich is contained in the will of Thomas Edmund, who left a bequest in 1404.” Margery Kempe visited an anchoress named Julian in Norwich in 1413. She was probably alive in 1429 when testamentary bequests appeared for an unnamed anchoress of St. Julian’s.

³³ *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.

³⁴ Carol Hill, *Women and Religion in Late Medieval Norwich* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6. The commercial development of the city led to valuable investments of infrastructure, specifically in sections with access to the water, where mercantile houses constructed stone and built-in undercrofts to facilitate the ready access of ships to storehouses.

vessels lending their skills to ongoing building projects, participated in a cultural exchange, and were steeped in experience and outlooks extending beyond their own shores.

Norwich had transformed its civic and governmental systematization, evident in the compiling of *The Norwich Domesday Book*, the only cartulary of its kind in Britain. Compiled around 1396, it marks the decision of the city's leaders to increase Norwich revenue and favorably regulate trade by buying up the entire market, a process beginning in 1378.³⁶ Such planning indicates the system of civic and economic planning on the part of those who sought to control and self-direct the future of Norwich, as a community with its own social and cultural networks.

Along with commercial and cultural vibrancy came diverse religious ideas to Norwich. Besides evidence of continental influences in material artifacts in churches,³⁷ the sheer number of religious houses in Norwich suggests a complex of diverse activities were taking place there. All four mendicant orders were housed in Norwich. A high concentration of parishes, totaling forty-one of them, are listed in the rolls from 1370-1532.³⁸ With nearly ten thousand inhabitants, Norwich was exceeded only by London in its number of parish churches, since London had slightly more than twice as many churches for five times the number of residents.³⁹ On the other hand, Yarmouth and

³⁶ Penny Dunn, "Financial Reform in Late Medieval Norwich," in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005).

³⁷ *Ibid*, 7-8. There is much international influence in the glasswork, rood screens and paintings of Norwich, suggesting a cultural exchange of ideas among craftsmen and artists between England and continental Europe.

³⁸ Tanner, *Church in Norwich*, 173 – 178. Seventeen sites provided homes for hermits, anchorites or similar Beguine communities in the same period of time.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

Lynn, the two major towns nearest Norwich, had only one parish church for populations of roughly four thousand people and six thousand respectively in 1520.⁴⁰ Even though the statistics show a decline in the number of churches, every major church not demolished or destroyed in Norwich underwent major renovation or expansion.⁴¹ The evidence of diverse and continuous outlay of efforts and funds contradicts a generally held view that religious activity was in decline at the end of the late middle ages. Paradoxically, in Norwich, the era gave rise to increasingly divergent and rich expression and support of religious endeavors.⁴²

Norwich, a hub for ideas from universities and schools, both English and continental, flourished. The education in universities hinged upon a knowledge of theology, logic and rhetoric. Rhetoric was taught, not so much as a way to persuade, but as a tool of administrative procedure⁴³ and as a way to meditate and to organize one's thoughts. Knowledge gained at a university or the Cathedral Priory of Norwich was explicitly and implicitly passed along to preachers in Norwich. A few influential texts threaded their way through assorted paths. Preaching techniques in the *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria* of the Paris master Alan of Lille (1203) probably influenced religious guidebooks. *The Ancrene Wisse*, as one such devotional guidebook, was designed with a female audience of women who lived outside strict monastic oversight. It influenced preachers who addressed sermons to a similar audience. Furthermore, the Fourth Lateran

⁴⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁴¹ Ibid, 3.

⁴² Ibid, 167.

⁴³ *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, eds. Joseph Miller, Michael Prosser and Thomas Benson (Bloomington: Illinois University Press, 1973), xiv.

Council initiated a major program of pastoral reform and required assistants to support the increase of work in preaching and hearing confessions. The Dominicans and Franciscans involved in this reform spread their academic learning in the field.⁴⁴ Two well-known monks from Norwich studied at Oxford in the late fourteenth century. Adam Easton, later a cardinal, and Thomas Brinton, later the bishop of Rochester, were well-known preachers trained in Norwich. Both maintained contacts in Norwich and the surrounding area. Friars preached and ministered to all levels of the population.⁴⁵ In their spiritual direction and preaching, they orally disseminated scriptural knowledge and church teachings, following rhetorical practices of the time. A number of Norwich priories list the availability of books from England and continental Europe. The Cathedral Priory, for instance, possessed one of the finest libraries in the kingdom, which was augmented with a donation of 228 books from Adam Easton in 1407.⁴⁶ Evidence of libraries and access to schools forged a complex of cultural influences, extending the knowledge of the Norwich population far beyond provincial or parochial views. The threads of cultural values and concepts, in turn, were woven through the rhetoric of preachers and writers. In a city so vibrantly situated as Norwich, residents would have been exposed to viewpoints, materials and perspectives reaching far beyond their own locale and experience.

⁴⁴ Bella Millet, "The *Ancrene Wisse* Group," in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. A.S.G. Edward (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004,) 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 35. Four monks of the priory, one Dominican, four Augustinian, five Franciscan and twelve Carmelite friars were listed as writers between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, and most of them studied at Oxford or Cambridge.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, 35.

Textual Rhetoric in Norwich

Those who attended universities received instruction in a long and unbroken chain of methodologies and practices extending from the classics through the Middle Ages. The classical and Roman schools, intended to educate the citizen leader, were so effective, that even after the Roman Empire fell, the education system remained intact and unaltered for centuries.⁴⁷ For example, Quintilian's schema of composition exercises⁴⁸ had been common since Cicero's time in 55 BCE, and the tradition flourished at least into the sixteenth century.⁴⁹ A significant transfer of the ancient rhetorical curriculum, especially through grammar and narration, survived in the sermon handbooks and preaching tools of the middle ages.⁵⁰ Pulpit oratory flourished with an elaborate medieval response to the carefully developed textual exegetics of ancient Greece.⁵¹ Besides exegesis, preachers focused on memory, which had previously been crucial to civic

⁴⁷ Ibid, xiii.

⁴⁸ This system, outlined in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, included a series of composition exercises or *progymnasmata* or *praeexercitamenta*. These graduated exercises increased in difficulty and built upon a student's growing proficiency. The twelve composition exercises include: 1) retelling a fable, 2) retelling of an episode from a poem, 3) *Chreia*, or amplification of a moral theme, 4) amplification of an aphorism or proverb 5) refutation 6) commonplace which confirmed a statement, 7) encomium, or eulogy, 8) comparison of things or persons, 9) impersonation, or speaking in the character of a given person, 10) description or vivid presentation of details, 11) thesis or argument, 12) laws and arguments for and against. Students copied, or modified, or adapted examples of them in a speech or argument. Each of these composition exercises focused on the replication, application and adaptation of the appropriate model for the correct purpose, and formed the basis of speeches, public discourse, histories, and sermons for centuries. Quintilian and James Murphy, *Quintilian on the Teaching of Speaking and Writing: Translations from Books One, Two, and Ten of the Institutio Oratoria* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), xxxi.

⁴⁹ Ibid, xxxi.

⁵⁰ Ibid, xiii.

⁵¹ Rita Copeland. *Rhetoric*, 59.

oratory and legal courts.⁵² The same *ars memoria* practiced in the late twelfth and thirteenth century survived because preachers needed to recall scripture and canonical material. The rise of this branch of rhetorical studies increased in the Dominican order, with its emphasis on developing useful tools for studying thirteenth century texts, and the subsequent popularization of the art of memory. Other mendicant orders, including the Franciscans, practiced memory techniques useful for preaching friars and theology students. Moreover, in the thirteenth century, texts featuring rhetorical memory techniques were translated, including Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*, which closely aligns with rhetorical precepts from the *Ad Herennium*. They presented a detailed anthology of things to be remembered from classical writers about ethics and rhetoric.⁵³ Through the sermon tradition alone, members of the laity and clergy became familiar with rhetorical patterns.

Rhetoric and Sermons

Basic rhetorical principles underpinned medieval religious discourse, buttressing it with methods of organization and sets of rhetorical figures akin to those found in secular literature. The trademarks of the medieval sermon were verbal benchmarks intended for a listening audience. The sermon needed to sound memorable, so an array of easily recognized rhetorical stylistic figures were sprinkled throughout the sections.⁵⁴ Sermons

⁵² “The elements of a formal art of memory and of a formal study of the faculty of memory, based on older authorities, are all present in the twelfth century schools... what was missing was a stimulus.” Gillian Evans, quoted in Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 150.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 154-155.

⁵⁴ G.R. Owst, *Literature*, 7. The following list includes the dominant figures: *divisio* (the categorization of concepts by topic and subtopic), formulaic pairing of words (the use of similar sounding words using assonance and consonance; in Old English the pattern used two stressed and one unstressed syllable) symmetry and parallelism (words linked together in similar grammatical patterns), repetition (repeated use of the same word) and opposition (two contrary ideas linked together). Along with those figures were impersonation (using the words in imitation

offered a repository of rhetorical principles to preachers who wrote them, and also to the audience, both common and educated, who listened to them. Sermons not only utilized rhetorical tools, but taught them to an audience interested in interpreting the signs from scriptural readings.

The rhetorical patterns of sermons were duplicated in popular religious guidebooks. The rhetoric of the *Ancrene Wisse* instills interpretive skills in its audience, a community of anchoresses. The author passes along the rhetoric of sermons, especially for scriptural interpretation. The audience of the *Ancrene Wisse* could hear the parts of a particular sermon as it was passed along in texts that mimicked or included it. In Chapter Seven of the *Ancrene Wisse*, the author highlights a metaphoric comparison of the love of God to a burning fire. He first references Luke (12:49), who describes the Pentecostal love as a fire. Then the *Ancrene Wisse* author elaborates on this metaphor in the vernacular. “‘Ich com to bringen,’ he seid, ‘fur in to eorðe,’ þet is, bearninde luue into eorðlich heorte,’ - ‘ant hwet ʒirne Ich elles bute þet hit bleasie?’”⁵⁵ [“‘I have come’, he says, ‘to bring fire into the earth’ – that is, burning love into an earthly heart – ‘and what else do I want but that it should blaze’”].⁵⁶ Even in his Middle English translation, he references the familiar sermon on the same topic written by Peter of Blois, and delivered as the Sermon xxiv at Whitsun. In this sermon, the Holy Ghost is also compared to fire, using a similar comparison and syntax. Even as the fire cannot help but burn, the Holy

of another person), similitudes (comparison of two similar things), examples (detailed cases used to illustrate a point) and shifts between formal and conversational tones (shifts from Latin based patterns of repetition and parallelisms to vernacular idioms or expressions).

⁵⁵ *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402*, ed. Bella Millett. Published for the Early English Text Society. No. 325 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Part 7:16, 151.

⁵⁶ *Ancrene Wisse: Guide for Anchoresses: A Translation Based on the Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402*, trans. Bella Millett. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2009), Part 7:16, 151.

Ghost cannot help but warm the earth.⁵⁷ As scripture was included in vernacular texts like the *Ancrene Wisse*, the syntax and metaphor of sermons reinforced rhetorical methods, which were instilled in readers and listeners of the audience. In this process of imitation, models of rhetoric were transported to wide audiences.

In Margery Kempe's *Book*, a similar pattern of rhetorical instruction through sermons appears. When the Archbishop prohibits her from preaching, she responds with her own interpretation of scripture. She calls upon Luke 11:27-28 to summarize the story of a woman who praises Jesus for his healings. Jesus responds that the woman was blessed and should hear the word of God and keep it. Margery uses this scriptural story to bolster her argument to the Archbishop and to support her ongoing efforts to proclaim God's word through her own experiences and stories, regardless of her status as a woman. If that weren't enough, she tells the bishop her own exemplum of a bear eating a pear tree, which mirrors the pattern of similar exempla in sermons. After telling the tale, she interprets it for the Archbishop, revealing that the pear tree is flourishing in the good soil of the sacraments, but the priest has become lazy. He is saying his prayers, and blabbers on without serious devotion.⁵⁸ Kempe demonstrates her use of the exemplum

⁵⁷ *Ancrene Wisse: Parts Six and Seven*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 64, n.19f.

⁵⁸ "be the wombe that the bar and the tetys that gaf the sowkyn.' Than owr Lord seyde agen to hir, 'Forsothe so ar thei blissed that heryn the word of God and kepyn it.' And therfor, sir, me thynkyth that the gospel gevyth me leve to spekyn of God," lines 2970-2974. The tale of the bear and pear tree are as follows: "Preste, thu thiself art the pertre, sumdel florischyng and floweryng thorw thi servyse seyng and the sacramentys ministryng, thow thu do undevowtly, for thu takyst ful lytyl heede how thu seyst thi mateynes and thi servyse, so it be blaberyd to an ende. Than gost thu to thi messe wythowtyn devocyon, and for thi synne hast thu ful lityl contricyon." *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. and ed. Lynn Staley, A Norton Critical Edition (London: Norton & Company, 2001), 93. Text in original Middle English from Margery Kempe, and Lynn Staley, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Kalamazoo, Mich: Published for TEAMS in association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan

and her interpretation of it. Rhetorical patterns in sermons appeared in ways that could be duplicated by those not formally educated in rhetoric.

Interpretation included a familiarity with scriptural metaphors and a familiarity with allegory, in part from the interpretation of parables and exempla. With adaptations to these rhetorical tools, the friars, canons, monks and others wrote a new literature in English, created out of the more popular and vivid preaching material of earlier mendicants. They produced sermons containing moral and entertainment value,⁵⁹ and combined the anecdote, the fable, and the symbolic figure, with the symbols and stories of sacred material. The variety of material found in sermon aides also included metaphor, division, allegory and exemplum.⁶⁰ These rhetorical patterns were woven into religious texts of all kinds, including those similar to the *Ancrene Wisse*, directed to lay women living as anchorites. A scholarly cleric writing in the late middle ages, for instance, would quite naturally apply the rhetorical arts to his Latin studies and sermons; “he could not have done otherwise.”⁶¹ The *Ancrene Wisse*, as just one example, disseminated the rhetorical art of composition to English.⁶² In particular, the informal and colloquial idioms of popular preaching, along with the similitude and exempla, contribute to the

University, 1996), lines 2996-3000. <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/staley-book-of-margery-kempe-book-i-part-ii>.

⁵⁹ Owst argues that the secular romance and *chanson courtoise* also influenced sermons, which in turn, reached Norwich. “Apart from the famous orators of the Church like Anselm, there were sermons on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, setting forth her grace and other charms, by his contemporary Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of Norwich” Owst, *Literature*, 17.

⁶⁰ Mary E. O’Carroll, SND, *A Thirteenth Century Preacher’s Handbook*, Studies in Texts 128, (Toronto: Pontifica Institute of Medieval Studies, 1997), 164-169. Among the many metaphors were the division of sin; sin as a spiritual leprosy; sin from nature; sin like men at sea in calm or storm. Images of Christ include Christ as judge, light, master, temple, home in us, family, fatted calf and healer. Images relate sin to a sickness, leprosy, darkness, blindness and dumbness.

⁶¹ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd, xvii.

⁶² *Ibid*, xvii.

literary quality of the *Ancrene Wisse*.⁶³ The religious guidebooks in the vernacular owe a debt to sermons containing classical and ancient systems of rhetoric.

The format of preaching relied upon a series of preaching manuals, *ars praedicandi* (art of preaching), which provided guidelines for sermons. Encyclopedias of preaching material found their way into guidebooks such as Bromyard's *Summa Praedicatorum*, written in the mid - fourteenth century.⁶⁴ The demand for these books and sermon aids grew after the Fourth Laterine Council required preachers to educate the laity about church teaching and receiving the Sacraments. The sermon's primary purpose was to disseminate patristic knowledge, interpret scripture and provide guides on how to live a good life, with a focus on parts of the liturgical cycle. In addition to feast days of saints and other occasions, sermons were written for the Nativity, Easter, the four weeks of Advent, the weeks of Lent, as well as the Sundays leading to Pentecost. A regular and continuous cycle of sermons provided scriptural and rhetorical instruction to lay people who may not have been able to read or write.

One charge lodged against Julian is that she is unorganized and circular, but a look at one sermon will show this is not the case. She followed the organizational and thematic patterns outlined in most sermons. Sermon collections, such as the MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 18 B xxiii, from which the following example is taken, were compiled as models to provide material for other preachers.⁶⁵ The sermon's argument, themes,

⁶³ *Ancrene Wisse: Guide for Anchoresses*, trans. Millett, xiv-xxx.

⁶⁴ See *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, trans. Siegfried Wenzel (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), xii.

⁶⁵ Ross, xix. The first eight sermons of the collection are believed to be written by the same author, and all but the sixth and eighth specifically use the salutation "Good men and wymmen." Since the eight are closely linked in content, style and chronological order in the MS., it appears they were delivered to an audience of men and women. (xix.) On p. xxix, see further information

figures, and structure share common characteristics with many others of the time period found in a variety of sermons, including those listed in the in the *Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons* (SERMO) series.⁶⁶

Rhetorical Figures in Sermons

The theme of Sermon 8 explains nuances of “the servant,” and develops the social, moral and spiritual obligations of the servant/master relationship.⁶⁷ Like most sermons of the time, this sermon begins with the story from the Bible,⁶⁸ in this case, Mathew 28:23-35. The sermon features a debtor whose master forgives a debt owed him. Instead of acting generously, the debtor quickly demands payment from another person who owed him money. In the case of this sermon, the preacher argues for persons in the audience to recognize their indebtedness to Jesus, who has fought for their souls, has purchased their salvation, and has become a servant himself to humanity. Before launching upon the subdivisions of the theme, the preacher rounds up various authority figures, in this case, more scriptural passages, to support his argument. As commonly found in the organization of most medieval sermons, a theme, in this case the meanings of the “servant,” are divided and subdivided, with subsequent explanations rippling

about this sermon. Sermon Eight was given on the 22nd day after the Trinity. Based on internal evidence referencing historical placement of Richard II and Edward III, it is unlikely these were preached before 1380. The collection seems to be assembled at Oxford, but the MS prose makes it difficult to determine the precise location of the sermons, since vowel forms seem to be uniformly altered to conform to the dialect used in Oxford.

⁶⁶ See Vol, 4 of the SERMO series, which contains an index compiling patterns of familiar tropes, images, and words. *A Reperatorium of Middle English Prose Sermons: Part 4*: eds. Veronica O’Mara and Suzanne Paul (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007), 2658-2884; See the section where a full listing of exempla are compiled on 2885-2893.

⁶⁷ Ross, 36-46.

⁶⁸Ross, xlv offers much more information about sermon structure and sourcebooks.

through the rest of the sermon.⁶⁹ As a result of this continuous mention of the same word, the preacher weaves a common thread through the entire sermon, using the rhetorical device of repetition.

The rhetorical figures embellish the otherwise pedantic discussion with engaging stories, metaphors, and allegories. The rhetorical figures magnify the preacher's message of indebtedness to Christ. In the same sermon, the preacher elaborates with the metaphorical and allegorical symbols. He uses the servant, the knight, the precious jewel, the giant, the bride, the child, the cross, the lily and the five roses:

The firste worde of þis auctorite is serue; þat is for to sey, seruaunt. Euery man in þis worlde is a seruaunte for þre skilles: þe firste, for he is gette in batell; þe seconde, for he is boughte with a precious iewell; and the þride, for he is þe childe of a seruaunte. The firste, I seye euery man was gette in bateyll þorowe þe myghtfull dethe þat Crist suffred on þe Rode Tree. And how þat he gatte þe I will shewe þe by ensample. I rede of an ermyte þat walked by a veye and met with a knyght commynge azeyns hym un-armed. And þe ermyte asked hym fro whens þat he com and wheþer þat he wolde. And þe knyght answered and seid, "I com fro my fadur and am goynge to feyght with a geaunte þat hathe many of my faders men in pryson." þan seid þe ermyte, 'Seþen þat þou wolte goye feyztthe withe þat geaunte, tell me what þan þou bereste in þin armes.' 'I bere a beere of blake with a lylie of whyte and v roses of redde.'" ⁷⁰

[The first word of this authority is serve; that is for to say, servant. Every man in this world is a servant for three reasons: the first, for he is acquired in battle; the second, for he is bought with a precious jewel; and the third, for he is the child of a servant. The first, I say every man was obtained in battle through the mighty death that Christ suffered on the Rood Tree. And how that he acquired you I will show by an example. I read of a hermit that walked by the way and met with a knight coming against him unarmed. And the hermit asked him from whence he came and what that he wished for. And the knight answered and said, "I come from my father and am going to fight with a giant that has many of my father's

⁶⁹ A similar example of the structural repetition of the theme based on a phrase is found in Sermon 5 of *A Macaronic Sermon Collection from Late Mediaeval England*, ed. and trans. P.J. Horner (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2006), 13. The sermon is based on Philippians 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

men in prison.” Then said the hermit, “Since that you wish to go fight with that giant, tell me what that you bear/carry in your arms.” “I bear a bear of black with a lily of white and five roses of red.”] ⁷¹

First, the preacher clarifies his message by explicitly interpreting the allegory for the audience in a process that instructs the audience in rhetoric as well as theology. In this sermon, the hermit is every Christian, and the giant is the devil. The knight represents Christ, who was not armed when he entered the world as an infant. He needed to leave behind his earthly powers. The black bower represents his suffering on the Rood Tree, the white lily represents his pure body, and the red roses represent his wounds. The allegory would be recognized by nearly any medieval person, but even if it was not recognized, the preacher provided the code and the instruction on how to understand the story correctly. ⁷²

Second, the preacher taps into a metaphoric reservoir of meaning with the mention of “the way” of Christ. ⁷³ “I understonde gooslyche every Cristen man in þis worlde þat walkep in þe veye, I hope, towarde heven.” ⁷⁴ Layers of nuance fill this sentence, with life being described as a journey, a pilgrimage or a long walk. All Christians must walk the way of the world, and hopefully, with Christ. The medieval practice of a journey or pilgrimage to a holy site was not only discussed in the fourteenth century, but performed by lay women and men and would also call forth the concept of

⁷¹ Translations are my own, unless noted otherwise.

⁷² See David Lawrence Cole, *James Howell and the Speech of the Commonwealth: Seventeenth-Century Prose Style in Transition*. (Diss. Texas Tech University, December, 1974), 88-89, <https://repositories.tdl.org/ttu-ir/bitstream/.../31295004596390.pdf>.

⁷³ For “the way” as a rhetorical metaphor for language, referenced in Chaucer’s “The Parson’s Tale.” See Arvind Thomas, “What’s Myrie about the Prose of the Parson’s Tale?” in *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2012): 419-438. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/chaucerrev.46.4.0419>.

⁷⁴ Ross, 38.

this phrase. The line also calls forth an entire scriptural passage that uses a metaphor comparing Jesus to the “way” in John’s gospel (John 1:23-24): “He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias said.”⁷⁵ The phrase also recalls John 14:6 which elaborates on Jesus as the way of Truth: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁷⁶ These passages would be recognized by nearly any medieval Christian. The concept of Jesus being the only way to the Father is repeated in the later themes of the sermon when Jesus is described in two other metaphors: winning the soul in battle and paying for the life of humans. The complex figurative correlation of the servant being acquired in battle and also of him paying with his life for humanity is woven into in the logical fabric of this sermon’s argument. These arguments are not circular, but are caught like threads under the general structure of the text.

Third, the repetition of sound, particularly via alliteration, augments the sermon’s message through its oral delivery. This alliteration forms a cascade of sound which is connected to the meaning, the structure, and the emotional appeal of the sermon. The exemplum concludes with alliterative lines: “þan þat þou bereste in þin arnes. I bere a beer of blake with a lylie of whyte and v roses of redde.”⁷⁷ The alliteration, or repeated use of hard consonant sounds (b) in bere a beer of blake, or the repetition of the “r” at the end of the line signals a shift in content, from the previous lines, which were more conversational and less structured than the last two in this example. The shifts signal to a

⁷⁵ *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1285. John 1: 23-24. All subsequent references to the Bible are from this text

⁷⁶ John 14:6.

⁷⁷ Ross, 37-38.

listening audience that the preacher is moving from scriptural interpretation to a narrative voice, as he moves from expository teaching to narrative story-telling. As in numerous sermons and literary works from the fourteenth century, a shift in rhythm signals shifts in the argument, story or message.

Finally, rhythm unifies the passage, like links in a chain, through the various meanings of the words and into the next section of the sermon. The sound and feeling of the words, with the gentle tapping of the meter, carries the listener into the next step of the sermon, as the ringing of a bell would summon monks to prayer. The preacher says that Christians will “walkeþ in þe veye, I hope, towarde heven.”⁷⁸ The rhythm of the familiar one stressed, two unstressed pattern provides a memorable cadence, (“walkeþ in þe veye”) and helps signal a shift in tone as the exemplum moves to the end. The line creates a rhythmic pattern involving the three phrases, with two stressed phrases, connected by one unstressed phrase. The “I hope” in the middle links the two bookended stressed phrases (“walkeþ in þe veye” and, “toward heven”) together. Not only were these phrases memorable, but they linked together the content of the sermon, interconnecting concepts through rhythmic similarities. “Walkeþ in þe veye” is the same pattern as the “beer of blake,” “lylie of whyte and roses of redde.” Not only is the content linked logically in the argument, but it is connected orally by using the same meter and pattern to reinforce the sound of words, along with their content. The strategy, used by poets to build a story, suspense and plot, was also used by preachers to hold the

⁷⁸ Ross, 38.

attention of the audience and to build an argument for repentance, confession, and salvation.

On a broader level, the structure and content of this sermon is similar to that of others found in collections of sermons.⁷⁹ Although some of these patterns seem unfamiliar to modern readers, other structural devices seem comfortably familiar, as they have been passed down throughout centuries of oral homelitic tradition. They echo in a recognizable and steady pattern, like the breathing of a silent sleeper. To medieval listeners in the pews, however, these patterns would be readily recognized and would aid in the comprehension and recollection of a lengthy text which was only heard.

Structural patterns are the hinges upon which an entire sermon could be remembered. The themes and stories form an interlacing connection between different stories, examples and authorities to cascade into a deepening pool of accumulated evidence. First, the structure is based on a theme which was divided and then subdivided, usually within three main topics.⁸⁰ To ensure that the divisions of the theme did not contradict biblical or church teaching, the preacher established his divisions by citing authorities, either in the form of infallible scripture that came from a divine source, or in teachings from church fathers. Often the rule of thumb indicated that the greater the number of authorities cited, the more powerful the argument. It was absolutely crucial,

⁷⁹ See Owst, *Literature*. For more examples of sermons, see *Selected English Sermons of John Wycliffe*. <https://archive.org/details/selectenglishwo00wyclgoog>.

⁸⁰ For standard discussions of the form, see include James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*. 310-55 and Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 61-100. See also H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 228-68, and *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle. (Turnhout; Brepols, 2000), 363-447, esp. 370-82. <http://www.pims.ca/pdf/st153.pdf>.

however, that the sermon would not provide a false interpretation. To avoid errors, this preacher, then, turned to other scriptural passages containing the main theme word “servant,” to establish the main theme. In the example of Sermon 8, the preacher references Saint Paul’s Letter to Corinthians (6:20) which cites man as a servant because he was bought with a jewel of Christ’s body. He mentions the “wickedness” of the reckless servant mentioned in the story of the wicked servant (St. Luke 19:22) and in St. Matthew’s story of the workers in the vineyard receiving the same reward despite working different hours in the field (Matt. 25:14-22).⁸¹ In this sermon arguing for the value of living the good Christian life, the preacher warns against the consequences of leading a sinful life, and in case there is any doubt, he illustrates his point using three examples of the wicked servant, each detailing the increasingly horrible consequences of following the devil.

The preacher seasoned his sermon with surprisingly realistic, colorful and even exotic exemplum to build upon biblical quotations and appropriate church teachings. In the case of Sermon 8, St. Augustine and St. Gregory are both quoted in the middle of the sermon to underscore the difference between worldly justice and divine, and to explain why all servants get paid the same amount at the end of the day, regardless of their work. The preacher also uses quotes from Augustine and St. Gregory, who recommends all Christians give of their good will, even if they have no money to give.⁸² To add a touch of the exotic, the preacher tells the tale of a man from India who was falsely accused of a

⁸¹ He confuses it with Luke 19:12-16.

⁸² Ross, 42-44.

crime, but who found a Christ-like figure who was willing to be exiled in his place.⁸³

The quotes from church authorities and the moral lesson of the exemplum urge the listeners to repent quickly and live a holy life. The entire structure, linked with references to authority, enhanced with examples from ordinary life, and developed through repeated word choice and metaphor, would have been familiar to the medieval person reading or listening to a sermon.

Cycle Plays

Early mystery cycle plays enacted the same scriptures that were the focus of preaching. If the structure and rhymes and themes of language were heard in sermons, then it was not much of a stretch to recognize how the same patterns emerged in medieval dramas or in staged reenactments of scripture. In some cases, the space occupied by the preacher and the space occupied by the drama may not have been far from each other.⁸⁴ At Norwich, one document noted: “we are informed that out of door Sunday sermons were delivered annually... from the Greenyard preaching cross, hard by the cathedral – protota civitate Norwicensi.”⁸⁵ The pageant producers followed the example of the outdoor preacher, who had already added vibrant characters, conversational language and narrative examples to enhance the potentially dry and pedantic sermon. Preaching even

⁸³Exemplum were not always assigned in any specific place, like at the end. The exemplum are used in the Royal MS collection when the occasion demanded. “The preachers simply use them as they would any other rhetorical device: when they wish to drive home a point by narrative illustration, they tell a story.” Ibid, lxiii.

⁸⁴Owst notes it was popular preaching “that brought about the secularization of the drama... Every feature characteristic of this new presentation of the plays is familiar to us already in the methods of open-air preaching inaugurated by the friars.” Owst, *Literature*, 478.

⁸⁵Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period 1350-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 148.

resembled an outdoor theatre set, as a 1650 record noted about medieval times: “But in the old time they had a moveable pulpit which was carried into the yard, and set up in Rogation week, as were also forms and benches to sit on. And the ground about the pulpit was strawed with green sedges the first two days.”⁸⁶ Given that Rogation events were repeated each year on April 25, and on several dates preceding Ascension Thursday, medieval residents saw these as part of the yearly blessing of their community. Living in Norwich at that time, believer or not, any person would have been surrounded by the rituals and tropes of medieval dramas performed in an open square or in processions surrounding the boundaries of the parish.

East Anglia had an abundance of dramatic performances. In Norfolk, thirty-one sites report significant dramatic activity.⁸⁷ Linguistically, the text of the *N-Town Play* belongs to the southwest region of the Norfolk/Suffolk border near Thetford, and even though the direction in which it traveled is unclear, it was connected to Norwich and other cities in the northeast part of the county with ports.⁸⁸ Throughout England, pageants crisscrossed counties. They were performed in wagons at six or seven stations, by members of craft guilds.⁸⁹ In Norfolk, plays were performed in the same cities that were on the pilgrimage route from Thetford to Walsingham, home of the cathedral and Clunian priory.⁹⁰ Moreover, plays from different cycles shared characteristics not only with common liturgical material, but with similar scriptural foundations. The plays listed at

⁸⁶ Kirkpatrick, *Religious Orders of Norwich*. 1845, quoted in Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*. 214.

⁸⁷ Penny Granger, *N-Town Play: Drama and Liturgy in East Anglia* (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2009), X.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 40.

⁸⁹ Hâppe, 35.

⁹⁰ Granger, 41-42.

Hereford and Beverly contain subject matter supporting a pattern consistent with other known cycles plays, specifically the York, Chester, Towneley and N-Town.⁹¹ Cycle plays with common elements appeared in Norfolk, with obvious clusters of activity close to East Anglian ports, including Lynn, Yarmouth and Lowestoft.⁹² Material artifacts, such as the roof bosses at Norwich Cathedral and the *N-Town Plays*, provide evidence of a shared story.⁹³ Even though the scribe of the *N-Town Plays* appears to come from the south-west portion of Norfolk, the plays had connections to the eastern part of the region, based on evidence of a set of bench-ends in South Walsham church.⁹⁴ In Norwich, two versions of the Fall, performed by the Grocers, and a list of twelve lost plays from Adam and Eve to Pentecost were performed.⁹⁵ Though the earlier history of the plays at Norwich is difficult to determine, there is a strong indication in the Paston letters that the *N-Town Plays* appeared there in 1478.⁹⁶

Rhetoric in Cycle Plays

The cycle plays were a performance of scripture. They embodied the same scenes and words heard in scripture and further explained in sermons. In the *N-Town Crucifixion*, portions of the passion scenes are not only performed, but characters' speech is critical to our seeing what Julian – or any of the audience – must have seen and heard.

⁹¹ Ibid, 34-35.

⁹² Ibid, x, 151.

⁹³ Ibid, 41.

⁹⁴ Granger, 41. Granger makes a reference to Peter Meredith's, "Carved and Spoken Words: The Angelic Salutation, The Mary Play, and South Walsham Church, Norfolk," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 32. (2001), 369-98.

⁹⁵ Ibid, x.

⁹⁶ Ibid, x.

For example, when Mary, in the *N-Town Crucifixion*, speaks to Jesus while he is on the cross, her feelings are not concealed. Her concrete language posits her emotions in the language of the body, which serves as the original source of Jesus' connection to her before his birth. She recognizes that her body becomes the central and initiating locus of incarnational action, which she claims while looking at Jesus' body from the foot of the cross:

Thow he had nevyr of me be born,
 And I sey his flesch þus al totorn -
 On bak, beyhyndn, on brest befor,
 Rent with woundys wyde.
 Nedys I must wonyn in woo
 To se my frende with many a fo,
 All to rent from top to too,
 His flesche withowtyn hyde.⁹⁷

First, the metaphor of the body compares her physical connection to Jesus, not only at the time of the crucifixion, but throughout his life. She reminds the audience of her special place, having given birth to him, and she cannot leave his side because of this fundamental physical bond, which reminds him of their shared physical body. She uses body references to describe his pain as she describes his flesch "al-a-torn." The sections of his body, his back, behind, and his breast, in front, show progressive levels of pain he endured. The special orientation of his wounds carry meaning of a pain wrapped around him, from behind, in front, and rent from head to foot. Because she initially emphasized her shared maternal body, at his death, she shared his bodily pain with the wide wounds.

⁹⁷ *The N-Town Plays*, 272, lines 238-240.

The flesh, so badly torn, is without a hide, and the comparison, familiar from medieval experience and literature, is to an animal that has been hung, stripped and dressed in a field.

The sound of the words, coupled with detailed imagery, generates a concrete language of the body. The pace, tension and urgency builds through images and the syllabic momentum of the lines. Old English patterns of alliteration, with two stressed and one unstressed syllable, plant the image in the memory. The phrases “wounde is wide,” “wonen in woe,” “frend and fo” emphasize the tension of his pain and her involvement in it. The alliterative pattern and short, forceful sounds reinforce her growing grief and alarm at his condition. These phrases are interrupted by a line that includes “On bak, beyhyndn, on brest befor” which have very short unstressed syllables, causing the sounds to steadily build upon each other. The accumulated accounting of his wounds and torn skin create a sound of panic, and complete a listing of injuries that build a sense of urgency. The “back,” with one syllable, moves to “beyhyndn,” with two syllables, and finally to the three syllables of “brest befor.” The three hard sounds together in “All rent from top to too” also build tension and finality, enclosing his body in pain. The final line uses the figure of opposition, since the flesh is still on his body, but it is without a hide or skin. In this final descriptive line of this passage, the flesh is separating from the skin, and the author has shown how Jesus’ body, from top to bottom, and from front to back, has been so torn there is no hide or skin remaining to cover him. The words and patterns of discourse in dramas echo rhetorical codes already heard in scripture and authoritative texts. In the drama, these codes were heard, learned and

transported in the open market, where they could become familiar to educated and uneducated listeners, and could offer new interpretations of scriptural texts.

Rhyme scheme, an effective tool for actors and audiences memorizing lines, also connected sound to meaning. The pattern of Mary's passage is comprised of eight lines, with lines 1-3 rhyming together and lines 5-7 rhyming together, and lines 4 and 8 rhyming with each other. The first three lines explain the torture his body has endured, with line 4 providing the result: "rent with woundes wyde."⁹⁸ The next three lines describe her feeling of "woe" having to watch his body be tortured. "His flesch withouten hyde"⁹⁹ ends the stanza with a harsh, final sound of the "hyde." All the other lines of Mary's speech end in vowel sounds of "borne," "torn," "beforne," and the next cluster of words ("woe," "foe," and "too,") evoke feelings of pain and elongated sounds. Mary's final line, "his flesche withowtyn hyde," however, is sharp, abrupt and concrete.

The juxtaposed rhetorical strategies of logical and emotional appeals are used to express her response to Jesus. Unlike the disciple John's abstract and theoretical lines which appear in the same play, Mary's are concrete and visceral. Some of these figurative patterns of rhythm and rhyme correspond to what Frank Napolitano refers to as the two discursive rhetorics in the *Towneley Crucifixion*. He understands the play as demonstrating two discursive rhetorical conventions, namely that of logical discourse and emotional discourse. The two discourse conventions are evident in the abstract, theoretical discourse of John's lines to Jesus, and they are juxtaposed to Mary's concrete, physical language. John argues the logical inevitability of Jesus' death in the salvational

⁹⁸ Ibid, 272.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 272.

scheme, necessary for man's salvation. Mary, however, only expresses pain, sorrow, and shock at the raw physical torture of her son. Napolitano argues that in the *Towneley Crucifixion*, characters at the site of the crucifixion can speak in two voices – one of emotion and one of reason – and Jesus can respond to them in his own mode of discourse.¹⁰⁰ Napolitano uses the result of the separate discourse traditions as allowing for different ways the religious person could react to Jesus' passion and death. Although I think the plays allow for different responses to the crucifixion, I suggest that the different discursive reactions to the passion of Christ actually express a deep anxiety about the meaning and necessity of the crucifixion that were shared by many, including Julian.

Julian articulates these anxieties several places in her vision. In her questions, she articulates this anxiety and prompts ongoing discussions of sin. The topic of sin and blame, and the paradox of unconditional forgiveness offered through Jesus, is addressed, left, and revisited throughout her text like the theme in a symphony. The theme is mentioned and then amplified, and then revisited again. Early in her text she asks, “But in this I stode ...seyng thus to oure lorde in my menyng with fulle gret drede: A, good lorde, how myght alle be wele for the gret harme that is come by synne to thy creatures?” (Julian, Rev. 29/1-4). Her feelings of dread surface when she considers the deep harm sin fosters. At the end of that chapter, she records the words of Jesus in her vision. She realizes that Adam has sinned and done the most harm possible to humanity, and

¹⁰⁰ There are two forms of discourse spoken in the crucifixion scene, one the rational and the other the emotive response to the death of Christ. Napolitano argues that “these two discourses represent different ways in which a believer could describe, conceptualize, or react to Christ's passion and death.” Frank Napolitano, “Discursive Competition in the *Towneley Crucifixion*,” *Studies in Philology*. 106.2 (2009):162.

nevertheless, Jesus has forgiven humans and will make all things well. Jesus tells her, “For sythen that I haue made welle the most harm, than it is my wylle that thou know ther by that I shalle make wele alle that is lesse.” (Julian, Rev. 29/ 15-17). Then again, in Chapter 50, she probes the problem of blame and sin, knowing that she herself, and everyone else in her audience has sinned, but could be forgiven. This passage directly precedes the story of the servant and lord, which answers her questions in a metaphoric and allegorical form. The question is a prompt and a signal to her readers that she will be expanding yet again on this topic. “How may this be? For I knew be the comyn techyng of holy church and by my owne felyng that the blame of oure synnes contynually hangyth uppon us, fro þe furst man in to the tyme that we come uppe in to hevyn” (Julian, Rev. 50/10-14). Such anxieties festered during the late medieval period, when lay devotion allowed for prolonged contemplation of Christ’s pain and death. Those like Julian who meditated for years on the passion and death of Christ, and even those with just a cursory knowledge of it, would have questioned the necessity of the torture. Some believers understood the logic, but could not help but be disturbed by the details of the crucifixion.¹⁰¹ Her language articulates her frustration and confusion about the nature of sin and forgiveness. In this case, the rhetorical question prompts further pondering. Rhetoric, with logical and emotional strategies, fill Julian’s text.

¹⁰¹ Bynum addresses the problems raised by a theology of sacrifice. She argues that one obvious consequence of this anxiety was the “idea of God as victim could be both guilt-inducing and difficult to integrate into piety.” Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 229.

Rhetoric in Religious Guidebooks

All of these rhetorical strategies were available to nearly any medieval person. anchoresses and religious laywomen had religious guidebooks available to them or had texts specifically recommended to them, and these manuscripts contained a rich rhetorical model of language describing the spiritual life. As an anchorite, Julian would have been familiar with the *Ancrene Wisse* to provide instruction for her semi-cloistered existence. The popularity of the book is apparent in the variety and number of extant manuscripts, which include nine in English, four in French and four in Latin.¹⁰² A thirteenth century manuscript appeared in a collection of works in French from Norwich Cathedral Priory.¹⁰³ Its association with the texts for female virgins written in the West Midlands dialect also proves its influence. Its intended use as a religious book written for women makes it worth discussing as a model of rhetorical discourse. The *Ancrene Wisse* was one of the earliest texts for lay women, compiled in the later 1220s.¹⁰⁴ The text resulted from a rising demand for devotional material for the laity and for women, who had a varied background in church teaching, monastic rule, and spiritual formation. Its author appears to be linked to the Dominicans. The text was written to a specific set or group of lay women living without a definitive connection to any monastic group, but under the supervision of a bishop or dependent on local clergy.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Denis Renevey, "1215-1349 Texts," in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mystics*, eds. Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 95.

¹⁰³ *Ancrene Wisse: A Translation*, Ed. Millett. Xliii, R.14.7.

¹⁰⁴ Bella Millett, "Ancrene Wisse and the Book of Hours," in *Writing Religious Women*, ed. Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 26.

¹⁰⁵ *Ancrene Wisse: A Translation*, trans. Millet, xv – xvi.

Its style, however, owes much to the earlier literary traditions of Old English and Latin, and acted like a “linguistic Noah's arc.”¹⁰⁶ The *Ancrene Wisse* was a compilation of material from a wide variety of origins. Its author borrowed from, imitated and continued the work of writers such as Æthelwold and Ælfric, and in doing so, preserved English traditions. Some material was derived from preaching as well as teaching of the schools, as an indicator of preaching guides developed in Paris from 1260 onward.¹⁰⁷ Other material was drawn from Old English alliterative tradition in prose and poetry. The “Englishness” of its style balanced against the influence of Latin literature to generate patterns familiar to “readers” from diverse written traditions.¹⁰⁸

The mingling of Latin and Old English styles generated varied, but familiar patterns in the vernacular. For example, assorted scriptural and authoritative sources frequently fall together in the same paragraph, with the author explicitly providing attribution to his sources, and implicitly modeling his syntax after English and Latinate styles. The author, for example, uses this composite method in Part 2, addressing the sins of the tongue.

Vre deorewurðe Leafdi, seinte Marie. . . . wes of se lutel speche þet nohwer in Hali Writ ne finde we þet ha spec bute fowr siðen; ah for se selt spreche hire words heuie ant hefden muche mihte. . . . ‘Feole inwordet mon’, seið þe Salmwruhte, ‘ne schal neauer leaden riht lif on eorðe.’ . . . ant is as þah he seide, ‘Ich chulle wite mine weies wið mi tunge warde; wite Ich wel mi tunge, Ich mei halen þe wei toward heouene.’ For as Ysaie seið, . . . þe tilunge of rihtwisnesse, þet is silence.’

¹⁰⁶ R.W. Chambers, “On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School,” in *Harpfield's Life of More*, ed. E.V. Hitchcock, Published for the Early English Text Society (London; New York. 1932)

¹⁰⁷ See *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd. Also see T. P. Dolan, “The Rhetoric of the *Ancrene Wisse*” in *Langland, the Mystics, and the Medieval English Religious Tradition*, ed. Helen Philips. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 203-213. See also Millet's *Ancrene Wisse: A Translation*, xxxiii.

¹⁰⁸ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd, xxx-xxxix.

Silence tileð her, ant heo itilet bringeð forð sawles eche fode, for ha is undeadlich.¹⁰⁹

[Our precious Lady, holy Mary...spoke so little...nowhere in Scripture do we find that she spoke more than four times; but Because she spoke so seldom, her words were weighty and had great power.... ‘A talkative man,’ the Psalmist says, ‘will never lead a good life on earth.’ That is why he says elsewhere,... I will guard my ways so that I do not transgress through my tongue; and it is as if he were saying, ‘I will protect my ways by guarding my tongue; if I guard my tongue well, I may well keep on the way towards heaven. For as Isaiah says, silence is the cultivation of righteousness. Silence is the cultivation of righteousness. Silence cultivates it, and when it it is cultivated it produces everlasting food for the soul.]¹¹⁰

First, the author refers to the four times Mary spoke in the gospels, but he uses the Psalmist and Isaiah to lend the unquestioned authority of scripture to his argument. Secondly, the author uses parallel patterns of Latin grammar, familiar from prayers and sermons, repeating the syntax of “Ich chulle wite mine weies....Ich wel mi tunge... Ich mei wel halten þe wei toward heouene.”¹¹¹ This repetition emphasizes the firmness of action required of the reader, perhaps a woman who may have slipped in her resolve. Moreover, the entire passage is framed in an oppositional tension between speech and silence, with the audience being reminded that even Mary spoke rarely, and because she was usually silent, her words had increased potency.

The message of the passage is clear, but the urgency and importance of its meaning is underscored, perhaps for memorized repetition later, by the rhetorical framework in which it is cast. First, the assortment of metaphors in this passage build on each other to describe the power of speech, both guarded and unguarded. Speech is compared to a “heuie” weight which gives power to words. Second, the tongue, a portal

¹⁰⁹ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millet, Part 2: 21, lines 467-471.

¹¹⁰ *Ancrene Wisse: A Translation*, trans. Millet, Part 2: 21, lines 467-471.

¹¹¹ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millet, Part 2:21, lines 467-468.

for transgressions, needs protection, so the woman must guard her tongue against sinful words. Third, silence, the opposite of speech, is compared to a gardener, who is busy in “þe tileunge of rihtwisnesse” to cultivate righteousness and produce everlasting food. Finally, alliterative patterns from Old English appear in the phrases with the repetition of the “s,” “h,” and “m” sound, juxtaposed with the double stressed syllables at the end when the author writes: “ah for se selt speche hire words weren heuie ant hefden muche mihte.”¹¹² The pattern of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed derives from Old English roots create a rhythm: “In silence ant in hope schal beon ower strengðe.”¹¹³ The pattern is recognizable to those speaking the vernacular English. Meanwhile, the parallel structure of Latin echoes in the vernacular syntax of “wite Ich wel mi tunge, Ich mei wel halen þe wei toward heouene”¹¹⁴ to create balance. Moreover, the pun on the words “wit wel” play with the vernacular English to suggest that the woman must “counsel well” her tongue, so there may be a “witness” to her careful speech. Then she may take “þe wie” on the road to heaven.

The *Ancrene Wisse* was meant to be read orally, given the abrupt shifts in tone from authority figures to conversational speech to prayer. The claim that the *Ancrene Wisse* author assumed his text would be read orally does not imply that the language within it is merely conversational, “but rather, the syntax, the verbal effects, and the choice and arrangements of words are designed to satisfy first the ear of our mind and the brain that depends on the ear.”¹¹⁵ The author’s use of parenthetical comments suggest a

¹¹² Ibid, Part 2: 21, lines 444-445.

¹¹³ Ibid, Part 2:21, lines 473-474.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, Part 2:21 lines 467-468.

¹¹⁵ *The Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd, lxxv.

shift in tone. The use of dialogue questions the reader. The use of expository expressions mark changes in pitch or tone of voice.¹¹⁶

Geoffrey Shepherd's questions of the text—how its style of formal rhetoric is appropriate for an audience of lay women needing practical direction in living a spiritually centered life—are valuable. Still, I ask different questions of the text. The oral component of the text suggests that women who “read” it were not only being given advice on how to be an anchorite, but they were also being provided a model on how to “read” a text. They were also given direction in organizing and interpreting a text themselves. The text provided a tutorial of interpreting metaphors such as the “weight” of words, the “transgression” of the tongue, and the “cultivation” of silence. The author uses figures of speech, such as *oppositio*, to explain the tension between speech and silence. The author not only underscores the importance of silence, but demonstrates rhetorically how to emphasize the value of silence by juxtaposing it against unregulated speech. Even parallel phrases imitate the structure of Latin, even though *The Ancrene Wisse* is written in the vernacular. The parallel pattern provides the formal structure and also enhances the meaning of the sentences: “Silence tileð hire, ant heo bringeð forð sawles.”¹¹⁷ The capacity of the *Ancrene Wisse* to capture formal and informal rules of style in an orally transmitted media means that women were able to readily receive informal instruction in rhetoric. Given the availability of sermons, plays and religious guidebooks, Julian could not help but be exposed to patterns of textual rhetorical discourse surrounding her in Norwich.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, lxvi.

¹¹⁷ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millet, Part 2:21, lines, 469-470.

Visual Rhetoric in Norwich

Since the visual rhetoric combines symbol and word to span the whole spectrum of language and interpretation, it has greater impact than textual rhetoric alone. If a person could see, then she could learn. Besides verbal forms of rhetoric, even men and women lacking formal education could learn through visual rhetoric. The medieval church, with wall paintings, rood screens, paneled altar fronts, statues and stained glass, visually depicted the passion and crucifixion of Christ, various scenes from the life of Christ and depictions of saints, Church fathers, or the Virgin Mary. Illustrated bibles, psalters and prayer books also depicted scenes from familiar scriptural stories. According to Ellen Ross:

The pictures rarely stood on their own: on the contrary, they were part of an ongoing dialectic between the images which visually awakened the imagination to reflect on what the stories depicted, and thus shaped how believers heard the sermons and readings, and the sermons and readings which taught the viewers how to “see” and understand the paintings that surrounded them.¹¹⁸

About wall paintings, she argues that the pieces of art were not randomly assembled or created. “Their arrangement suggests thoughtful attention to the narrative potential and liturgical orientation of church wall art, on the one hand, to the architectural structure of the buildings in which they were placed on the other hand.”¹¹⁹

What Ross sees throughout Europe is also in Norwich. Several representations of Jesus’ crucifixion critically resemble Julian’s descriptions of her own visions. The pictures in Norwich have dominant characteristics. Some of the images in Norwich

¹¹⁸ Ellen Ross, *The Grief of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 55.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 55.

would have been in the churches around Julian in the form of iconography. At the beginning of her visions, a curate gives her a crucifix to gaze upon, and she uses it as a focal point as she moves deeper into her near-death state.¹²⁰ I examine visual crucifixion images in Norwich in Chapter Three, but at the moment, I will give a sketch of the rich availability of visual art in Norwich during Julian's lifespan. The material art I describe was available to anyone in Norwich. In Norwich Cathedral, the five-panel Despensers Retable¹²¹ divides scenes from Jesus' life from the passion to the resurrection, offering a "reading" of the visual panel that moves from left to right like a text. The stages of the passion follow the depictions of Jesus' suffering. In the chapel of St. Andrew located in Norwich Cathedral, another painting is drawn on the wall. It depicts Jesus with a blue face, the very characteristic which Julian describes about Jesus' drying and torn skin.¹²² In the Gorleston Psalter, which was moved to Norwich Cathedral in 1325, a miniature of a crucifixion scene was added at the time it was moved to Norwich. That scene shows Mary Magdalen clutching the foot of the cross and soaking up the blood of Jesus. It testifies to the importance of emotional elements and to the role of women at the foot of the cross. Each of these visual images point to narratives in scripture and texts that would have been read, heard or used for contemplation.

Visual iconography and textual versions of Christ's passion both fuel and illuminate each other. The common link between art in Norwich and Julian's description

¹²⁰ Julian, Rev. 3/ 21-24.

¹²¹ Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England: 1200 – 1400*. Royal Academy of Arts (London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 516.
<http://www.cathedral.org.uk/historyheritage/art---collections-art-treasures-and-despensers-retable.aspx>.

¹²² Hill, Panel 13.

of her vision rests in the elaboration of the passion story, a trend of the late fourteenth century. Particularly in Germany and the Netherlands, visual depictions of the passion story emerged from meditative tracts, plays and literature, where extra-scriptural accounts of the passion narrative developed. “Artists of the late Middle Ages created an elaborate new body of lore concerning the passion story, and determined what had actually happened to Christ during the passion, what torments he had endured.”¹²³ Julian of Norwich tapped into this elaborate new body of lore. Norwich, as a cultural hub, with the availability of sermons, drama and rhetorical tradition provided the soil of self-expression, ready to provide a rhetoric of interiority for meditation and prayer. It had an artistically rich tradition available to any person. For an anchoress struggling to write and understand a rare vision, Norwich offered her the language, symbols and images of sacred possibilities.

Visuals of the Last Judgment

One last feature of the visual art centers on images of the Last Judgment. These scenes were ubiquitous, since the back of most churches, the tympani, the chancel arches, and apses portrayed interpretations of Last Judgment. The end of time is a central question in Julian’s longer text: What “deed” will God perform at the end of time? The Last Judgment was the most fundamental theme of all the subjects found on wall paintings in England. “At least seventy-eight examples of it are still to be seen in this country. No other picture can have so much affected the thoughts and feelings of

¹²³ See James Marrow, “Inventing the Passion in the Late Middle Ages,” in *The Passion Story: From Visual Representation to Social Drama*, ed. Marcia Kupfer (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2008), 24.

medieval Christians.”¹²⁴ The Judgment was one of the most frequent of the subjects of wall-painting. It was usually in the highly visible chancel arch, and “its characteristic features were the most vivid and memorable of all the pictures presented to medieval parishioners.”¹²⁵ It was described in forceful language and imagery to influence the peasantry as well as noblemen, royalty and ecclesiastic authorities. In a John Myrc sermon, for instance, he warned rich men who are masters to mend their ways to avoid finding themselves beneath the poor on Doomsday, after being judged by Christ.¹²⁶ Moreover, the parishioners who walked and kneeled in the church saw that people from every class and rank would be included in the Judgment. “The figures of popes, kings, monks, and merchants in the paintings reminded men that before God there was no discrimination of persons, and that the emperor would be as the serf.”¹²⁷ The Day of Doom leveled every man and woman the type of afterlife each deserved. The prevalence of these images in churches throughout England may explain why half of Julian’s longer text is preoccupied with the issue of sin and a proper punishment.

Julian’s technique was not conducted in a vacuum, but was steeped in a varied tradition available to her in Norwich. Norwich was a cultural center, and as such, it cultivated a sermon tradition, dramatic performances, and visual art that provided a blueprint or tutorial for her work. These visual and oral guides are palatable and material forms of influence. Far from ephemeral abstract concepts, these forms of language and

¹²⁴ A. Caiger-Smith, *English Medieval Mural Paintings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 31.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²⁶ John Myrc, *Festial*, ed. Susan Powell. Vol.1 O.S. 334. Early English Text Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

¹²⁷ Caiger-Smith, 43. This appears in a reference to B.M. MS. Harley 45, f. 1 in the beginning of a collection of didactic tracts.

symbol surrounded her in the stone, clay, fabric, speech and pageantry of the city. They surrounded any other medieval person with the same loam of rhetorical possibilities. Quite simply, I mean to show that all the sources a writer would need were palpable to Julian. In Norwich, there was a pool, or a mine of language containing the properties she needed to record her experience with its complex meanings.

It would be an oversight to exclude one other rhetorical system available, *ars memoria*, in this contextual discussion, since it promoted the memorization of scripture, sermons and prayers. It was familiar to pre-modern people, including those in the Middle Ages, as it promoted the organization of texts into visual schema for future recall. It is also evident from numerous sources, including the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue” and the *Book of Margery Kempe*, that listening to sermons provided a popular form of entertainment, and that homilists were in demand, as well as the material they delivered. Listeners used *ars memoria* to remember what was heard; preachers used it to recall what was to be spoken. Consequently, the rise in vernacular languages led to an increased interest in and use for *ars memoria*. This form of memory training, however, was not based only on words, but was pictorial, dependent upon a system of visual images, used to recall and organize information.

Ars memoria gathered together visual referents, not only for memorization, but also for contemplation and invention. Monastic practices taught a “toolbox” of paradigms, systems, exercises and rituals, both verbal and non-verbal, to facilitate meditation and to make new prayers, poems, chants, and sermons. The *Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Didascalicon* of Hugh of St. Victor offer just two of the many

examples of those systems offered as basic religious reflections. All Christians could focus upon these to better develop techniques in meditative practices. Much of this material was put together to assist preachers who wrote texts to be orally presented, in the case of sermons, prayers, and lectures. Preachers knew sermons were remembered and recalled later.¹²⁸ Practice in the art of memory was part of the education of lay people, as well as religious. If Julian were not directly aware of these meditative guides, then she would have been influenced by others who used them, including Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle.

The classic form of *ars memoria*, associated with Cicero, can be traced through textual references to Charlemagne's discussion of memory in 830 AD. *Ars memoria* spread to Norwich through the monks, several of whom were housed there. Subsequently, monks practiced the art of memory, helpful to compose prayers, songs and rites, but also to serve as meditative tools.¹²⁹ While some scholars thought the monks diluted rhetoric when they took it from the realm of public discourse, Mary Carruthers notes, "the monks did not kill off rhetoric – they redirected it to forming citizens of the City of God."¹³⁰ Ironically, the monastic practice of devotional meditation was rooted in the pedagogy of ancient rhetoric and the textual pedagogy of Judaism.¹³¹

¹²⁸ For mnemonic devices, see Alan of Lille, "On the Six Wings of the Seraph," in *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Text and Pictures*, eds. Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 83-102. Also see Hugh of St. Victor, "A Little Book About Constructing Noah's Ark" in Carruthers and Ziolkowski, 41-70.

¹²⁹ *Ars memoria* primarily focused on the tasks of public persuasion, and was later adapted by monastic groups for invention. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 11. See Francis Yates *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 66. A passage traces Alcuin's discussion of memory with Charlemagne.

¹³⁰ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 11.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 12.

Julian's words were likely to be read and even to be memorized by others. In some sections, she references the psalms from the Office of the Dead, and suggests that she presupposed her audience memorized portions of other prayers or texts and could recognize some of the passages. Texts were heard, and memory functioned as a tool for comprehension and ongoing meditation and creation, as well as for the careful storing and inventory of ideas. The understanding of the "text" is more than a compilation of words, and is sometimes linked with mental pictures serving as memorial devices. Her use of visual images, then, paint pictures that are more than verbal metaphors. Her words build a visual and imagined storage file in the mind. These file drawers organize thoughts into meaningful clusters, but create a storehouse for memory and the future recall of prayers. This visual method assured the retrieval and recollection of information in Julian's texts.

A good example is the prologue to the *Orchard of Syon*, the English translation of the St. Catherine's *Dialogue*, which builds a landscape of meaning and memory. The *Orchard of Syon* has its own prologue, written for the nuns who are encouraged to peruse the alleys of the garden to take in passages they find most instructive to them at the time, the herbs or the fruits. The garden, of course, as a literal referent, is only an initiating image. The purpose of the garden is to create a mental visual in the mind, in which further information can be organized, stored, and reorganized. The image of the garden, then, is more than a metaphor; it serves as a placeholder for further information. The prologue encourages the nuns to read the book as they would stroll through a meditative

garden,¹³² choosing the herbs or the flowers, and gathering them up in their minds for the future. The fruits of the garden refer to the comforting, encouraging, and pleasant parts of the text, while the herbs refer to the disturbing, painful, and difficult parts of the text. The image of the garden provides a locational place holder for the nuns to store and sort information for future use. All this learning about images and their role in memorization was available in many sources, which would have been disseminated to lay women and men. Although this rhetoric was not available in prescriptive form, it permeated and organized texts generally available to women and non-monastic lay people.

Julian of Norwich demonstrates a dexterity at delving into a reservoir of language sources, both verbal and visual, to explain her visions and the theology emerging from them. Although she was denied a formal education and lived in a semi-cloistered environment, her access to language was vast, given the fact that Norwich was an economic and cultural hub. Sermons, dramas, guide books, and an assortment of visual images in the churches and illustrated texts of her time provided her with rhetorical tools she needed to articulate her visions. As I will demonstrate in the next chapters, she used the tools and created her own innovations of language to describe concepts hovering over the edge of orthodoxy, yet based in a foundation of scriptural knowledge and church teaching.

¹³² *Orcherd of Syon*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson and Gabriel Liegey. The Early English Text Society. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 1-2.

II

Rhetoric and Language

Male writers in the middle ages studied and honed their skills in universities, schools, monasteries, commercial markets and legal courts. They could learn and practice classical rhetorical background, obtain mentors, befriend colleagues, seek out patronage or sponsorship, associate with leaders of political factions, and obtain support from religious orders. On the other hand, women were denied access to universities, and barring rare exceptions, were discouraged from travel, were unable to own property and obtain wealth, and were limited in their friendships with other women. Consider the lives of two medieval contemporaries, Richard Rolle (1300-1349) and Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), to understand the differences. The only information we have of Julian is in her own writings, as her name surfaces in wills or testaments, and in Margery Kempe's book. She would have been denied access to a formal education and could not own property. Anchoresses were not financially supported by a religious order, so they needed to be supported through the kindness of a parish or patrons. On the other hand, Richard Rolle attended the University of Oxford and then the Sorbonne. He was trained in theology and learned Latin and French. His translations included the well-circulated English Psalter. His residence in England near Pickering gave him opportunities to brush up against members connected with the royal courts.¹³³ These differences establish a

¹³³Richard Rolle, *Richard Rolle: The English Writings*, ed. and trans. Rosemond Allen (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 16-20.

rhetorical stance for Julian of Norwich that required a complex of language sources other than the written text.

Julian cobbled together her education from a network of discourses, some formal and others informal. She picked up knowledge of how to write through listening to and observing a web of language. This influenced her writing and made it open to language as a web rather than a linear or logical path, although she was aware of the classical rhetorical forms that surrounded her.¹³⁴ As I will explain in this chapter, the organization of her visions follows a narrative pattern found in sermons and cycle plays. Moreover, her language uses patristic rhetorics and scripture, but she alters these language sources to carve out another way of seeing and hearing. Her rhetoric exposes the holes, discrepancies, incongruities, or disordered elements of stories and teachings that have been passed down to her through cultural sources, in sermons, prayers, dramas, and art surrounding her in Norwich. These paradoxes and tensions are part of her vision and her words, built upon textual and non-textual rhetorical sources, creating a rhetoric of interiority for herself and lay people.

Julian begins with an orderly and linear recording of her vision, but the elemental order soon dissipates. Her longer text, *Revelation of Love*, outlines the sections of her book in the first chapter.¹³⁵ On the one hand, she begins with her story of her own vision, with a date, three petitions, and a linear narrative that resembles the passion story. On the other hand, her story often leads down an unclear path, or one that is significantly obscured and contradictory, because she is at loss to explain some of it herself. The

¹³⁴ Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich: Theologian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 8.

¹³⁵ Julian, Rev. 1/1-15.

fractured order appears when she describes her visions as if they are scenes from a play. As she continues her narrative, she ‘reads’ each vision as a kind of allegorical drama in which every detail of the imagery and the dialogue is significant. “The color of the clothing, the movements and gestures of the characters, the similes that occur to her as she observes her recollections, which sometimes take the form of static, hieratic images but more often are visualized as scenes dramatizing parables original with her.”¹³⁶ The linearity moves to the background while her interpretation of events rushes to the foreground.

Spiral Structure

Can Julian’s writing be characterized as “linear” and “logical” or, by contrast, as “circular” and “associative?” These distinctions make it notoriously difficult to ascribe consistency to Julian’s texts. Denys Turner characterizes her writing style as a spiral. It “moves forward, as one does along a straight line. It constantly returns to the same point, as one does around a circle. The repetition is therefore never identical, is always moved on - it has a progressive trajectory, up or down, into high reaches or greater depth.”¹³⁷ He sees her writing as systematic, in terms of school theology that is typically “inferential and linear, forward from premise to conclusion.”¹³⁸ He admits this is partially accurate with Julian, because her theology could be described as both linear and circular, and so it is also spiral. He is still intrigued by her reasoning, which he admits is “not the less

¹³⁶Elizabeth Petroff, *Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 300.

¹³⁷ Turner, 4.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 4.

inferential and linear for being also circular.”¹³⁹ He views her writing as being aligned with two forms of scholarly study in the Middle Ages. The first is a systematic and academic method in which theology could be taught and examined in a university course. This method draws on a linear path, with a beginning, middle and end hinged together with logical connections forming a comprehensive analysis. Different from this scholastic model is a monastic method of meditation, whose purpose is not to teach, but rather, is to live a life of contemplation. By necessity, it does not focus on a starting point or ending point. This model involves a “complex of lifelong activities,”¹⁴⁰ including prayer, reading, writing, and meditating.

Julian’s text is perplexing, because it is intended to be. “Julian systematically refuses to finish, because she intends theological incompleteness. And she intends theological incompleteness on grounds that are themselves theological.”¹⁴¹ They raise more questions than she, or the theology of her time, can answer. This follows a monastic model of lifelong contemplation, prayer and meditation. It requires an ongoing consideration of words, experiences, scripture, church teaching and prayer. The complexity of Turner’s response mirrors most scholars’ attempts to categorize Julian’s writing. Eventually, Turner argues that Julian is trying to reconcile “two stories of sin.”¹⁴² One story of sin describes hell as a “place of misperception, a place where all knowledge and all speech are grindingly out of joint because hell’s order is structured upon a fundamental misreading of reality.”¹⁴³ The other story of sin describes Julian’s own

¹³⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, xii.

¹⁴² Ibid, 90

¹⁴³ Ibid, 90.

insights derived from her visions, in which sin was foreseen by love from the beginning of time, and therefore, sin is nothing in itself. Sin is a false construct. Eternal, everlasting and unconditional love is large enough to overturn the consequences of any sin.

Eventually this results in a dismantling of the oppositional forces of sin and forgiveness.

A similar challenge of reading Julian's work is in the slipperiness of her terms. Christina Maria Cervone points to the difficulty of understanding Julian's philosophical distinction between "substance" and "sensuality," especially because Julian wants to use "these terms in an idiosyncratic way without specifically defining them in advance."¹⁴⁴ Julian uses the terms "substance" and "sensuality" interchangeably when referring to humans.¹⁴⁵ When speaking of God, however, she uses the word "substance." Cervone does, however, clarify Julian's specific choice of words to signal relationships crucial to her theology. A dichotomy of "substance" and "sensuality" indicates that Julian is thinking about the connection between God and humans. When Julian is not thinking about a relationship between human and divine, and is thinking about the tensions residing in all human beings (and not in their connections to God), she uses the terms "body" and "soul." These fine distinctions in Julian's word choice requires a reader who can follow small threads of meaning, but Cervone claims the efforts are rewarded.¹⁴⁶

Ultimately, Julian's choice was not to remain silent, but to build upon the rhetorical strategies she knew, even though they could not accommodate everything she wanted to say, and even though she may not have applied them within the patterns

¹⁴⁴Christina Maria Cervone, *Poetics of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 50. She explains this in a chapter titled "The Enigma of Signification," where she addresses the problems of using the words "substance" and "sensuality."

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 49-50.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 50.

prescribed in the medieval academy. Her rhetoric provides a generative language in the vernacular that relied not only on written textual referents in rhetoric, but also those unwritten parts of rhetoric based on *inventio*, which include oral and mnemonic devices. Her writing evokes a language beyond words, and through words, to re-envision and bring new voices to established metaphors, stories and prayers. She weaves a web of meaning, often including tensions between two contraries at once. I define generative language as utterances (written or spoken) that elaborate upon existing words to build new meanings of those words. Generative language opens new spaces within words (using connotations, denotations, associations, comparisons, and oppositions) to produce expanded meanings of those existing words. Julian's generative language builds upon existing rhetorical patterns and strategies cultivated in the monastic and homiletic traditions, but it also opens new pathways of thought and vision through language.

The practice of evoking a language beyond words and through words evolved in monasteries. Meditation is a craft of thinking, and language is a part of the process. This production process rested at the heart of the sermons, books, prayer guides, and psalters housed in monasteries. "In the idiom of monasticism, people do not 'have' ideas, they 'make' them."¹⁴⁷ The "work" of the monks, in its various forms, was to live in a way that cultivated spiritual reflection, growth and self-awareness. Their daily prayers, regulated by the parts of scripture they contemplated at specific times during the day and night, channeled their intellectual, spiritual, and emotional energies. Meditation used language to cultivate inward reflections (to "sharpen tools" of imagination, experience, and contemplation) and external expression (to "craft" songs, prayers, litanies, paintings, and

¹⁴⁷ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 5.

writings). The reason the monks referred to their work as a labor in the vineyard was because they were tilling the soil of their souls.

Rhetoric and Generative Language

Prayer, and the language accompanying it, was generative. The practice of crafting prayers, sermons and theological arguments came under the heading of *inventio*. The process of *inventio* in the Middle Ages differed from that of the modern era, especially in the use of imagery. Medieval rhetoric associated metaphor with invention. Modern rhetoric, however, aligns metaphor with style, and it is used to enhance or articulate personal expression. Medieval writers used metaphor to build their arguments. The material would be important for developing the argument, but not necessarily for personal expression. These metaphors could come from scripture, as in the body of Christ, the fire of love, or the bride of God. Through different and accumulated metaphors, a writer brought credibility to his argument. Meaning was accumulated in the evolution of metaphor. Amplification, opposition, repetition, along with synonyms and homonyms, also built the argument of the writer. In the *Ancrene Wisse*, the shield is a metaphor the writer returns to repeatedly in the text using a means of amplification. He uses the shield to argue for evidence of Christ's protection and continuing companionship. Then the knight fights with a shield and covers his body for protection, just as God covers the flesh of humans. Next, the shape of Christ on the cross resembles a shield. The shape of the crucifix as it appears in the cell of the anchoress is like a shield hanging on the wall as a tool of contemplation. The shield, then, is an accumulation of multiple meanings, suggesting a covering for the body, a protection of the soul, and a

conduit for meditation. The shield is a metaphor, but it is revisited so the writer can build numerous meanings and connections that have verbal and visual references.¹⁴⁸ The image of the shield produces an increasing number of complex meanings as the author layers his argument through accumulation and amplification of the initial symbol. So too, Julian's writing evokes a language that builds meaning through words, to re-envision and bring new voices to established metaphors, stories, and prayers.

She begins in Chapter Five with a common object, a hazelnut, which is like all that is made in creation. The comparison introduces connections that will unfold throughout her text, as the hazelnut will be a metaphor for all that is created by God, small though it is. Even though it is small, it is significant. It is only a "ball" that could suddenly have "fallen to nawght," but it is significant to God because he made it, loved and protected it (Julian, Rev. 5/ 9-19). These words ("all," "fall," and variants of "hazelnut"/ "hull"/ "hole"/ "holy") will be revisited over the entire text. The ball is compared to the earth and universe which God made, the "fall" is compared to the Fall of Adam (sin), and the relationship to God ("God made it," "God loveth it" and "God keypyth it"). She will visit these metaphors in her exemplum of the servant and lord, connecting it to the scriptural stories of the vineyard, yet allowing God to cast "no blame" for sin. She will also connect the hazelnut to "our Mother Jesus," comparing the properties of motherhood to those of the God who loves the hazelnut. The hazelnut is significant because God made it, loved it and protected it, and a similar triangulation is repeated when Jesus is compared to a woman, taking on the office of motherhood, to "beryth us" to "fede us" and to "systeynth us." (Julian, Rev. 60/19-32). The repetition of

¹⁴⁸ *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd, lxx-lxxi.

similar syntax and phrasing with words of similar meanings also assists her in building of metaphor through amplification and accumulated meaning.

She uses concrete details of Jesus drying on the cross to raise abstract questions about the nature of repentance, salvation and the pains of hell. These are based in scriptural images found in the Gospel, but they extend beyond it, generating new images and meanings. She uses “paynes” to connect first to the pains shown on the head of Jesus. Then she describes the pain associated with drying and cold wind. These initial descriptions are rooted in a concrete experience. Then she makes a move to introduce a layer of abstract meaning. She refers to her own “peyne,” which was unnoticed, since she only felt “Cristes paynes.” She then layers in greater abstract discussions of hell. The pain of hell is compared to earthly pain. Hell is yet another kind of pain.

Theyse were ij paynes that shewde in the blyssed hed. The furst wrought to the dryeng whyle it was moyst, and that other slow with clyngyng and dryeng, with blowyng of wynde fro without, that dried hym more and payned with colde than my hart can thingke, and all other peynes, for which paynes I saw that alle is to lytylle that I can sey, for it may nott be tolde. ...

...And in alle thys tyme of Cristes presens, I felte no peyne, but for Cristes paynes: than thought me I knew fulle lytylle what payne it was that I askyd, and as a wrech I repentyd me...For me thought my paynes passyd ony bodely deth. I thought: Is ony payne in helle lyk thys? And I was answeyrd in my reson: Helle is a nother peyne, for ther is dyspyer. But of alle peyne þat leed to saluacion, thys is the most, to se the louer to suffer (Julian, Rev. 17/44-58).

She builds increased meaning from the concrete descriptions of Jesus’ drying flesh to the abstract meaning of repentance. To Julian, the cross produced physical pain, but “helle is nother peyne” caused by watching Jesus, or any loved one suffer. The concept of salvation requires a state of profound sorrow, a concept she can only begin to describe in her text. Her words, then, offer language in which more ideas can be generated later in a rhetoric of interiority that creates an accumulation of images.

Language and Literary Theory

She guides her readers with instruction on reading and writing by crafting her own “literary theory.” She outlines her writing process and the tension she feels between the events in her vision and the new generative language she is introducing to her “evenchristian.” By the time she writes Chapter Nine, her language has grown to open interior pathways accessible to each person:

All this was shewde by thre partes: that is to sey, by bodily syghte, and by worde formyde in my vnderstondyng, and by goostely sight. But the goostely syght I can nott ne may not shew it as openly ne as fully as I would. But I trust in our lord god almightie that he shall of his godness and for iour loue, make yow to take it more ghostely more sweetly then I can or may tell it (Julian, Rev. 9/ 29-34).

The language of narration she started with in her first chapter, with its tidy structure and numbered sections, is transformed into a complex of rhetorical methods, devised through her own innovation.

She explains the steps in her process, which are threefold. First, she starts with describing her bodily experience, which is to witness the passion, the wounds, and the pain of Jesus’ suffering and death: “the dryeng [of flesh] whyle it was moyst” (Julian, Rev. 17/45). Second, she forms her experience and feelings into words: “I felte no peyne, but for Cristes paynes” (Julian, Rev. 17/53). We see yet a third step apparent in the quotation describing Jesus flesh drying in the wind on the cross: “I can not ne may not shew it” (Julian, Rev. 9/30-31). The third step is the “gostely sight,” which she cannot show as well as the “bodily” sight because it speaks of a deep, and often troubling paradox. It leads her to a consideration of eternal salvation, which church teaching claims is available only to good Christians and not to sinners. On the one hand, it leads to her

understanding of “helle” as a place filled with despair and no hope of salvation for sinners, but on the other, a place an all-forgiving God does not need. If any person, even a sinner, feels enough pain, even if watching another suffer, can salvation be obtained? Is hell necessary? And for whom? She says that she trusts God will “make you to take it more ghostly...” (Julian, Rev. 9/33-34). This statement serves two purposes: first, it invites the reader to meditate on God, and second, it situates God as the author of Julian’s language, and of all language coming from it. She suggests, however, that the language is more than symbolic; it has the ability to generate new concepts and ideas that challenge concepts of sin and forgiveness. Her language, with God’s help, can “make you to take it more ghostly.” Her emphasis on “bodily sighte” grounds metaphors and language itself in concrete experience, but opens it to possibilities beyond mere symbolic function. “More than stylistic dress laid onto thought, metaphors are the innate generative power of language that enables it to be used, consciously and unconsciously, to subvert the status quo.”¹⁴⁹ She is consciously using familiar metaphors. Although she is aware of the stylistic and organizational rhetorical patterns, she is tapping into a generative power of language that may knowingly or unknowingly subvert traditional concepts.

Rhetoric and Amplification

In Julian, the generative power of language builds through amplification, repetition and association. Julian will use several words in separate places of her text to amplify a term or to repeat it with a new association. She may then leave that word, only

¹⁴⁹ Krista Ratcliffe, *Anglo-American Feminist Challenges to the Rhetorical Traditions: Virginia Woolf, Mary Daly, and Adrienne Rich* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 72.

to return to it much later with other associations. Certain words, then, are repeated to take on a substance of their own. It requires an accumulation of an argument and a pre-conditioning of symbols. Geoffrey Shepherd notes the same quality of language in the *Ancrene Wisse*. The strategy is also used by St. Bernard, especially when he used words like “speculum,” “misericordia,” and “umbra” over several parts of his text. In *Ancrene Wisse*, the author uses “dunes,” “schadewe,” and “schild.” For the modern reader here, the term “metaphor” lacks the same meaning.¹⁵⁰

For I knew be the comyn techyng of holy church and by my owne felyng that the blame of oure synnes continually hangyth vpon vs, fro þe furst man in to the tyme we come uvpe in to hevyn. Then was this my merveyle, that I saw oure lorde god shewyng to vs no more blame then if we were as clene and and holy as angelis be in hevyn. And between theyse two contraryes my reson was grettly traveyled by my blyndnes, and culde haue no rest for drede that his blessed presens shulde passe fro my syght, and I be lefte in uvknowyng how he beholde vs in oure synne (Julian, Rev. 50/10-18).

This pivotal passage of Julian’s text maximizes the rhetorical strategy of amplification. It contains metaphors that look back to earlier parts of her vision, and then leads the reader to the next level of meaning. “The comyn techyng of holy church” and the “sin continually hangyth vpon vs” looks back to the beginning of her text in which she describes the two domes of the church, namely the teachings of the church and the knowledge she secures from her own direct encounter with God. The image of the “synnes continually hangyth vpon vs” recalls the skin of Jesus hanging on his face in previous chapters. Her mention of these details pulls the reader back into the text to reconnect with previous concepts before moving the metaphors forward into the next chapter. There they will reappear as metaphors of the upper and lower dome of the church, signaling tensions in church teaching on sin. Or they will resurface as images of

¹⁵⁰*Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Shepherd, lxx.

the painful hanging of Jesus on the cross, signaling tensions about suffering. This passage pre-conditions other metaphors to come in the next chapters. Her feyling (“feeling”/ “failing”/ “falling”) will reappear in the exemplum of the servant and lord by association. There, her “feyling” through sin will be connected to Adam’s fall: “Adam fell fro lyfe to deth, in to the slade of this wrechyd worlde” (Julian, Rev. 51/ 221). Other images are re-cast and will be re-ordered through the passage in her Chapter 50.

Images of work and rest run throughout her text. “The vertu and the goodnesse that we haue is of Jesu Crust, the febilnesse and blyndnesse that we haue is of Adam... and thus hath our good lorde Jhesu taken vppon hym all oure blame” (Julian, Rev. 51/229-233). Feebleness and blindness are now connected to Adam’s sin, the sin that caused the suffering for humanity. Also, the work which comes as a result of sin becomes the work of the servant mentioned in Ch. 50. It will reappear in Ch. 51 when the forgiving lord will eliminate the need for work: “The syttyng of the fader betokynnth the godhead, that is to sey for shewing of rest and pees, for in the godhead may be no traveyle...” (Julian, Rev. 51/273-274). Eventually, in Ch. 52, all the sins of humans will be excused by God. “For it longyth to man mekely to accuse hym selfe, and it longyth to the propyr goodnesse of oure lorde god curtesly to excuse man” (Julian, Rev. 52/ 70-73). Eventually, the blame and work will be turned into joy, all because of the lord’s kindness. At this point, the sin or failing has become transformed. “And in this nott only oure good lorde shewde our excusyng, but also the wyurschypfulle noblyte that he shall breng vs to, tornyng all oure blame into endlesse wurschyppe” (Julian, Rev. 52/ 94-96). With this passage, Julian uses secular terms of “curtesly” and “excuse” to introduce the all-

forgiving God. She revisits the concept of incomplete work again, only in Ch. 52, she refers to the God who is gentle and kind.

This passage contains six or more metaphors that are being re-collected for further launching or are being re-examined for multiple meanings. Some appear just to be threaded through to the next chapter containing a pivotal story. This shrinking of some metaphors (teaching of holy church) and expanding of other metaphors (falling into slade/ failing to do good/ falling as Adam did) is so much more than mere comparison. It expands language. It places the same word (or its synonyms) in different places to build associative meaning that may be consciously or unconsciously established. It allows her to lead readers to concepts without even realizing it. She shapes the metaphor and language. The accumulation of metaphor is how she arrives at a God who will never assign fault in the servant. The associative metaphors generate levels of meaning, an amplification and accumulation of argument that modern concepts of metaphor do not have. The generative language does not necessarily produce more words, but it produces deeper meanings of words. These associations occasionally bring forth subconscious meanings the reader is not expecting.

She expresses both the function and inadequacy of language. Just as she has refined her language over time, and has produced a long text four times the length of the initial short text, she urges others to generate new concepts and meaning from her own words, even if it takes years. In describing her own process of a rhetoric of interiority, she is modeling it for others.

...words passyth my wyttes ...[they] passyth alle that hart can thynk or soule may desyre. And therefore theyse wordes be nott declaryd here; but evyry man, aftyr the grace that god gevyth hym in vnder standing and loving, receyve them (Julian, Rev. 26/11-18).

She directly addresses her audience, explaining that her re-formed words have the potential to form new “meyngs.”¹⁵¹ Some of her meanings are not in words exactly, but are crafted in metaphors (Jesus’ “syde wound”), exemplum (the servant’s story), and rhetorical devices (*repetitio*, *divisio* of “payne”). Her new concepts appear in highly figurative meanings built upon allegory and puns. Her meaning is forged in the nuances of oral discourse, in the alliterative repetition of sound (“sharpe smytynges all a bout the swette body”),¹⁵² and it also is in the rhythm of her words (“feyer skynne was broken full depe into the tendyr flessch”).¹⁵³ It is in the puns that hold two meanings (hull/hole/ holy/ whole; or deed/dead), and the words she coins, such as “forthbringing”¹⁵⁴ (Julian, Rev. 60/47-50) or “geynmakyng”¹⁵⁵ (Julian, Rev. 10/54-56). She specifically urges her readers to hear them and to understand their ghostly meaning in a manner that is better than hers. She urges her readers to enter the same space as her own and to interpret the meaning for themselves and other “evenchristian.” She has used the same process herself, in first recording her vision, and then spending twenty years revising her description of it.

In five different categories - metaphor, exemplum, alliteration, coining words and puns - she creates a conduit for generative language. She follows the linear guidelines of traditional rhetorics, but she moves in a web-like construct, always pushing against the borders of language to remain true to her own vision without transgressing boundaries of orthodoxy. She uses all the facets of language at her disposal, building layers of

¹⁵¹ After telling the exemplum of the servant, Julian says, “Also in thys merveyulous example I haue techyng with in me, as it were the begynnyng of an ABC, wher by I may haue some understandyng of oure lordys menyng, for the pryvytes of the reuelacioun be hyd ther in, not withstandyng that alle þe shewyng be full of prevytes” (Julian, Rev. 51/268-273).

¹⁵² Ibid, 12/ 3.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 12/ 2-3.

¹⁵⁴ Julian, Rev. 60/47-50.

¹⁵⁵ Julian, Rev. 10/54-56.

language into a textured “book,” complete with oral components of alliteration, puns, coined words, and figures such as polyptoton and anacalasis to transform language based upon traditional elements and rhetorical techniques.

Text and Texture

Julian’s problem is that she had an explosive experience, and then she set down to write about it, and unlike Bridget of Sweden or Catherine of Siena, she was not content with recording and account of her vision, and resting in a closeness with God. Instead she wrestled with the incongruities her vision represented, and she continued to revisit the challenges her vision presented to church teaching. Her own position as a woman entering the story of Jesus in the passion challenges the position of Mary and women, not only in church history, but in scripture itself. Although she develops a systematic theology, she is primarily a writer and a rhetorician, concerned with using carefully chosen words to articulate her meaning. Her efforts detailed in her initial book attest to her concern about her writer’s craft. Her struggle was in finding the words to record her “bodily” vision, and then to convey the “ghostly” meaning of it.

The tradition of the generative power of words is embedded in the etymology of the word for “text” that precedes the dominance of the written word over the spoken word. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “web is a fabric as it is woven in the loom.”¹⁵⁶ A text, written or orally spoken, “weaves” a web of meaning and has the potential to spin

¹⁵⁶ In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymology of the word “text” is from “French *texte*, also Old Northern French *tixte*, *tiste* (12th cent. in Godefroy), the Scriptures, etc., < medieval Latin *textus* the Gospel, written character (Du Cange), Latin *textus* (*u*-stem) style, tissue of a literary work (Quintilian), that which is woven, web, texture, < *text-*, participial stem of *texere* to weave.” <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200002?result=1&rskey=EvQ7lo&>.

new metaphors in the imagination. Brian Stock recognizes the distinct meaning of the “text” to be based in Romance Languages and German to mean “to weave with a loom.”¹⁵⁷ Especially for women who often were not educated in schools, language itself was a fabric woven by women in conversation with one another. As an example of this tradition, the twelfth - century story of Leoba,¹⁵⁸ tells of a prophet who dreamed of herself spewing out spools and spools of yarn, as a metaphor of her spilling forth new words and prophecies.

Julian uses the image of knitting (people will be “knit” to Jesus in the making... and forever “knit in this knot”)¹⁵⁹ to find a useful metaphor to explain the incarnation. Her choice of this domestic metaphor, connected to prophetic insight, with a playful alteration in syntax, appropriates the purpose of “weaving” a text that can be memorized and disseminated to others.¹⁶⁰ It underscores her skills at using innovations of language that include a broadened range of metaphor and the use of reconfigured syntax. It plays

¹⁵⁷ Stock, 41. Stock explains the ambivalence of the medieval reader to the text, especially in its written form, as a static document. He notes that the complexity of the tissue, texture, or style of composition, which originated in Quintilian, survived through the Middle Ages.

¹⁵⁸ Laurie Fink uses St. Leoba as an example to illustrate that “St. Leoba is only one of a number of women throughout the Middle Ages whose mystical visions gave them an unprecedented authority to speak and write, indeed to preach and instruct... Women from the eighth century enjoyed more institutional power, better education, and were more likely to assume duties and privileges that after the twelfth century would be reserved solely for men” (31-32). She also points to the fact that “this sketch describes accurately the writing of many female mystics whose emotionalism and intense personal involvement, polyglot mixture of genres, and open-endedness contrasts markedly with the monumental rationalism and harmonious proportion of classical theological writing by men” (37). She also discusses the way women mystics took disciplines designed to regulate and subject the body and turned them into what Michael Foucault has called ‘technologies of the self,’ methods of conciliating spiritual power and authority, perhaps the only ones available to women (41). Laurie Fink, “Mystical Bodies and the Dialogics of Vision.” In *Maps of Flesh and Light*, 29-44.

¹⁵⁹ Julian says “ he wyll we wytt that this deerwurthy soul was preciously knytt to hym in the making, whych knott is so suttell and so myghty that it is onyd in to god.” Rev. 53/ 59-61.

¹⁶⁰ Stock, 41.

upon the rich variation in oral discourse. My first chapter outlined the rhetorics that surrounded Julian in Norwich, and here in Chapter Two, evidence proves how Julian produced a text with textures of sound and image, gathering material from all the rhetorics she knew and generating new ones to articulate and contain two separate meanings simultaneously.

Amplification and Metaphor

The metaphor of the side wound of Jesus, grounded in the traditional scriptural narrative found in medieval sermons and plays, weaves new and non-traditional images through the generative power of language. Julian is not necessarily producing more words, but she is using metaphor to generate meaning with new depth and new concepts. She introduces the image of the side wound of Jesus in Ch. 24 of *Revelation of Love*, and then returns to it in an expanded context later in her Ch. 60, shifting its meaning as a preacher might, but pushing it to the edge of orthodoxy and suspending it over both old and new meanings. She initially uses the image of the open wound of Jesus' side wound to reference traditional scriptural attributes of the physical wound, but then creates a tension with various and increasingly feminine attributes to the same wound. For example, the "wound" refers to a container for blood and water: "hys worthy blode and hys precious water" (Julian, Rev. 24/7-9). Then it refers to a breast, as "the moder may geve her chylde sucke" (Julian, Rev. 60/30). Then it refers to his milk ("mylke") used to feed his children: "but our precious moder Jhesu, he may fede us wyth hym selfe" (Julian, Rev. 60/29-34). She does not make the metaphorical leap in one move. She shifts referents several times, over several chapters, creating a web of meaning: "wound" shifts

from “feyer...place” to “blode and water” to “mylke” to expand the generative nature of her language. It uses amplification and accumulated meanings to produce new and shocking concepts.

First, she establishes a familiar trope from scripture referencing the wound as the place the sword entered in Jesus body. This reference recalls the passage in John 20:23-29, but in her vision, Jesus looked in to his side joyfully, and invited Julian into his side. It is intimate and personal in a way that the scriptural narrative of Thomas is not, and describes details unheard of in the scriptural narrative.

Wyth a good chere oure good lorde lokyd in to hys syde and behelde with joy, and with hys swete lokyng he led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature by the same wound in to hys syde with in; and ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow of alle mankynde that shalle be savyd and rest in pees and loue. And ther with he brought to mynde hys dere worthy blode and hys precious water whych he lett poure out for loue. And with the swete beholdyng he shewyd hys blyssyd hart clovyn on two, and with hys enjoyeng he shewyd to my vnderstandyng in part the blyssydfulle godhede as farforth as he wolde that tyme (Julian, Rev. 24/1-10).

Moving beyond scriptural narrative, she metaphorically connects the concrete description of the wound to refer to a space like a room, which echoes another religious text, the *Fifteen Os*. The narrative explains what happened to Julian, but the references to other images and texts create new layers of meaning. The image of hiding in the wound of Jesus is found in *The Fifteen Os*,¹⁶¹ but in Julian she enters Jesus’ side with an open and “joyful” invitation from him. Her image is different than that of the *Fifteen Os*, however, because she does not hide in the wound out of fear; instead, she enters into it out of joy. Three lines later, the metaphor of the wound is compared to a fair delectable place, as a

¹⁶¹“I pray þe for þe deppnes of þe wondes þat went throw þe flesche... hyde me lorde in þe holes of þi wondes fro þe face of þine ire.” Quoted in *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 394, n.6.

room. The metaphor is building upon the tension between two different concepts, both rooted in the physical, concrete word “hys syde” but later, it is building upon other tensions. The wounded side Thomas examines was frightening and stark, whereas the wound Julian enters establishes a new concept of symbolic space within Jesus’s love. Jesus’ side is a room, entered into without fear, guilt or doubt. The “wounded side” creates a space for her to consider the fearful experience of Jesus’ torture and the comforting experience of Jesus’ invitation.

Julian often builds multiple layers of tension as she relies upon the semantic incongruence and congruence between the established metaphorical reference of a word and its new meaning. She continuously relies on the orthodox lexical values of words and traditional referents, and then moves beyond to a new imagined value of words. In medieval rhetoric, this would be recognized as *amplifacio*. Often, she casts metaphor in a wide net across several chapters, layering it with different textures, allusions, and even cross-references to her own text. Her language resembles a theme in a symphony, since it starts with one theme and then picks it up later in a slightly different context with new meaning. She pre-conditions a phrase “Jhesu... oure broder” (Julian, Rev. 7/ 55) in one place of the text, so it can be seen again later in a slightly different way as “oure very moder Jhesu” (Julian, Rev. 60/ 19). The metaphor can open up a new space, that is not a new space, since it has been faintly introduced earlier. There is a semantic congruence and incongruence between the two. Julian has merely mentioned the concept by way of syntactic similarity, so she has dodged a larger concept she will return to later. Later, the “office of motherhood” will be described as one which involves nourishing and nurturing and protecting the young child. When the two metaphors come together as “moder Jesus”

in Chapter 60, Jesus is finally described as a mother. Her language has generated a new concept that extends beyond mere metaphorical ornamentation. This strategy allows her to discuss shocking ideas, just hinting at them in the imagined space, building within the tension described by Ricoeur¹⁶² and the accumulation of meanings as found in the *Ancrene Wisse*.

She builds tension and a “predicative connection” with the metaphor of the wound of Jesus to cross gender boundaries. She first uses the open side to reference traditional attributes of the wound, but then creates a tension with various and increasingly feminine attributes to the same wound. In her Sixtieth Chapter, the “sweet open side” image is replaced with the image of the side being like a mother’s breast, a distinctly feminine quality, but one that is a familiar medieval religious theme, coming from biblical sources in Isaiah, even though it may sound liminal to modern sensibilities. The reference also resonates with the *Pryking*, and she maintains the image in its traditional meaning.¹⁶³ Much later, in Chapter 60, Julian returns to the image of “the side wound,” in a move that is critical for her to make the next comparison of Jesus our savior to Jesus our mother, a

¹⁶² To imagine, according to Ricoeur, is “not to have a mental picture of something but to display relations in a depicting mode.” Ultimately, then, metaphors are not mimetic, but they are also hermeneutic, since they involve the interpretation of images and a predicative assimilation of that scene into other scenes in the reader’s imagination. Words generate feelings and sensations which expand the schematization of an image, so they rearrange them as they are retained, so the mind is functioning not only as a container for the replication of an image, but it also scanning the mind for a place to categorize it and even imprint or reconfigure it over the previous image in a hermeneutic process, and making what Ricoeur calls the “predicative connection.” See Paul Ricoeur, “The Metaphorical Process.” In *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, ed. Mark Johnson. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 236-237.

¹⁶³ *The Pryking of Love*. Ed. Harold Kane. 2 vols. Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 92:10. (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik Universität Salzburg, 1983), 6. Noted in *Writings*, ed. Watson and Jenkins, 312 n. 34.

move which is not exactly logical or linear, but is associative. It draws upon deviant or disjointed connections and compares Jesus' side to a mother's breast. She not only switches genders, but the agent of divine power. Now Jesus is not only a historical figure of a man, but is also our very mother.

The moder may ley hyr chylde tenderly to hyr brest, but oure tender mother Jhesu, he may homely lede vs in to his blessyd brest by his swet opyn syde, and shewe vs there in perty of the godhed and þe joys of hevyn, with gostely suernesse of endlesse blysse. And þat shewde he in the x revelation, gevyng the same vnderstandyng in thys swet worde where he seyth./ Lo, how I love thee, behold(yng) in to his blyssyd syde, enjoyeng (Julian, Rev. 60/38-44).

The metaphor changes to compare Jesus to a mother, who is not only named as mother, but who also is filling the physical functions of a mother feeding with his breast, and showing us the joys of heaven. We are “beholding” a different sort of image in this part of the revelation. The metaphor bridges the boundaries of the wound/ room, but also sustains the contraries of divine and human. The divine God can feed his followers with his human body and blood. The last metaphoric connection shows how Jesus “our moder” can feed Christians as a mother does.

Both interpretations are sustained at one time, and the tensive relationship between the two spins a new space for imagination and language. She has moved from a wound to a room to a womb within her text, and even returned to the initial image of the side with the blood and water flowing out, as it would after birth, making sure that she has woven the thread through from Ch.60 back to Ch. 10 (Julian, Rev. 60/38-45). She has suggested that Jesus is feminine, but of course, has grounded so much within the metaphor on scripture and orthodox teachings that she is able to imply that Jesus is only feminine in the “metaphorical” sense. Yet, of course, to understand the meaning of the

“metaphorical” or “figurative” sense, the reader must also maintain the most basic lexical meaning of “mother” as feminine and Jesus as male. In the incongruity that she sustains, the range of metaphor builds to include both, if not several, shades of new meaning.

Wound and Womb

It would be negligent to gloss over how the conflict in scholarship over this wound passage galvanized a divide between scholars who see Julian as a writer relying upon patristic sources, and those who interpret her through the lens of feminist theory. This image has been examined from several perspectives, but I argue that this section is an issue of language. In Chapter 60, the “sweet open side” image as a room is replaced with the image of the side being like a mother’s breast, a distinctly feminine quality, one that is a familiar medieval religious theme.¹⁶⁴ The image of Jesus suckling his people is coming from biblical sources even though it may sound unsettling to modern sensibilities. It opens a new incongruity that disrupts the reference to Jesus as a man and allows for ongoing, and increasingly tense references to the feminine Jesus. Using the patristic tradition, Julian can arrive at the image of Jesus as a woman in a figurative

¹⁶⁴ David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy*, 92. Aers deals extensively with this image, also noting Riehle’s claim that the side wound resembles the female pudendum: the vulva, as the place of erotic ecstasy, and is equated with the divine union. Aers acknowledges this interpretation, but then, goes on to note that instead of pursuing the path of an eroticized connection to Jesus, Julian shifts from the feminine matrix to an abstract and generalized discussion of “Ghostey” understanding as she sets aside the fleshly image. See also Glasscoe, 238 for the view that this scene is “familiar iconography.” I argue that Julian is weaving a broader metaphor than Aers is noticing, making a move to establish the initial concept early in the text and then to pick it up later, specifically referencing it as a point she mentions in “Ch. 10.” In this way she is using a rhetorical strategy that resembles amplification. This is critical if her purpose is to emphasize her liminal understanding within the orthodoxy of the church, since her interpretation of her vision places Jesus not as an eroticized female, but rather as a substantive female who is the agent of the incarnation.

sense, but her own female identity emerges. Through her expansion of the metaphor and perhaps her own subconscious insights, a feminine Jesus evolves through and in a new language and a new perspective the patristic tradition missed or overlooked. Julian sustains two large contraries, one being Jesus as historical person being able to feed his people, but the other is Jesus as female. Here his role is not eroticized as a bride/bridegroom relationship familiar to the Song of Solomon. Rather, it is actually substantive, making a woman an agent of salvation and nourishment, and an essential and central part of the scriptural story.

Her method also operates by a rapid switching of referents without explanation and with quick and unexplained connections. Rapid substitutions in the image make this happen with the replacement of one referent moving slightly in a new direction before another referent has moved: “Oure faylyng is dredfulle, oure fallyng is shamfull, and oure dyeng is sorrowfull” (Julian, Rev. 48/23). Her own failure through sin is conflated with Adam’s falling in sin. So too, dying is a combination of physical and spiritual death. It is a similar to amplification and the development of the “theme” in a sermon, with familiar references to scripture and a popular medieval play, but it is layering these textures together to sustain an unsettling meaning in a traditional teaching. She is mixing and reordering images and metaphors to break old codes and establish new generative pathways. This way she can gradually introduce and propose two contraries or ideas of gender. This leads us to view Jesus as human and divine, but also view Jesus as male and female, all at the same time. Julian can live on the border of transgression to sustain both ideas simultaneously. One is within orthodox tradition, but the other moves us beyond

that boundary. The fact that she can hover over both solidifies her status in theological writing and rhetoric, since she can write a broadly inclusive theology.

Her metaphor of the side wound is at the threshold of new concepts of the feminine. Through the wound, Jesus gives birth to his people, not so much in an allegorical connection to the church, but in his own physical and embodied self.¹⁶⁵ He is the metaphorical bridegroom of the Church, but he is also a physical mother, validating and calling upon a creative power available only to and through women to bring forth life. The metaphor suggests the original tension of corporal, embodied Jesus affirming the resurrected, divine Jesus. Both interpretations are sustained at one time, and the tense relationship between the two spins a new space for imagination and language. Julian has moved from a wound to a room to a womb within her text. In Ch. 60, she even returned to the initial image of the side with the blood and water flowing out, as it would after birth, making sure that she has woven the thread through from Ch. 60 back to Ch. 10.¹⁶⁶ Her language mediates between new meanings of the “wound.” They reference the feminine Jesus who physically feeds his children and the “metaphorical” mother, who spiritually nourishes them. The incongruity between the two builds a new construct of “motherhood” and God.

Nicholas Watson notes that “Julian’s revelation has an imagistic sparseness and at least a surface fragmentariness to it that is largely untypical of the experiences of

¹⁶⁵ Nicholas Watson, “The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*.” in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition, Exeter Symposium V*, ed. M. Glasscoe (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), 85 n. 16. Aers agrees “that Julian’s “treatment of motherhood...might have pulled her out of her sparseness” 97.

¹⁶⁶ “And that shewde he in the tenth, giving the same understanding in this swet worde...” (Julian, Rev. 60/ 36.)

medieval women visionaries and which must initially have been deeply confusing to its recipient.”¹⁶⁷ Aers agrees that Julian’s “treatment of motherhood... might have pulled her out of her sparseness.”¹⁶⁸ I argue that even though Julian’s metaphoric matrix may be sparse in terms of a detailed and lengthy discussion of birth pains, motherhood, or childrearing, her few metaphors are efficient and powerful. Her language is carefully constructed to create an interconnected web of meaning, which begins with suggestion or the initial “incongruity” that also contains the potentially “deviant predication” to be more fully developed at a later stage in the text. At this point in her text, she is not so concerned with writing down all the words she could to describe accurately what she saw in her vision, nor was she interested in providing rational proofs for it. Rather, she was using an approach of invention common to the monastic practices of meditation. She was doing the work of contemplation by building a scaffold for meaning. She is using language to create new concepts that she could amplify later in her text through an accumulation of metaphors.

Metaphor and Deviancy

Metaphor compares two things, and the tension between the two create new meaning. It is the space of tension that introduces new concepts, since it is a new comparison being made out of two dissimilar objects that form another new and often unfamiliar comparison. Metaphors are sometimes “deviant,” and mediate between the border and frontier of familiar and unfamiliar concepts.¹⁶⁹ In this way, metaphors build

¹⁶⁷ Watson, 85 n. 16.

¹⁶⁸ Aers and Staley, 97.

¹⁶⁹ Ricoeur, 230-231.

an imagined space that sustains two contraries simultaneously. This new imagined space spins new metaphoric possibilities. Julian makes the comparison of Jesus' blood to "pelettes" or "the scale of heryng."

The plentuousshede is lyke to the droppes of water that falle of the evesyng of an howse after a grete shower of reyne, that falle so thycke that no man may number them with no bodely wyt. And for the roundnesse they were lyke to the scale of heryng in the spredyng of the forhede. Thes thre thynges cam to my mynde in the tyme: pelettes for the roundhede in the coming ouzte of the blode, the scale of heryng for the roundhead in the spredyng, the droppes of the evesyng of a howse for the plentuousshede vnnúmerable (Julian, Rev. 7/22-30).

Her initial comparison links the abundance of blood to rain falling from the eaves of a house. Although Julian is not necessarily interested in the activity of uprooting and nullifying language employed by men or a male dominant church, she is using an unconventional comparison, linking the divine blood of Jesus to the common occurrence of a heavy rainfall. Here she uses domestic images in three ways: 1) the drops of blood are so plentiful they are like drops of water that fall from the eaves of a house, 2) they fall so thick that no person can number them, and 3) they are round like the scales of a herring in the way they spread. This accumulation of metaphors can be called "deviant" since they compare a sacred object (the blood of Christ) to something common, average and accessible to almost anybody (rain). Her vision itself opens such access to God and to his theological lessons. She needs no intermediary and can interpret God's vision and words to her in the way she chooses. In this sense, this cluster of metaphors is deviant because it opens a pathway to unconventional, unapproved interpretations of experience.

Her metaphors rely on intimate knowledge of God, and they are shocking in their implications. They promote a deviancy, not in the ways they are stretched out, but in the degree to which they jar the reader with new images and messages. She begins with an

accepted and orthodox use of metaphor, but eventually breaks away from that traditional use. A cluster of metaphors weaves through the text in her use of the word “hanging.” In Chapter Five, she describes Jesus as our clothing, “for loue wrappeth vs and wyndeth vs... hangeth about vs for tender loue” (Julian, Rev. 5/ 5-6.). In Chapter Ten, she describes the crucifix she sees as it “hyng before me” (Julian, Rev. 10/2). The image of hanging has been used in two conventional meanings, with one referring to God’s love as a cloth to cover us with tender love, and the other as the image of Jesus hanging on the cross. Her metaphor becomes more shocking as it describes the horrible torture of Jesus. The flesh of Jesus’ head with the hair and blood “alle rasyd and losyde aboue with the thornes and brokyn in many pecis, and were hangyng as they wolde hastely haue fallen downe whyle it had kynde moyster...it was broken on pecys as a cloth, and saggyng downwarde” (Julian, Rev. 17/ 18-24). The intimacy of this description is forged from the shockingly close details of the falling skin and the broken pieces of flesh. Although devotional writers did write of the harsh torture of Jesus, Julian’s metaphors are deviant and different in the degree of detail they provide. The pieces of flesh hang like falling skin of an animal ready to be dressed. So too, the ordinary domestic details clash with the sacredness of Jesus’ divinity. Finally, she describes the details of his drying body. The first horror is his lack of blood, the second is the pain, and the third is that he was “hangyng vppe in the eyer as men hang a cloth for to drye” (Julian, Rev.17/39). Her comparison of the body of Jesus to a rag drying in the air evokes an unsettling link between a discarded cloth and the neglected body of Jesus. The degree to which she pushes the metaphor is still within the bounds of orthodox teaching, but it is expanding into extra-scriptural detail of harshness.

Her telling of the vision allows her listeners to participate in “delinquency” in reserve.¹⁷⁰ The intimacy of her details, expressed in part through metaphor, push her language to the edge of orthodoxy. In the wound example, she reframes the placement of the feminine in the salvation story, since Jesus is feminine. Instead of relying on traditional images of the wound, and an image of Jesus feeding his Christian followers from his side, as a mother would from her breast, Julian moves toward the edge of meaning, explaining that Jesus will even bring forth life from his side. The biological role of women is no longer coincidental or tangential; it is absolutely central to the creation and sustenance of life. The life-giving role is more than true in a “metaphorical” sense, since Jesus, with a body and in a body, places the female in the center of salvation. Without the potency of the feminine, salvation would never happen. Julian allows all of these voices and options to speak within the same shared orthodox space, often after she makes another circling round with language and metaphor.

Rhetoric and Coined Words

Julian used a rhetorical strategy of shifting a word from one part of speech or one verb tense to another to create interest, but for some words, the meaning challenges gender expectations, orthodoxy, and time itself. She shifts the phrase “bring forth” to “forth bringing” which switches a finite verb to a future progressive. With the new coined word “forthbringing” she introduces continuity and future action. The effect is colossal. It is moving her “evenchristian” out of a single, completed event to one that could be

¹⁷⁰ Michel De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 203. His explanation of the “wildman” points to other forms of delinquent labeling of mystics.

witnessed in the present and the future. Continuity reinforces fluidity. The present active voice emphasizes the completeness of the action, but the future progressive voice stresses the process of the action, which changes the length of time the event will require. It enacts a generative language.

Notice, too, what happens when “forthbringing” becomes a noun? Even as a noun, the word “forthbringing” can be assigned two categories, either “bodily” or “gostely.” After describing the open wound of Christ and its feminine attributes of nourishment, Julian describes how the wound can lead to a “forthbring” or birth:

For though it be so þat oure bodily forthbryng be but lytle, lowe and symple in regard of oure gostely forth brynggyng, yett it is he that doth it in the creaturys by whom that it is done...oure lord doth it in hem by whome it is done. Thus he is our moder in kynde (Julian. Rev. 60/49-58).

The coined word “forthbryng,” conflates the bodily birth and the “gostly” birth by saying that “our lord” does both. The word and its shifting adverbs open the strictly figurative meaning of a spiritual birth, but also carefully suggests the lord does this in the same way a mother delivers a “bodily” birth. Julian mediates between both contrary meanings at the same time, sustaining the concept of Jesus as both female and male. It also allows for Jesus to be the bodily source of earthly life, as well as the spiritual font of eternal life.

The coined word “forthbringing,” another way of saying “to bring forth,” is used to denote a process rather than a singular event, like that of giving birth. It opens up an imaginative predicative connection between Jesus as mother in a physical and spiritual sense. Although the concept of Jesus giving birth to the Church is not uncommon, the concept of the feminine being an indispensable and central part of the redemptive process

is. “Ande in our gostly forth bryngyng he vsyth more tendernesse in kepyng without ony comparyson, by as moch as oure soule is of more pryce in his syght” (Julian, Rev. 61/1-3). The key is not that the feminine is just one way of contemplating Jesus; it is an integral and necessary part. Jesus’ birthing of our bodily and spiritual beings is without comparison, and Julian opens the space to insert the feminine centrally in this process through her use of the coined word and the concept it represents.

Central to my thesis is that Julian’s language is bold and broad. It can hold multiple interpretations, which accounts for her popularity in the modern era. She grounds her writing in traditional scriptural narratives and church teaching of the Middle Ages, but she uses rhetorical devices like metaphor and coined words to simultaneously expand upon the full meaning of her vision. What frustrates scholars is that she begins in a particular line of thought, based on logic and tradition, yet as soon as her writing is easily categorized, she escapes the rigidity of medieval topoi and the torturous coding and decoding of modern theory. In the end, everyone, medieval and modern, can interpret the “menyn” of her words. The rigidity of our own theoretical analysis is an invention of modern scholarship, and to understand Julian, students and scholars would benefit from recognizing her own use of language.

Rhetoric and Narrative

There is a reason Chaucer exhorted against the exemplum in “The Pardoner’s Tale.” It was one of the professional tricks used to wrestle the money out of a crowd.¹⁷¹ It

¹⁷¹ It singles out the exemplum as one of the pardoner’s tricks. “Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon/ Of olde stories longe tyme agoon. For lewed peple loven tales olde; Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and holde. ... whiles I may preche, And wyne gold and

also hurled verbal darts at the clergy, satirizing through pompous mimicry. In the medieval sermon, the exemplum acted as a bridge between scriptural exegetics and personal experience, allowing for social and ecclesiastic critique. It carried the power of the tale, story, anecdote and historical account, with an easily adaptable cast of characters and a sketchbook of settings in the narrative genre. It cast the preacher's interpretation of scripture, a potentially logical and scholastic exercise, into a lively narrative form, easily followed by non-scholastics in the audience. The preacher, using an exemplum, told a story and borrowed widely, liberally, and sometimes illogically, from a variety of sources, including ancient mythology, classical fables, natural and human history. In an effort to keep the attention of his audience and drive home his argument, the preacher embellished his exemplum with humor and realistic details of everyday experience. Where the exegetics and interpretation of scripture strayed little from logical syllogism and figurative analysis, the narrative opened up a space for social critique, satire and humor. From the pre-reformation sermons of friars and preachers came the bold social critiques of stingy and unforgiving lords, as well as misbehaving and hypocritical clergy. Critiques and satires attacking clergy abounded from the pulpit. "The Catholic clergy of every species in the Church [had] for centuries been accustomed, from their own pulpits, to scold their fellow clergy – and indeed the hierarchy as a whole."¹⁷² And they used

silver for I teche."Chaucer, "The Pardoner's Prologue," *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), lines 435-440.

¹⁷² Owst, *Literature*, 235. He devotes a chapter of his book to the satiric genre in sermons, arguing that the richness of satire and critique has its roots in the vernacular sermon.

terms leaving little to the imagination, being ‘deviant’ with such “protestant” references as the “Pope-ass” used by orthodox Catholic preaching men.¹⁷³

As an echo chamber of meaning, the sermon and its narrative exemplum offer room to examine further transgressive concepts. In telling the exemplum of the servant, Julian is using a rhetorical device and tradition filled with social and ecclesiastical critique. In this case, the conflict between sin and forgiveness is explored as Julian falls into a transgressive space. Her exemplum travels to a place beyond limits when she contemplates the end of time when sin will be forgiven. Her narrative forms its own deviancy because it is different in degree of tolerance toward sin.

Its deviancy relies on the codes and patterns it chooses to undo and displace. Her story does not want to live in the frontier of transgression, but rather it wants to live in the intersections formed along the border. The “delinquency” can be of the sort mentioned by Ricoeur as a veering away from the established pattern. It can also be thought of in the satire and critique brought to medieval sermons through preachers who did not shy from attacks on the aristocracy or the clergy.

In Julian’s exemplum, the lord asks his servant to perform a task, and the servant bounds off willingly to complete it. Along the way, he falls into the muck and cannot finish the task the lord asked of him. The lord, however, is not angry with the “belovyd servant,” and he does not punish him. Instead, he does not cause him fear or dread, but the lord gives him a gift better than any other reward he should have received.

Than seyde this curteyse lorde in his menyng: Lo my belouyd servant, what harme and dysses he hath had and takyn in my servys for my loue, yea, and for

¹⁷³ Ibid, 235.

his good wylle. Is it nott reson that I reward hym his frey and his dred, his hurt and his mayme and alle his woo? And nott only this, but fallyth it nott to me to geve hym a zyfte that be better to hym and more wurschypfull than his owne hele shuld haue bene? (Julian, Rev. 51/47-53).

The lord's actions break the expectations of the servant and the audience, and one would expect, Julian herself. The servant has failed to do the task, and yet the lord is not angry with him. Instead of being angry, the lord not only forgives the servant, but decides to give the servant a gift for his pain and injuries. When the exemplum draws into its net the narrative of Adam and Eve, with Adam being forgiven and rewarded after failing to obey the lord, the deviancy becomes obvious, yet more troubling. Julian's exemplum poses disturbing questions: What will happen to those who sin? Is sin necessary if God is not wrathful and will always forgive them? If God is all-loving and all-forgiving, then why is man fearful? The plot and characterization is contrary to medieval interpretations of scripture and from church teaching, and in this sense, is a "deviant" story because it so openly undermines the necessity of severe punishment.¹⁷⁴

Julian references three scriptural narratives, but alters them to sharpen the focus on the all-encompassing forgiveness of God. First, she references St. Luke's Prodigal Son (15:11-32), an irresponsible child who returns to an unconditionally loving father. Julian's faithful servant, unlike the prodigal son, never willingly neglects his duty. Julian carefully notes that the failure of the servant is unavoidable, and even expected. Julian uses the tension between the greedy, opportunistic prodigal son, and the humble,

¹⁷⁴Michel De Certeau uses the term "delinquency" to describe the skill of living in the "interstices" of codes that are broken and displaced. Michael De Certeau and Steven Rendall, "Walking in the City" in *The Practices of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 130.

fumbling servant, to emphasize the necessity of sin, and perhaps irrelevance of sin, in light of the father's forgiveness. This dissociation between the scriptural story and her exemplum opens up a transgressive space. Second, she references the fall of Adam in Genesis 3, with the couple being forced from the Garden of Eden. She explicitly compares the servant to Adam, as he has failed to follow the lord's directions, but she does not mention an allegorical equivalent for Eve. Julian does not blame Eve for her complicity in the fall, and she does not include a conniving serpent to tempt her. In Julian's exemplum, the "blame game" is edited from the story, or rather is simply omitted, leaving out the culturally coded and negative language of women found so easily in *Ancrene Wisse* or in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue."¹⁷⁵ The third scriptural story Julian references is Matthew's parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16). Julian's servant is rewarded, even though he does not complete the lord's task. While the workers in the parable each get paid the same amount, even if some labored for fewer hours than their co-workers, Julian's servant receives a gift to ease his pains resulting from the fall. Her exemplum associates itself with familiar scriptural narratives, but deviates from them to focus on her theology of forgiveness.

Her vision was the reason her writing twists and weaves together multiple contrary ideas. She wrestled with paradoxes in the church. Her explosive experience could not be ignored and remained evasive, complex and difficult because it challenged

¹⁷⁵ In her prologue, the Wife of Bath points to the double standard used to overlook the bad behavior of men and condemn the similar behavior in women. She says "Sire olde lecchour, lat thy japes be! / And if I have a gossib or a freend,/ Withouten gilt, thouy chidest as a feend,/ If that I walke or pleye unto hi hous!/Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,' And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!/Thou seist to me it is a greet meschef." Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," lines 141-148.

the contraries of sin and forgiveness, divine and human, male and female. To understand and explain these "contraries" she could never fully reconcile, she wrote her texts. Under the teaching of the church, she knew the power of sin so great that Jesus needed to suffer torture and death, and yet in her vision, she knew the power of unconditional love so great that it fully forgave all, and even more so, included all. This inclusive message, unconditional love and unavoidable sin, seems to be mutually exclusive, yet Julian will not deny the existence of all-encompassing love and inevitable sinfulness.¹⁷⁶

Julian is different because her own vision demanded an unusual interpretation of scripture. In her Chapter 51, Julian "reads" the exemplum of the lord and servant and explains her interpretation. She recounts her twenty year effort to understand all the properties and conditions shown in the example, even though they were partially understood at first. She interprets all of the vision of the lord and the servant, including "the manner of syttyng of the lorde and the place he satt on, and the coloure of his clothyng and the manner of shape" (Julian. Rev. 51/ 93-95). Then she examines the servant, "hurte in his myghte and made fulle febyll... even though she acknowledges that she "saw oure lorde commende and aproue" of him (Julian. Rev. 51/ 104-108). After interpreting the signs, colors, aspects and manners in the exemplum, she recognizes the real paradox of sin and forgiveness. Adam, even though he has sinned and God has forgiven him, struggles with blame and self-accusation. He cannot see that God is loving: "For neyther he seeth clerly his lovyng lorde" nor does he see "hym selfe ... in the syght

¹⁷⁶ Denys Turner believes Julian's understands sin as an illusion of sorts. Turner says, "For sin is from all eternity foreseen by love, and for that reason, it is nothing in itself, even if what sin intends-that is,- its nature as sin- is precisely the attempt to mean something in itself and independently of the love of God that foresaw it." Turner, 94.

of his louyng lord. And welle I wott when theyse two be wysely and truly seen we shall gett rest and peas” (Julian, Rev. 51/109-113). Julian’s vision shows her that sin is wrong and inevitable, as Adam’s fall illustrates in the preceding interpretation of the exemplum, but God’s love is greater than the sin. She insists upon these two contraries, and also knows that they will never fully reconcile until humans can see the way God sees. The church, its authority figures, Christians and non-Christians struggle with these two contraries, which she addresses throughout her text.

Rhetoric and Sound

Julian’s text borrows heavily from the oral tradition to address her audience. The exemplum had power because its oral delivery packed meaning into the very words that comprised it. For those outside the academy, oral reading was still common, and the division between orality and writing may have been a distinction not even worth noting. Quintilian comments on the interconnection of speaking and reading:

I know that it is often asked whether more is contributed by writing, by reading, or by speaking. This question we should have to examine with careful attention if in fact we could confine ourselves to any one of these activities: but in truth they are all so connected, so inseparably linked with one another, that if any one of them is neglected, we labor in vain in the other two... ¹⁷⁷

For medieval women and other lay people who were denied access to a scholarly education, reading may very well have been, in fact, “listening.” When reading actually meant “listening,” an author made rhetorical choices in diction, syntax, and meter to stimulate an imaginative capacity to recall and replicate sensory experiences. To have “read a text” meant to “memorize” or “remember” a type of discourse within a context of

¹⁷⁷ *Quintilian on the Teaching of Speaking and Writing. Book X*, ed. James Murphy, X1.1-2.

other discursive acts. Cues in language would prompt phrases that could readily make impressions in the mind. Especially effective for memory are words used to recall affective feelings (“than he gronyth and monyth and wallowyth and wryeth”),¹⁷⁸ or to conjure disparate meanings (“restoryd fro doubyll deth”),¹⁷⁹ or to play with puns (“I saw god in a poynt”)¹⁸⁰ Rhyme delivered memory cues (“thre thyngs cam to my mynde in the tyme”).¹⁸¹ A “reading” often included passages to be remembered for future use or correlation to prior knowledge stored in a non-written memory bank. It would have been immediately apparent to the medieval audience. It also would have encouraged schematized listening to help audiences classify some of the new information into the old.

The implications of oral reading suggested interrupting and shifting voices. Texts were not only read silently in the hushed room of a monastery, but also in communal or public spaces where one person would “read” a text aloud to others in the room.¹⁸² This type of oral reading allowed for interruptions in the form of questions, comments, or instructions on church teaching or scripture, which could lead to a familiarity with different interrupting voices, sounds and rhythms surfacing in texts. The shifting syntax, verbal effects, and rhythms of the *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, indicate that it was intended to be read orally.¹⁸³ Julian of Norwich, then, included certain voices that seem difficult for modern readers, but seem purposeful to medieval “readers” who were either listening or who were remembering the text. Julian’s “readers” would have been familiar

¹⁷⁸ Julian, (Rev. 51/16.).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 55/ 46.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 52/38.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 7/27.

¹⁸² For Cheryl Glenn’s insights into active listening techniques, see “Medieval Literacy Practices Outside the Academy,” *College Composition and Communication*. 44.4 (1993):497-580.

¹⁸³ *Ancrene Wisse*, Ed. Shepherd, lxxv.

with the oral patterns (dividing themes into units of three or four categories), repetition of sounds (“h”, “s,” “p), and the common metaphors (pilgrimage, the road to heaven, the journey). The oral context of her writing, then, is as important as her written words.

There is evidence of the importance of orality in other literature of her time. Oral context was crucial. Not just for women, and not just in devotional writing, but it was also crucial for highly sophisticated works like *The Canterbury Tales*. There is evidence of a rich oral tradition of stories told over a series of days in a journey which placed stories in conversation with each other, with shifting voices and narrators. She uses such oral patterns to generate new ideas about God, men and women, and the relationships between them. Even when she writes, “As verely as god is oure fader, as verely is god oure moder; and that shewde he in all, and namely in theyse swete wordys there he seyth: I it am” (Julian, Rev. 59/12-14), the passage recalls Matthew 12: 50, which reads: “Whoever will do the will of my Father who is in heaen, he is my brother, my sister and my mother.” Yet, she is also forecasting her own new interpretation of this text when she will use this concept to describe “our moder Jesus.” She generates new meanings by starting with a familiar scriptural passage, which would have been read aloud or silently, and then transforms the connection into a concept that is bold, unusual and startling.

Julian’s texts build a complex of sense data to aid meditation. Julian’s language helps the listener enter the space of the text. With oral sounds, metaphor builds synchronicity between a concept and the ways in which the incidents of believing and knowing correspond to bodily sensations. Orality creates the sensory textures of metaphor by evoking multiple levels of meaning as in the case of onomatopoeia or alliteration, in which words even sound like the concepts, feelings or actions they

represent. Even in “written” discourse, diction summons a “voice” which, in turn, recalls a previous context or reference, or even a hidden message. In responding to a need to “hear” as well as “see” or even “smell” or “feel” an object, orality provides a complex of sense-data. In other words, if Julian obtains enough sense-data in a complex method, she can not only participate in the passion of Jesus, or the “compassion,” but can re-create it and enter into a meditative space to come to know God. To do so, she must situate herself and her readers into the space of the passion, a common element of affective devotional writing. Examples of such narratives could be heard in the bleeding, suffering Christ of Richard Rolle’s *Meditations on the Passion* or the weeping, sobbing misery in *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Rolle’s reference to the scourged body of Jesus, for instance, uses metaphorical language comparing Jesus’ body to honeycomb, full of holes, and Margery Kempe’s uses similar language to describe Jesus’ painful walk to Calvary. Although they are both using the familiar trope of affective description, to create the feelings and sensations of passion, Julian differs from them in that she actually enters the space of the passion in her text.

Julian’s language creates an intimacy with Jesus that separates her from other writers. Julian describes Christ’s blood flowing unto her bed in her Fourth Revelation. She begins with a description of the “plenteous bledyng in semyng of the scoregyng” (Julian, Rev.12/1-2). This scene is common in devotional writers, including Richard Rolle and Catherine of Sienna. Richard Rolle invisions himself at the foot of the cross, soaking up the blood of Jesus. Catherine of Sienna writes a letter in which she hopes that a group of her disciples can be “immersed and bathed in the blood of the humble spotless

Lamb.”¹⁸⁴ The image, however, is different for Julian. For her, the blood actually flows into her space. For Rolle and Catherine, the person must move to or enter into the flowing blood, but for Julian, the blood enters her physical space, without her moving or seeking it. It actually flows over her and engulfs the bed she is in while having her vision. It leads her to see so much blood that “for that tyme it shulde haue made the bedde all on bloude, and haue passyde over all about” (Julian. Rev. 12/11-12). Julian also directs dialogue with Jesus, in personal pleas and through questions. In contrast, Margery Kempe receives lengthy messages from Jesus, often in the form of a test of her faith or commitment. Jesus tells Kempe to wear a white dress, to discontinue marital relations with her husband, to travel to specific religious sites, but Margery does not have a logical or intimate conversation with God. Margery asks for signs or for guidance, God provides a course of action for her, and she carries out his tasks. Julian, however, uses language to dialogue in an intimate conversation with God. She asks God to explain sin. “How shall I be esyde, who shall tell me and tech me that me nedyth to wytt, if I may nott at this tyme se it in the?” (Julian, Rev. 50/36-38). She receives the story of the lord, who sends his servant on a task and the servant, who fails the task, yet is forgiven and still receives a reward. God, as the lord, answers her in the form of questions: “Is it nott reson that I reward hym his frey and his drede, his hurt and his mayme an alle his woo? And nott only this, but fallyth it nott to me to geve hym a zifte that be better to hym ... than his owne hele?” (Julian, Rev. 51/49-52). Julian’s dialogue takes place on the different, and more intimate level than it does in other devotional works. Julian’s vision inserts dialogue with Jesus and a shared space which Jesus enters. To contemplate the intimacy of this shared space and

¹⁸⁴ *Catherine of Sienna: An Anthology: Volume One*, ed. and trans. Suzanne Noffke, OP (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 97.

the direct dialogue with Jesus is to allow readers to open avenues for new concepts to be formed through ongoing language.

Orality creates three effects which Julia uses for her generative language. First, it produces a kinetics of sound to present a syllabic momentum of a felt sensation or a process, and those sensations can sustain a complex of multiple emotions: “he wolde suffer the sharpyst thornes and grievous paynes” (Julian, Rev. 60/21-22). Second, orality insinuates the voice from the pulpit or sermon that may work against the grain of the textual script, also allowing her to hover between two contraries at the same time: “oure hevynly moder Jhesu may nevyr suffer vs” (Julian, Rev. 61/38-39). Third, homonyms and puns, embedded expressions of two meanings intended to be “heard” at once (“hole” / “whole”/ “holy”) suggest contrary ideas at the same time. Each of these strategies, whose oral components leverage sound experience against - or in addition to - lexical meaning, add texture to her words. These create generative language by using words, but also suggesting words with multiple, and occasionally contrary meanings.

Rhetoric and Alliteration

Feelings of pain, fear, joy, bliss, and mirth burst from Julian’s text. From a meditative standpoint, the sound of her language negotiates a move from the immediate space she inhabits to another space she enters. The kinesthetic of sound, or the creation of a feeling in the reader, serves the purpose of crossing between the human sphere and the divine. So too, it authenticates Julian’s vision and those of those who are moved by

her.¹⁸⁵ Even in non-Christian traditions, notions of the kinesthetic “shed light on the larger cultural framework of sensual perception in which these protocols and conventions for authenticating religious authority.”¹⁸⁶ Julian’s works recall the sensations of pain, which her words the force of an authentic experience, which in turn, verify the authenticity give of her vision.

The passage detailing Christ’s scourging at the pillar illustrates the potency of kinesthetic language to provide a complex of sensory data. Rhythm, alliteration and meter build tension and a steady pace.

The thornes and the naylys, the drawyng and the draggyng, his tendyr flessch rentyng... The flessch was...fallyng on pecys vnto the tyme þe bledyng feylyd; and than it beganne to dry agayne, cleuyng to the bone. And by the walowyng and wrythyng, gronyng and the monyng is vnderstonde that he myght nevyr ryse (Julian, Rev. 51/290-295).

This poly sensory swell of metaphors that spin sounds, sights and smells together open the scene to new experience and language to describe it. Her words also allow the listener to hear the pain, the groaning and the moaning, to place themselves in the scene, and to generate their own words to describe it.

Evidence of medieval preaching methods to draw upon the impassioned involvement of the listener is common. Examples of the impassioned preaching surfaces in Chaucer’s “Friar’s Tale.” The devil, who claims to only take “all that humanity wants to give him,” brags about his ability to touch and move a person to offer up all their

¹⁸⁵ Dorothea Schulz, “Soundscape,” in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. David Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2008), 183.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 183.

money, but only on the condition it is what a person wants to willingly give.¹⁸⁷ Skills in affective preaching were commonly used, and as Chaucer pointed out, it was used to swindle as well as save the populace. So “touching” and “moving” a crowd was associated with authentic religious experience.

Reading Against the Grain

Julian uses orality to magnify a tension between two interpretations of the same sentence and to juxtapose two or more meanings at the same time. Orality maximizes the sound of the word from the pulpit to work against the grain of the textual script, allowing a speaker to hover between two contraries simultaneously. This has to do with Julian’s use of affect, but oral enunciation also sustains her content, logically supporting two different ideas at the same time, one often working against the grain. The written text alone provides this juxtaposition, but the oral alliteration, the jamming together of sounds, or the flow of sound from one part of the sentence to the end, creates a movement propelling the reader through her argument with syllabic momentum, or forcing the reader to stop after suggesting a dizzying supply of words in multiple meanings.

The passage about God as father and mother draws upon a tension between church teaching, on one hand, and Julian’s vision on the other. The reading of the following lines can either suggest that the teachings of the holy church are unquestionable, or it can mean that God’s voice in the holy vision is more important than

¹⁸⁷ In “The Friar’s Tale,” the devil tells the summoner his secrets: “And therefore by extocions I lyve./ For sothe, I take al men wol me yive./Algate, by sleyghte or by violence,/Fro yeer to yeer wyne al my dispence.” Chaucer, “The Friar’s Tale,” lines 1429-1432.

church teachings. This example illustrates the way differences in oral enunciation determine choices between multiple meanings of the same passage. A person reading this text aloud could sustain two options, one which supports a male gendered god and the other which supports the feminized God of Julian's vision:

As verely as god is oure fader, as verely as god oure moder; and that shewde he in all, and namely in theyse swete wordys there he seyth: I it am; that is to sey: I it am, the myght and the goodnes of faderhode, I it am, the wysdom and the kyndnes of moderhode, I it am, the lyght and the grace that is all blessyd loue: I it am, the trynitye, I it am þe vnite (Julian, Rev. 59/12-16).

Her discussion of both genders is caught in an echo-chamber or narrow breathing room, and is caught between two meanings. In Chapter 32, Julian insinuates that the teaching of the holy church is at cross purposes with the voice and grace of God and with the power of faith. In Chapters 59 and 60, Julian juxtaposes church teaching against the grace and word of God, and emphasizes the pronoun "I" to privilege God's word over church teaching. In Chapter 32, she explains that faith is grounded in God's words, but the speaker there is "oure lorde." Julian mediates another concept of sin because on the one hand, she knows that the church teaches one lesson about the necessity of "paying for sin," but on the other, her vision tells her that "oure lorde" claims his authority in providing ultimate forgiveness. His word overpowers that of the church as the primary actor and judge: "It is not impossible to me. I shalle saue my worde in alle thing, and I shalle make althyng wele....(Julian, Rev. 32/49-51). The authority is in the first person, especially if the "I" and "me" pronoun is emphasized in the oral reading of the text. Then the oral argument against the grain is even stronger than in the written text. The speaker, in this case, the lord, uses repetition and syntax to establish his unquestioned authority. With the oral enunciation foregrounding the "I" voice of God, Julian is careful to bolster

her text with the authority of God's word, and to privilege her text over some church teaching – but not to state that position explicitly.

Julian authenticates her discourse by positioning Jesus' words to substantiate her own. The teachings of the church control one construct of sin and forgiveness, one laden with social and political power, but "our lorde," who has the ultimate authority over all, explains a different construct in Julian's vision. By comparison, Julian's text is not the *Scale of Perfection*, in which a hierarchy of sin is carefully navigated, but rather, Julian's text privileges Jesus' authority and message in her vision. Both interpretations are explained, but the orality of the repeated first person pronoun works against the grain of the traditional teaching on sin. The tension between God's words in Julian's vision and church teaching heard from the pulpit open a space for new and generative thought about sin and forgiveness.

Rhetoric and Puns

Oral reading leverages the dual meaning of homonyms and puns to construct phrases with two meanings to be "heard" at once. They imply physical gesture, tone of voice, and timing that are part of elocution. Both orally and textually, they point to two referents at the same time. For instance, she uses the "left" and the "right" in her exemplum of the servant to emphasize two meanings of the same word. Not only do the homonyms and puns signal the reader to look for dual meaning in these and other words, but to take time to consider both. Julian explains the "rightful" position of the servant should be on "the right," but that the servant is on the "left" side, indicating that the father "left" his own son die. "By that that he stode dredfully before the lorde, and not

evyn ryzte, betokynnyht that his clothing was not honest to stonde evyn ryght before þe lorde” (Julian. Rev. 51/ 282-284). The word “right” suggests correct placement, but also, that which is morally correct, and it also has the meaning of being honest, ethical and not being deceptive. The servant’s position then, is at the left for this period of time.

his clothing was not honest to stonde evyn ryght before þe lorde, nor that myght nott nor shulde nott be hys offyce whyle he was a laborer, nor also he myght nott sytt with þe lord in rest and pees tyll he had wonne his peece ryghtfully with hys hard traveyle; and by the lefte syde: that the fader lefte his owne son wylfully in the manhed to suffer all mans paine without sparyng of hym” (Julian, Rev. 51/283-288).

The “left” provides a sense of direction, but as a verb, the word accuses the father of abandoning his own son. This pun not only signals multiple levels of meaning, but creates tension. The passage suggests Julian is holding two opposite meanings at the same time, one with the servant or Jesus being at the left side of the father, and the other suggesting the father has deliberately let his son “willfully” be scorned and punished. The switching of the two meanings of the same terms occurring in the same sentence contributes to the slippery and playful use of her words. While it lends to Julian’s opaqueness, it helps her establish a pattern of using two referents for the same word, one deviant and the other traditional.¹⁸⁸ The shift between between two meanings of the same word generates new uses of language and meaning.

Even Julian’s use of the hazelnut in her passage about the smallness of it containing an entire world becomes referenced as puns later in the text. The etymological background provides clues for lexical connections to her use of the words “nut,” “hull,”

¹⁸⁸ See Cervone, 19-49. She includes a chapter on “The Enigma of Signification,” in which she addresses Hilton’s word “Jesus,” and Augustine’s “Word.”

and “hole.” The *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) lists the following meanings to the word ‘hole’ as a noun and an adverb, with the primary definition being a “husk,” “shell” or “seedpod,” a connection which Julian establishes in the familiar lexicon when she refers to the hazelnut as a metaphor for the small and universal “all” contained within the hazelnut. Another meaning of the word “hole” however, is for the skin of a person, used when she compares the skin of man which Jesus will wear. In the MED, the same word “hole,” used as an adjective, is defined as a garment full of holes, like the servant’s “kertel.” It is also used to refer to something “hollow, cavernous, empty wounds or containing a cavity.” The same words, “hole,” “holy,” and “wound” are used in the context of Jesus’ wounded side, being like a cavernous room that all mankind can fit into for rest and peace. Finally, another definition of the word “hole” is as an adjective, helping a person or animal to be “cured, healed, to be free from disease or defect” or to be cured in a socially configured context as being “healed of a wrong, amended.”¹⁸⁹ Each of these definitions weave through the text, spinning a web of metaphor and building upon contrary ideas, not the least of which is the hole in Jesus side, as a “hole-filled” piece of flesh that ultimately heals and “makes one whole” through his sacrifice and death. This concept circles back to the whole metonymic process of Jesus’ death saving the world and healing humanity. The one sacrificial act of incarnation and death contains the universal consequence of redemption. In scripture, this paradox refers to the tension between the acts of one person saving the whole community in Paul’s letter to the

¹⁸⁹ See *Middle English Dictionary*. (MED) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21005> for hole defined as perforation. For “Hole” defined as a nut or seed, see <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21002>

Romans.¹⁹⁰ It also circles back to the one small hazelnut containing the future of a tree and an entire forest.

A related pattern of Julian's leveraging of metaphoric possibilities occurs when she playfully uses rhyming words or similar sounding words as oral cues, both to point to an ongoing expansiveness of word referents or to change the reader's expectations, jarring shifts in meaning or sound. On the first page of her text, she provides a brief overview of the sixteen visions, and in the eighth, she summarizes it as taking her through the "last paynes of Christ, and his cruel drying" (Julian, Rev. 1/24). Listeners and readers would expect this line to read: "the last paines of Christ, and his cruel dying," since this part of the vision recalls Jesus' last moments. The jarring shift from "dying" to "drying" will open up to an entire section in which Julian layers a complex of sensory data which detail the four manners of his drying: "The furst was blodlesse. The secunde, payne folowyng after, the thurde is that he was hangyng vppe in the eyer, as men hang a cloth for to drye, the fowyrth, that the bodely kynde askyd lycoure, and ther was no maner of comfort mynstryd to him (Julian, Rev. 17/ 38-41). She goes on to spin more images of his drying, imagining his skin drying, clinging and blowing with the wind. The trope of the suffering Jesus is not what is unusual in this passage, although some of the images of him hanging like a cloth are. Rather, the manner in which she opens this metaphoric space is unusual, since the one turn of phrase— from "dying" to "drying" signals a shift to explore a new pattern of word play that ultimately leaves her at a loss for words. She ends the section "For which paynes, I saw that alle is to lytylle that I can sey, for it may nott be tolde" (Julian, Rev. 17/48-49). By moving into the space occupied by the

¹⁹⁰Romans 1: 1-8.

death of God, she then moves into a philosophically based discussion on the meaning of pain, suffering and joy. Only after placing herself, or her listeners, into the meditative space where the pain of the crucifixion is like the wind, heard and felt, can she negotiate a discussion of the meaning, both painful and joyful, of Jesus's suffering.

Julian's text, while introduced as a narrative of her vision, becomes a rhetorical articulation of her inclusive theology. She uses other texts, such as scripture, guidebooks, and sermons to build a language that can accommodate more than one meaning at the same time. In this sense, her language is generative, opening a space for ongoing mediation to be done through words, images, and sounds. The oral listening practices of her audience, which drew upon memory aids and the kinesthetic of sound to heighten meaning, built a space for ongoing generative language and meditation.

III

Visual Rhetoric of the Passion

Visual art was a chief form of education. The cathedrals of Norwich, Canterbury, and King's Lynn alone contained a visual rhetoric that informed and inspired Christians. Art filled the walls, panel paintings, glass windows, and rood screens of medieval churches. It decorated the prayer books and psalters with miniature depictions of scriptural scenes and saints' lives. Pictures and iconography contained cultural and religious codes: the humility of Jesus' birth, the pain of his crucifixion, the triumph of his ascension, and the finality of the Last Judgment. Without easy access to written texts, women and men learned and stored information vital for their earthly and spiritual lives in pictures. These visual referents were not merely metaphorical and decorative figures of speech nor ornamental pictures on the wall; they functioned as practical learning tools in the mind. What Julian needed for writing was readily at hand.

The ancient study of *ars memoria* established a schema for categorizing information in picture form. It was the foundation of the medieval education system. *Ars memoria* established a method for cataloguing information; iconography depicted much of the same information in art. For example, the Despenser Retable, a high altarpiece in Norwich Cathedral, made for the Bishop of Norwich from 1370-1406, is filled with memorial devices and iconography.¹⁹¹ The panel, divided into five sections, depicts

¹⁹¹Alexander and Binski, 516. <http://www.cathedral.org.uk/historyheritage/art---collections-art-treasures-and-despenser-retable.aspx>.

separate scenes from the passion. As an example of *ars memoria*, it identifies five separate moments leading to or following from the crucifixion, including Jesus' scourging, carrying of the cross, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. As a memorial device, the entire panel organizes, sorts, and locates the place and people in each scene in relation to each other. As iconography, the visual symbols of the passion are carefully chosen to represent religious ideas. The selection of object, colors, forms and even characters in each scene convey lessons in devotion. For instance, at the resurrection, Jesus is standing in his coffin, with his five wounds exposed. He is holding a white banner, as a sign of his triumph over death. At his feet are the same sleeping soldiers who ironically are meant to guard his body, not anticipating that it would rise again. Iconography provided the visual backdrop for meditation, and *ars memoria* provided an organizational schema. If Julian had only the access to pictures and visual rhetoric, she would have had all she needed to create a language with innovations.

Visual rhetoric, especially *ars memoria*, was critical to medieval education. Texts were expensive and rare; information was stored and kept "in one's head." So memory was crucial. The medieval education accommodated an idea of memory as a visual and spacial concept, which was designed to help the mind recall, retrieve and maintain information.¹⁹² In earlier times, farmers and sea-farers used it to remember, retrieve and organize information about skills, crop management, livestock, flood cycles, navigation, constellations, trade winds, and tides. This knowledge was primarily held and passed

¹⁹² "From the earliest times medieval educators had a visual and spacial an idea of Locus as any Ramist had, which they inherited continuously from antiquity, and indeed that concern for the lay-out of memory governed much in medieval education designed to aid the mind in forming and maintaining heuristic formats that are both spatial and visualizable." Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 32

along in the communal memory. Astronomers' charts, such as that of Abbot Adbert's, dating to the year 1000, shows pictures of the northern sky made for a Greek textbook, Aratus' *Phainomena*. The chart, part of a common textbook, was originally a Greek poem translated into Latin. It served as a monastic astronomy lesson using visual images and patterns. The Zodiac constellations, along with Orion, the North Star and the Little Bear, take their usual places. These pictures, however, are not exact representations of the constellations in the sky, but rather, are tools to help students locate key markers in the night. Recognizing the pattern in the sky was more important than seeing an exact pictorial recreation of an animal or creature. The patterns would likely shift at various times of the year. They could be partially visible depending on weather conditions. What was crucial was that navigators could pick out the key stars in a pattern. Locating the key stars and patterns was the primary concern of ancient and medieval people.¹⁹³ These patterns created a mnemonic schema to hold information in a communally recognized form.

In medieval times, the practice of *ars memoria* held special value for mendicant preachers. They relied upon memory devices to recall scriptural passages, church teachings, and parts of their own sermons while they traveled from town to town without the aid of libraries or copied manuscripts. Audiences learned texts, and used visual markers to aid in their memory. Preachers looked to Longinus, who advised ancient rhetors to use pictorial scripts as a means to translate images to the audience. They made their orations and sermons memorable by referencing images and stories via compilations of myths, histories, and natural phenomenon that followed a rather formulaic approach.

¹⁹³ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 24-26.

Local legends, colorful characters in the region, or recent events in a village could be added to secure regional relevance. Hence, a list of architectural places and scenes were used by rhetoricians and preachers alike to create memorable sermons and speeches. To hold the attention of their audiences and to enhance memory, preachers tapped into accounts of romance, lust, and violence, which they could find readily in encyclopedic compilations such as *The Cursor Mundi* and *The Speculum Laicorum*, which included ancient pagan myths, historic battles, and crimes.¹⁹⁴ By inserting scenes of torture and violence into sermons and plays, they helped to set the script for communal memory. Violent scenes from scripture became part of memorable pageant and mystery plays, eventually establishing a “theatre of cruelty.” This staging grew from Greek theater, in which scenes of cruelty created a cathartic experience. Violence and cruelty became common to medieval plays, which featured graphic details of the scourging of Jesus, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion. In secular dramas, it also led to exaggerated farce featuring wife beating.¹⁹⁵ To modern audiences, these lessons of behavior and social norms support Fredrick Nietzsche’s concept of pain being the strongest aid to memory. Hence, these mnemonic patterns led to a preponderance of violence in theater.¹⁹⁶

Julian organized her text around pictures. They aided memory, organization, and sorting of material. Although she may have used this approach for her own memory, as a preacher might for a sermon, or as a monk might for meditation, she primarily used it for her readers, whom she references throughout her text. She is helping them read,

¹⁹⁴ Owst, *Literature*, 181.

¹⁹⁵ Jody Enders, *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty* (London and New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 18-19.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Enders cites Nietzsche in *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty*, 93.

understand, and interpret her text and the scripture, prayers, and visual art it references. In Chapter 8, she notes that she recalls her ‘evyn christen’ and wants them to see “and know the same that I sawe, for I wolde that it were comfort to them” (Julian, Rev. 8/ 22-24). She also identifies herself as one person who first experienced the vision, but when she refers to herself in the text, she says that she is referring to ‘alle my evyn christen’ (Julian, Rev. 8/33-34). She even clarifies who is in her audience, since she seems to be aware that her words might be met with skepticism or criticism, but she writes them for those who might be uneducated, at least in a formal academic sense. “I say nott thys to them that be wyse, for they wytt it wele. But I sey it to yow that be symple, for ease and comfort; for we be alle one in love. ... For I am suer ther be meny that never hath shewyng... that love god better than I” (Julian, Rev. 9/7-9). In Chapter 51, she explains the process she used over twenty years to interpret the vision, especially the exemplum of the lord and servant, by referencing colors, manners, conditions, and properties to grasp its meaning. She also urges her readers to understand how God beholds us in sinfulness, which in her case, is extremely forgiving.

Pictures and Architecture

The visual scenes of the passion offered a recognizable narrative structure, and they helped nuns, lay Christians, and clergy memorize texts. Julian used other mnemonic devices in her work as systematic frameworks. Augustine’s *City of God* appears to have been a source or central organizing principle. Her architectural landscape also draws upon the medieval commonplace of “building the moral life of a Christian in terms of

building a temple or church.”¹⁹⁷ Hugh of St. Victor’s elaborate treatise serves as a metaphoric example of Christians building their own spiritual temples. It instructs readers in how to group the books of the bible into three separate levels and a series of rooms. It provides a space for the Old Testament, the ark of the Church, and the New Testament.¹⁹⁸ The visual scheme allows a reader or listener to sort and organize an entire psalter, sermon, or gospel in a “file-cabinet” of the mind.

Julian’s description of two domes is a classic example. It operates as a placeholder to help readers visualize and organize two contrary ideas in her text, namely church teaching juxtaposed against her own vision. Her account of the two domes attributes the highest dome to God, one filled with endless love, and the lower dome to the holy church:

the furst dome, whych is of goddess ryghtfulnes, and that is of his owne hygh, endlesse loue, and that is that feyer swete dome that was shewed in alle the feyer revelation in whych I saw hym assign(e) to vs no maner of blame. And though theyse were swete and delectable zytt only in the behodyng of this I culde nott be fulle esyd, and that was for the dome of the holy chyrch, whych I had before vnderstodyn and was contynually in my sight. And therfore by this dome me behovyth nedys to know my selfe a synner. And by the same dome I vnderstode that synners be sometyme wurthy blame and wrath, and theyse two culde I nott see in God. ..For the hygher dome God shewed hym selfe in the same time, and therefore (m)e behovyd nedys to take it. And the lower dome was lernyd me before tyme in holy chyrche, and therefore I myght nott by no weye leue the lower dome. ...And to all this I nee had no nother answeere but a mervelous example of a lorde and of a seruannt, as I shall sey after, and that full mystely shewed (Julian, Rev. 45/13-22).

The first dome, filled with God’s righteousness and his endless love, is the upper place of the church. It is where she sees no reason for blame. In the second dome, she imagines a place where sinners are sometimes worthy of blame for what they have done. She insists

¹⁹⁷ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 44.

¹⁹⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, “A Little Book,” 41-71.

that she may not leave the lower dome of church teaching. She clarifies that “the lower dome was lernyd me before tyme in holy chyrche, and therefore I myght nott by no weye leue the lower dome” (Julian, Rev. 45/24-26). But then she contemplates her lessons in the lower dome, which teaches her to evaluate herself as a sinner, and she cannot reconcile it with the higher dome, which shows only God’s love. She articulates this tension in her plea: That “the dome of holy chyrch here in erth is tru in his syght, and howe it longyth to me verely to know it, where by they myght both be savyd, so as it ware wurschypfulle to god and ryght wey to me” (Julian, Rev. 45/27-30). Through the rest of the text, she will reference concepts that belong to church teaching, but she will be unable to reconcile them against what is worthy of worship to God and the right way of understanding them herself.

Pictures and Memory

The example of the two domes points to crucial assumptions about memory. It is important to clarify that the purpose of memory in the medieval sense was not the same as it is today. Definitions of some of the terms used in medieval times do not transfer easily to the same terms used in modern language theory. First, memory is not mimetic. In medieval constructs, visual images acted as placeholders in the mind whose functions were for future recall. They were fictive devices the mind itself made for remembering.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 12-13. Also see Carruthers for this vivid example: “The qualification is crucially important, for reasons well defined in modern philosophical discussions of the nature of mental images...What defines a mental image is not its pictorial qualities, but whether its user understands it to represent a certain thing...if asked to make a picture of a tiger I can paint a realistic portrait or I can draw a stick figure, but in both cases I understand the result to be a tiger.” Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 22-23.

Consequently, memory was thought to be composed of two elements: a “likeness” or *similitudo* that serves as a cognitive cue to the “matter” or *res* of any remembered experience, which helped to classify and retrieve it. The visual image bears a greater functional resemblance to a file cabinet in the mind where data may be stored than to a photo in which exact details are recorded. Words and images serve a visual function in the mind. For instance, astronomy constellations form pictorial “patterns” instead of “likeness.”²⁰⁰ Astronomers divided up the sky into constellations, which they named after hunters, animals, mythical creatures and gods or goddesses. If a person looked into the sky to “see” a set of stars clearly outlining a bull, lion, or crab, it may be nearly impossible to see it. The astronomers seemed not to require a mimetic, or realistic likeness of these animals, but rather, they needed to find a pattern vaguely resembling or reminding them of an animal. Once they identified one pattern in the sky, they could recognize the other patterns nearby to gauge their bearings. Therefore, the “domes” of Julian’s text are like patterns of the constellations. They are not referring to specific and solid referents. They are storehouses for other items with patterns.

Second, memory is locational. Although mnemonic devices may rely on images, they are actually forming places in the mind. Ancient and medieval peoples recognized a whole series of familiar images that comprised visual rhetorics, or pictures forming organizational systems and placeholders in the mind to store information there. In a culture in which books were scarce, this type of learning system was crucial, because people needed to have a uniform system for retrieving information necessary for their

²⁰⁰ One monastic, Albertus, understood that mnemonic places are entirely pragmatic because they are cognitive schematics rather than objects. Even though they may involve a likeness to a thing (a church, a palace, a garden) they are not themselves. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 13.

livelihoods and survival. Sorting places for words could be found in common visual rhetorics, including “cella,” “arca,” and “sacculus,”²⁰¹ which referred to a variety of rooms or purses used to hold information. Architectural visuals like a castle, church, ship or storehouse provided storerooms, stairways, and towers. Hugh of St. Victor encouraged students to take out a pen and pencil and draw the Noah’s Arc, with divided floors and rooms in which to write the books of the Old Testament and New Testament in a spatially oriented system that both placed them in logical order and in proper relationship to each other.²⁰² Other common visuals were the treasure house, or treasure chest that could hold the “coins” or “pearls” or “jewels” of knowledge. Various images from nature, such as bees and birds, could carry ideas that could fly to related places in the mind. Nests or pigeon holes, and dove boxes as in “The Owl and the Nightengale,” signaled cognitive and mnemonic patterns for the reader. Garden images, such as beehives, flowers, and meadows could also contain rows, holes, bowers, petals, or roots for holding information.²⁰³ The De Lisle Psalter contains an image of a cherub on top of a wheel which has spokes inscribed with the works of mercy. On its wings are inscribed theological verses from scripture to help the Christian understand them as separate items.²⁰⁴ The prologue to the *Orchard of Syon*, written to instruct nuns about reading the *Dialogue* of St. Catherine, refers to aisles of herbs and fruits for the reader to peruse during meditation. Natural landscapes, such as the vineyard, garden, and orchard could create pictures or places where a believer could “labor” to learn more about the “tree of

²⁰¹ Ibid, 34.

²⁰² Hugh of St. Victor, “A Little Book,” 41-70.

²⁰³ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 34-35.

²⁰⁴ London, MS British Museum Library, Arundel 83 II. Fol 130v.

knowledge,” the “bitter herbs,” and the “sweet virtues.”²⁰⁵ Julian’s reference to the two domes, one a place to store church teaching and the other to hold new information from her vision, suggests a schema familiar to nearly all medieval minds.

Third, the purpose of memory is not necessarily for exact word-for-word recall. The art of memory actually was the art of recollection, and these schemes are designed to accomplish this task. The exact word-for-word recollection of text is not crucial, but rather memory was a “task of recollection as *investigatio*, or a ‘tracking down’ of familiar schemas and patterns for retrieval in someone’s mind for future use. Therefore, all mnemonic organizational schemes are heuristic in nature. They are retrieval schemes, for the purpose of invention of finding information.²⁰⁶ An example is from Alan of Lille’s “On the Six Wings of the Seraph,” in which the qualities a sinner needed for examining the conscience prior to confession are written on wings. On one of the wings, for instance, under the heading “Purity of Mind” are five segments: modesty of gaze, chastity of hearing, decorousness of scent, temperance of eating and sanctity of touch.²⁰⁷ The priest or confessor is advised to use the wings as a partial framework or scaffold to connect various sinful activities. So too, the list of the Ten Commandments appears as a visual image in the De Lisle Psalter.²⁰⁸ The brevity of Julian’s first text, *The Book of Showings* might be explained as an initial scaffolding or outline of complex ideas to be discussed in a subsequent text. While she initially wrote certain parts of her vision in the short text, she acknowledges that she only has a partial understanding of the visions. She

²⁰⁵ *Orchard of Syon*, eds. Hodson and Liegey, 1.

²⁰⁶ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 41.

²⁰⁷ Carruthers and Ziokowski, 89.

²⁰⁸ London, British Library, Arundel MS 83 F. 127v.

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=468>.

knows she would return to them later to sort out their meanings. Such efforts to sketch an initial understanding of her vision and then to “recollect” and expand upon it is a concept familiar to medieval people, especially mystics or monastics.

Finally, memory is hermeneutic because it requires a stamping of a visual object into the mind. The mind, however, is not a blank slate. It has several banks in which images and text can be placed. Moreover, the brain will form the “representation” of the object in the mind, but obviously, not the object itself. Therefore, one can consider the figure or the copy. This flexibility allows for the recall of large amounts of seemingly unrelated texts, such as sermons and bible verses that can be clustered or categorized together for easy retrieval.²⁰⁹ Aristotle’s analysis in *De memoria* explains how a memory-image is like an imprint. “As a figure or picture, it is ‘an object of contemplation [*theorem*] or an image [*phantasma*]. But in so far as it is of another thing, it is a sort of copy [*oion eikon*] and a reminder [*mnemoneuma*].”²¹⁰ For example, Julian could recall a spectacular page of a manuscript containing an image of the crucifixion with Mary Magdalen pictured at the foot of the cross. She could think about it for its own sake. But if the picture helped her to remember the entire story of Mary Magdalen and passages from scripture or tradition about her life as a prostitute and friend of Jesus, then it is a cue

²⁰⁹ “The extreme idealist or formalist thinks of language in terms of how completely it represents the tiger, and since it can never fully get that right, would rather lapse into silence than speak. The rhetorician or pragmatist, having to speak, accepts that words are all more or less in the nature of crude stick-figures, but can be used meaningfully so long as speaker and audience share a common cultural and civic bond, whether that of *vivitas Romana or civitas Dei*, a bond forged by the memories of people and their texts. Whether classical and medieval rhetorical pragmatism diverges from modern, I think, is in assigning a crucial role to a notion of communal memory, accessed by an individual through education, which acts to “complete uninformed experience.” Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 24.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 23-24.

for remembering, and it represents those words as a copy. This process involves interpretive steps which require an understanding of the object, and also needs some previous knowledge of it, and it requires a categorization of the new object, so the reader knows where to place this new information and how to call it forward later.²¹¹ The entire process is one of exegetics.

Julian uses the chapter subheadings of her long text to provide a memory structure based upon the principles of *ars memoria*. For Julian, visual references aided her memory, offering a framework for her to interpret her own visions. Her text could follow a linear plot line, familiar to all medieval Christians, a plot line recognized with messages the entire community saw depicted in paintings and performed in mystery cycle plays. These visual images would have tapped into a communal knowledge of scripture. They also anchored a Table of Contents to her text, forecasting the connection between her inciting action (asking for the near death experience in her bed), to her experiencing the passion of Christ (feeling the pain), through to the final theological discussion (describing apocryphal messages of the Last Judgment). They also act as a memory devices for future meditation and the discussion of difficult explanations along the way.

Pictures and Chapter Headings

As the chart in Figure 1 indicates, her visuals closely follow the story of the passion. She begins with Jesus' crown of thorns, then moves to his scourging at the pillar,

²¹¹ Finally, *ars memoria* can involve a heuristic scheme. For this to be clear, a distinction should be drawn then between heuristics and the words “hermeneutic” and “iconographic.” Recollection can be done naturally or artificially, arranged in any order that suits the individual interpretation rather than retrieval. “The heuristic schemes might well take advantage of certain hermeneutic and /or iconographic conventions in constructing mnemonically valuable markers.” Ibid, 24.

and continues through the entire passion narrative. Her vision culminates with the Holy Trinity. Along the way, the entire sections in her vision digress from the scriptural

Figure 1: Chapter Headings as Visual Table of Contents

All quotes appear from the following text: Julian of Norwich, *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich: Part Two*. Eds. Edmund Colledge O.S. A. and James Walsh, S.J. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. 1978. 281-284

Visual Image 16 Revelations in <i>Shewings</i> (Short Text) & <i>Revelation</i> (Long Text)	Revelation in <i>Shewings</i> (Short Text)	Corresponding Ch. in <i>Revelation</i> (Long Text)	Passage
Crown of Thorns and Hazelnut	Revelation 1	Chapters 1-9	“Of which the first is of his precious crownynge of thornes” (1/3-4).
Discolored Face	Revelation 2	Chapter 10	“ discoloring of his fayer face” (1/8).
Wisdom, love, omnipotence.	Revelation 3	Chapter 11	“our lord god, almightie, all wisdom, and all loue” (1/10).
Scourging of Body	Revelation 4	Chapter 12	“plenteous sheding of his precious blood” (1/13-14).
She sees the Fiend	Revelation 5	Chapter 13	“the feende is overcome by the precious passion of Christ” (1/15- 16).
House of the Lord (Lord in House/ Feast)	Revelation 6	Chapter 14-15	“he rewardyth all his blessed servants in heaven” (1/17-18).
Well and Woe	Revelation 7	Chapter 15	“The seventh is often tymes feeling of wele and of woore” (1/19).
Crucifixion	Revelation Eight	Chapter 16-21	“the last paynes of Christ , and his cruel dying” (1/24).
Joy: The Gladde Geaver	Revelation 9	Chapter 22-23	“in solace and myrth with hym tyll that we come to the glorie in heauen” (1/27-28).
Blessed Heart Cloven in Two	Revelation 10	Chapter 24	“his blessed hart evyn cloven on two” (1/29).
Mother of Jesus	Revelation 11	Chapter 25	“shewing of his deer worthy mother” (1/31).
Lord as King	Revelation 12	Chapter 26	“The twelfth is that our lord God is all sovereyn being” (1/32).
Trinity of might, wisdom and goodness.	Revelation 13	Chapter 27-40	“I shall make well all not well, and thou shalt see it...”(1/39-40).
Parable of the Servant and Lord and Our Mother Jesus		Chapter 41-63	“The fourteenth is that our lord god is grownd of our beseking” (1/43).
Up in Heaven	Revelation 15	Chapter 64-66	“fulfilled with joy and blisse in heaven” (1/4950).
Trinity	Revelation 16	Chapter 67-86	“ blessed trinitie our maker” (1/51).

version of the passion narrative. The section describing the “Wel and the Woe” cause her to pause and meditate on the broader implications of sin and redemption. Her chapter divisions also allow the reader to find or track down a place for future use. The structure, with its build-in capacity to interrupt the scriptural story mimics the process of oral reading that was likely to occur in communities where only one text was available. If one nun were to orally read a text, there would be ample opportunity and even invitation to ask for further commentary, translation, or comparison.²¹² Furthermore, since her Table of Contents in Chapter One serves a mnemonic purpose, leveraging metaphoric visual possibilities, it also is a translation, of sorts, of the original scriptural account of the passion.²¹³

The structure of the entire sixteen chapters of Julian’s vision divides in half. The first eight chapters lead to and include the death of Christ, and the other eight describe the events following Jesus’ death, culminating in the Final Judgment. Each chapter is given its own visual image, or a picture corresponding to the “message” or scene of the chapter. Chapter One is depicted with the crown of thorns. Chapter Two contains the discolored face of Jesus during and following his mock crowning. Chapter Three is the trinity of God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Chapter Four focuses on the visual picture of the scourging of Jesus, with “plenteous shedding of his precious blood” (Julian, Rev. Ch. 1:

²¹²Bell admits that it was the religious houses, and particular the nuns, not only at Syon Abbey, which appeared to be a hub of literary material, writing, translating and learning, but elsewhere, in places where women, by choice or necessity wrote about religious experiences. “The greatest interest in this vernacular literature” flourished among the nuns. “It was the nuns, not the monks, who stood at the fore-front of English spirituality.” Bell, 75-75.

²¹³Dutton suggests that a scribe, and not Julian, authored the chapter headings in the Sloane manuscript. As my discussion and chart indicate, the chapter headings so closely resemble the body of Julian’s text that they clearly evolve from her own organizational structure. Dutton, 25-31.

13). The next three chapters describe the implications of Christ's pain and suffering. Chapter Five recalls the image of the fiend and Christ's victory over him, and Chapter Six depicts the lord in his house with his servants. The Seventh Chapter focuses on the image of the "W" from the alphabet, representing the contrast feeling of wellness and of woefulness. Chapter 8 recalls images of Christ dying on the cross.

The remaining eight images portray events after the death of Jesus and draw upon apocryphal messages. Chapter Nine is represented by the visual image of Jesus' dead body drying on the cross. The image for Chapter Ten is the blessed heart, cloven in two, and the image for Chapter Eleven is the mother of Jesus. Chapter Twelve is represented by the Lord as King. Chapter Thirteen, the one with the least visual image, contains Julian's passage, "I shall make well all that is not well" (Julian, Rev.1: 39-40). Chapter Fourteen compares God to the ground of all faith and our Mother Jesus. Chapter Fifteen describes heaven as a place, and Chapter Sixteen is represented by the triumphant trinity after the Day of Judgment.

The chapter headings at the beginning of *Revelations of Divine Love* form a scaffold upon which Julian constructs her theology. Because her long text is nearly four times the length and complexity of the earlier short text, she employs visual chapter headings to function as memory devices. The chapter headings, found only at the beginning of the long text, *Revelation*, refer directly to the original sixteen sections of the short text. In her long text, however, Julian adds sections, sometimes as many as twenty within some of her original chapters. Consequently, *Revelation* has a total of eight-six chapters. The visual images help to organize this expanding construct. For instance, the "lorde in his owne howse" is a visual image established early in the text. As a memory

device, the “house of the lord” is an imagined building full of rooms to hold passages of scriptural texts referencing the generous God and the self-sacrificing Jesus.²¹⁴ In the beginning of the long text, God is like the king in his house, who calls “alle hys derewruthy frendes to a solumnþ feast” (Julian, Rev. Ch. 14/6-7). “The “house of the lord,” is a visual placeholder, recalling the scriptural story (Matt. 22) of the king inviting friends, rich and poor, lords and servants, to the son’s wedding feast. Later in Julian’s Chapter 22, the house of the lorde refers to a scriptural passage from II Corinthians. Here, Jesus becomes the “Gladde Geaver” or the lord who would gladly suffer repeatedly for sinners; he sacrifices himself for the feast.²¹⁵ The feast is an invitation to all to come to his house. Finally, Julian returns to the visual of the “lord’s house,” as the setting for her own exemplum in which the lord rewards his own servants. In the exemplum, the servant sits before the lord at his house: “I saw the lorde sytt solemnly, and the servant standyng reverently before his lorde” (Julian Rev. Ch. 51: 163-164). The concept of the “house of the lord” creates a “file cabinet” in which increasingly complex issues of labor, work, reward, sin and forgiveness, penance and payment, ransom and redemption are stored and reordered. As a memory device, it provides a place where her readers can “track down,”

²¹⁴ Since the *Revelation* is an expansion of Julian’s earlier text, *Showings*, the chapter headings do not exactly correspond, since the long text includes additional material. As a result, concepts in Chapter Six of the short text actually corresponds to Chapters 14-15 of the longer text, and is expanded throughout the long text. As a memory device, the “house of the lord” is a house full of rooms to store information that continues throughout both texts, but obviously *Revelation* includes more complex material and elaboration than the short text. The concept of the “house of the lord” and the “lord and his servant” begins in the first chapter of *Revelation* as Julian explains how the lord “rewardeth all his blessed servants in heaven” (Julian, Rev. 1/ 17). She refers to it later as the lord calls “alle hys derewruthy frendes to a solumnþ fest” (Julian, Rev. 14/6-7). It will appear again, most significantly in Chapter 51 and Chapter 60.

²¹⁵ In *Revelation*, Julian expands upon the image of the “glade geaver”: “evyr a glade geauer takyt but llyttle hede at the thing that he geavyth” (Julian, Rev. 23/37-38).

retrieve, and recall similar scriptural passages that support her concept of an unconditionally loving God.

This visual schema is not as clear cut as Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* or as Dante's *Purgatorio*; rather it follows Hugh of St. Victor's "The Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History." In this treatise, he coaches students in the best ways to memorize historic dates, scenes and events. He teaches them his own schema for remembering facts: "matters that are learned are classified in the memory into three categories: number, location and occasion."²¹⁶ The method for classifying by number is to construct in the mind a line of numbers, and then to extend it "as it were before the eyes of your mind."²¹⁷ When any number is called out, the mind will move to that place on the line and recall the items remembered there. For other types of memory, other strategies are useful:

when we read books, we strive to impress on our memory through the power of forming our mental images not only on the number and order of verses or ideas, on the same time, the color, shape, position, and placement of the letters, where we have seen this or that written, in what part, in what location...in what color we observed the trace of the letter or the ornamented surface of the parchment.²¹⁸

Hugh of St. Victor is maximizing the strategies used by artists to enforce memory. Artists manipulate the location of objects in a painting to signify meaning. The Hortus Deliciarum's Ladder of Virtues also portrays the importance of location.²¹⁹ On a basic level, the virtuous Christians, monks and clerks climb to the upper rungs, but those unvirtuous ones hold onto the lower steps or nearly lose their balance. Women seductively lurk near the bottom of the ladder. Some of the men, who should be climbing

²¹⁶ Hugh of St. Victor. "The Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History," Eds. Carruthers and Ziolkowski's *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 36.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 36

²¹⁸ Ibid, 38.

²¹⁹ Hortus Deliciarum: Ladder of Virtues, in Mâle, 106.

up the ladder of virtue, are nearly falling off the rungs as they crane their necks to look down at the women. Their positions on the ladder indicate how virtuous each person has been. So too, the artist of the Holkham Bible Picture book uses location. The two separate stages of the flagellation are placed in the two corners across the bottom of the page. This placement in the picture bible produces a prolonged sense of time. Jesus' scourging is depicted in two separate frames of the picture; the first illustrates Jesus' head covered while others beat his back, and the other depicts his head exposed while his entire body is beaten.²²⁰ The location of wounds, along with the different people beating Jesus, etch a strong memory in the reader's mind in separate stages. Julian organizes her visions numerically in sixteen chapters, but she uses location to reconstruct the separate scenes within each chapter. Her text describes sixteen separate stages, each a complete and distinct temporal segment of the passion, which can be easily plotted on a time line for future recall. It easily divides time into manageable sections, and the crucifixion is divided into stages. Other details aid memory: the color of Jesus' dying face or Mary's blue robe, the roundness of Julian's hazelnut or the shape of the Jesus' wounds, and the placement of the thorns into his skin, pulling down his face.

Pictures and Location: The Lord's House

How are other images numeric and locational? Each time Julian refers to the "house of the lorde," for example, she recalls a different scriptural passage in her readers' minds. She remembers, reorients, or reorganizes the place of each scripture passage in its

²²⁰ London, British Library, MS. Add 47682 F. 30v.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r_f30v. Also see Brown, 1.

chapter of the Bible. From that point, she can make other connections, placing the passage in its place of the Office of the Dead or an Office of the Virgin Mary, or any other source that passage might be found. In her Chapter 14, the house becomes a placeholder for other scripture that references the lord's manner as one of joy and mirth. She begins the chapter describing her vision:

I saw the lorde takyng no place in hys awne howse; but I saw hym ryally reigne in hys howse, and all fulfyllyth it with joy and myrth, hym selfe endlessly to glad and solace hys derewourthey frendes fulle homely and fulle curtesly with mervelous melody in endlesse loue in hys awne feyer blessydfulle chere, which glorious chere of the godhede fulfyllyth alle hevyn of joy and blysse (Julian, Rev. 14/7-12).

The "house of the lorde" can be a vault in which these passages are "tracked down" for further invention and meditation. The nuances of each scriptural story accumulate to build a complex matrix of messages about the generous God and his relationship to his servants. Her passage opens a pathway to a bank of other passages in scripture: the parable of the king who held a marriage feast (Matt. 22); the scene of God calling men to a banquet when he returns (Luke 12:37); and the prodigal son, whose father is full of joy (Luke 15).²²¹ In these passages, the lord welcomes all to the wedding feast, he gladly gives without weighing the cost, and he freely rewards each servant, despite the inadequacies the servants may have displayed. The stories and scenes are rich with allusions to Matthew's stories of the master who left the servants with the talents and to John 12:26 ("I am where my servant shall be"). Psalm 90, with its servant's plea for his lord's return, is also part of this series of scriptural passages.²²² They create layers of

²²¹ *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 351.

²²² *Ibid*, 352, n. 14 and n. 21. Julian alludes to Matthew 5 3-6, which lists the beatitudes "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied," and Matt. 25: 21-3 with the story of the Master who left his servants with talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little.

language and allusions originating in a communal storage container, but are rearranged and spoken in the vernacular.

Pictures and Occasions

How is it occasional? Each time Julian refers to a different passage, she recalls a specific occasion. The wedding feast appears in one passage. Later, she references I Corinthians and the “gladde giver.” In the exemplum of the servant who falls after trying to do his lord’s task, she recalls the story of the servants in the vineyard, who receive a reward despite a short time in the field. The lord gives equally and generously to all. He is not wrathful, and he does not measure the work of one against the work of the other. Each story places the reader in a new scene which itself evokes a series of memories. The feast is one of celebration, the cheerful giver is one of sacrifice, and the lord rewarding laborers in the field is one of payment. The characters, settings, mood and even the scent of the earth, sweat in the field, mud on the clothes, and even the tactile embrace of the lord recall a memory. Each passage invites the reader to enter with increasing intensity into the moment of the scene to meditate upon its meaning as Julian explains her vision. Together, the passages serve as invention for greater understanding of Julian’s theology, both for her and her “even christen.” The language, then, is not sporadic and disjointed, but is woven together in a pattern of memory devices that any medieval person would have recognized. Her language makes innovative use of these mnemonic organizing

I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master. It also references John 12. 26: “if any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him.” It also recalls Romans 8: 18. She also references Psalm 90: 13: “Return O Lord! How long? Have pity on thy servants! Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

strategies to generate new stories and themes. Even though other writers use such strategies, Julian uses them to layer meaning in the vernacular to accommodate memory and other elements of language, particularly to explore her concepts of the feminine Jesus or the unconditionally forgiving God.

Pictures and Bold Comparisons

The chapter headings allow Julian one tidy structure announced at the beginning like a table of contents. She becomes less tidy as her questions grow ever more intense, raising paradoxes at the core of Christian beliefs. The hazelnut is introduced as a new metaphor in the first revelation to represent the entire universe held within it. Within the small hazelnut is “all.” Essentially, God gives it all it needs to grow and transform itself into a tree. God made it, loved it, and will preserve it.²²³ The three properties of the hazelnut are detailed: it can begin a new tree, the nut can nourish the seed, and it can even preserve the seed until it can take root. Its quality of “smallness” and its ability to provide “nourishment” like a seed are mirrored in the “womb” of Mary. Mary is lowly and humble when she conceives Jesus, a new child growing within her: “in þe sympyll stature as she was whan she conceyvyd” (Julian, Rev. 60/11). She also sustains life before and after his birth. In Mary’s womb, a decidedly humble place for God to dwell, Jesus took on the role of mother: “in this lowe place he arayed... hym self to do the servyce and the officie of moderhode in alle thyng” (Julian, Rev. 60/12-14). Julian deftly shifts to another “room” or category of “motherhood,” and “seedling.” Julian introduces her readers to

²²³ “In this little thing I saw iij propertes. The first is þat god made it, the secund that god loueth it, the thirde that god kepyth it” (Julian, Rev. Ch. 5: 17-18).

another concept, or room, in which Jesus, too, takes on the role of mother. By becoming human, he brings himself “to do the service and the officie of moderhode in alle thing” (Julian, Rev. 60/14). Within this space, Julian explains the extent of this meaning of “alle thing.” Like the hazelnut, Jesus will take on three qualities: he will bring forth a new life, will nourish that life, and sustain it until it can take root. “The moder may geue her chylde sucke hyr mylke, but oure precyous moder Jhesu, he may fede vs wyth hym selfe, and doth full curtesly and full tendyrley with the blessyd sacrament... and systeynyth vs full mercyfully and graciously” (Julian, Rev.60/29-33). Over the span of the text, the connection between the hazelnut, one seed that will grow, becomes similar to the infant embodied within Mary, who will also grow to redeem humanity. This connection between the hazelnut and “moder Jesus” is bold, but is achieved through Julian’s efforts to string patterns of metaphors and syntax through the text.

This process is generative in the respect that it begins with a fairly common comparison, but leads to increasingly complex pathways to new comparisons. In one form, the comparison is between a seed and an infant, but it will emerge as a connection to another object, a tree or a divine redeemer. The potency of the tiny “ball” of the hazelnut shifts to become the womb that holds Jesus, the child savior. And then, Jesus himself takes on the mother’s role to nourish and sustain his children. The hazelnut becomes a metaphor for the Incarnation through a few gigantic shifts that are built upon layers of language and meaning. These shifts and layers of meaning take place within two short folio pages in Julian’s Chapter 60. Once Julian explains how the “lowly” child Jesus infused his divine nature within Mary’s body, the implications of the hazelnut are infused with far more meaning than a basic ornamental reference. Julian uses metaphor

and images to build upon the meaning she understands in her vision, but it is extraordinarily complex and innovative. It is innovative in the degree of separation between the two concepts – the hazelnut as the bearer of new life of a tree and “Jesus as mother” as bearer of life to future generations – draws a striking connection. Then too, Julian’s use of the image is different in the way the hazelnut itself serves as a mnemonic device and a container which can initiate concepts and then open to hold other rooms with new, imaginative references.

Julian develops another concept of the feminine Jesus with the picture of the “cloven heart.” She introduces it in Chapter Ten, and she specifically amplifies the idea in Chapter Sixty. The two chapters are in conversation with each other. Initially, she describes the picture of Jesus’ wounded side and connects it to his heart cloven in two. The wounded side becomes analogous with the womb, as an open orifice, bringing forth blood and life. Then, in Julian’s Chapter Sixty, she explains how Jesus has taken on the “office of motherhood” in every aspect. In those middle chapters and at the end, Jesus’ feminine nature is explained in the section where the image of the cloven heart also sits. In Chapter 24: “he led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature by the same wound in hys syd with in: and ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde” (Julian, Rev. 24/ 4-6). A few lines later, she compares the characteristic of the wound to those of the “cloven” heart: “he shewyd hys blessyd hart clovyn on two and with hys enjoyeng he shewyd to my vnderstandyng in part the blyssydfulle godhead” (Julian, Rev. 24/ 9-11). In Chapter 60, Julian uses the place of the open side as a locational memory reference.

And þat shewde he in the tenth revelation, gevyng the same vnderstandyng in thys swet worde ... Thys feyer louely worde: Moder, it is so swete and so kynde in it selfe that it may not verely be seyde of none ne to none but of hym and to hym that is very mother of lyfe and of alle (Julian, Rev. 60/41-47).

At this point, which is near the end of *Revelation*, she moves to a new place, to “hym that is very mother of lyfe” in which the “feyer, delectable place” is a womb which allows Jesus to give life to all humanity. Julian is emphatic that it is “hym that is very mother.” The passage describing the open wound of Jesus has opened a door to yet another, similar room, which in fact, is a womb. The locational characteristics of both openings speak to her innovative use of language and pictorial memory devices. She makes verbal, metaphorical connections here as well as locational storehouses for further texts and thoughts. With the image of the womb, she taps into the scriptural text relating to Mary’s role a mother, and she transfers it to Jesus. In particular, she evokes references to Isaiah 66: “You will be carried at the breasts and on the knees they will caress you. As one whom the mother caresses, so I shall comfort you.”²²⁴ She opens a new holding place or storage room that usually contains scripture describing Mary, but now connects it to Jesus, our mother.

Certain pictures are noticeably absent from the scheme, especially those representing shame, wrathfulness, and punishment. The chapter headings are hermeneutic because they interpret scripture with particular emphasis on the loving nature of God and the intense suffering of Jesus. Still they tend to overlook parts of scripture that would have been used by preachers, namely the lists of sins, penance, and wrong-doing. For

²²⁴ *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 599, n.51.

Julian's text, it is noteworthy that there is no scale of justice, no explicit punishment for sins, and no shaming of Eve as the one who brings sin and evil into the world.

Julian's text summons urgency, an immediacy and an intense link between the reader and scripture. Visual images create storage rooms in the mind for readers to enter. These areas aid memory, so the reader recalls scriptural passages and prayers, almost in their entirety, drawing upon an individual and communal reservoir of language, stories, and dramas. These pictures also allow the reader to enter into the scenes she describes, promoting ongoing meditation of any of them, such as the workers in the vineyard, for instance, or the scourging at the pillar. Her interpretation of Mother Jesus evolves from her meditation to explain how Jesus nourishes his followers. The visuals also function exegetically, as a place to interpret scripture and church teaching, sometimes juxtaposing her understanding of the contents of her vision against church teaching. Her understanding of sin, as well as the ultimate generosity and forgiveness offered by God challenges, or at least calls into question, church teaching which magnifies sin, the measurement of transgression, the payment required for redemption, and fear of an angry God. The textual mapping afforded by techniques of *ars memoria* allow for a readily available construct which holds and organizes Julian's scriptural concepts. She is helping her readers build constructs of memory. She is conditioning her readers to re-emphasize and re-interpret scripture passages they remember, but also re-order and re-sort them with her insights.

Pictures and Puns

Etymology and puns about the hazelnut build visual storage cells for memory. Julian transforms the hazelnut introduced at the beginning of her text into a tool for memory. In Chapter 60, Julian describes the extent to which Jesus becomes the “mother” to humanity: “oure kynde moder, oure gracious modyr, for he / wolde alle hole become oure modyr in alle thing” (Julian. Rev. 60: 7-9). To modern readers, the word “hole” in this context implies an entire and all-consuming capacity with which a task is to be done. The *Middle English Dictionary* (MED), however, defines the first definition of the word “hole” as a “husk or hull,” or the “cupsole of an acorn,” or “side by side,” or “skin and skin.”²²⁵ The description of Jesus’ role as mother takes the reader back to the picture of the hazelnut, another type of hull that contains “all” within its “little” shell. The hazelnut becomes a storage area for memories. Early in her text, Julian uses the hazelnut to help her enter the scene of Jesus’ passion. It also can refer to her anchoritic cell, a small place that is large enough for her to contemplate the whole world, in a time span stretching from pre-creation and post-doomsday. The pun of the hole/hull/hazelnut also makes a reference to the words “hole,” “wholy” and “holy.” At the passion, Jesus has holes in his body after the scourging and after being nailed to the cross. Of course, the “holy” and “hole” are homonyms, but in light of the passion, the holes placed in Jesus’ body, even as the nails pierce his skin, make his death a “holy” act of love and redemption.

²²⁵ Middle English Dictionary, (MED) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21002>.

Mary Carruthers refers to this inventive tool as *etymologia*, recognized by Isidore of Seville as a pedagogical practice. This practice works because it shows the starting points for words, memories, and thoughts. Isidore presumed that all learning is built up, like a wall or a concordance that serves as memory markers. In the case of Julian, this *etymologia* is the same as riddles, punning and other word play. It unleashes the full meaning in the entire word family. After it has maximized the starting points of the word, the reader or listener can place the same words within the family inside many memory compartments.²²⁶ In *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus da Voragin in about 1260, a passage illustrates the way *etymologia* revolves around homonyms:

Cecilia is as though [quasi] “lily of heaven” [celi lilia] or “way of the blind” [cecis via] or fro “heaven” [celo] and “leah” [lya]. Or Cecilia” is as though “free of blindness” [cecitate carens]. Or she is named from ‘heaven’[celo] and “leos” that is “people.” For she was a “lily of heaven” because of her virgin chastity. Or she is called “lily” because she had the white of purity, the green of conscience, the odor of good fame.²²⁷

This example of the name of St. Cecilia illustrates how medieval people used words to construct “image banks” and “word banks” to help them remember, sort and retrieve information. The starting point of a word, and all its variants could link ideas together without specifically relying upon dry or lengthy logical explanations.

Modern scholars struggle with Julian’s slippery use of terms. Julian uses words like “substance,” to mean “humanity,” or “sensuality,” or even “soul” in various places in her text, but she is not arbitrarily shifting the meanings of the words. Julian is using words in a layered effect, building a storehouse of meanings in memory and puns and

²²⁶ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 156-158.

²²⁷ Quoted in *Ibid*, 158.

metaphors.²²⁸ Julian's logic may be indirect, and be "mystely" (Julian, Rev.51/1) understood in places, but her layers of language generate new concepts in the vernacular. They build holding areas and images in the mind.²²⁹ According the MED, even the term has three related meanings, which Julian uses. The first meaning is as an adjective, which meant "clouded" or "foggy." As a verb, it meant "to blur" or "to blind." Third, it was used figuratively as an adjective, and it described a spiritual experience. "Mystylly" or "mistily" has an etymology or starting point that can mean "a blindness" or "cloudiness" that can lead to spiritual maturity. It can also mean "confusion."²³⁰ Julian used the word "mystelly" not entirely logically or metaphorically, but associatively to make connections through memory pictures and pathways in the mind.

Julian layers these meanings of words to articulate her innovative theology. Although she may appear to be circular and confusing in her text, she consciously constructs new associations from the language bank at her disposal, and the communal language surrounding her. Scholars are challenged when trying to describe Julian's loose, yet organized and characteristic style. Again, I return to the comment by Denys Turner, who describes her writing as circular or spiral. He argues that Julian's writings are systematic and theological, but he also sees that her theology is spiral. The logic of her writing does not only move in a straight and even line. It frequently and subtly returns to "the same point, as one does around a circle. The repetition is therefore never identical, of is has always moved on - it has a progressive trajectory, up or down, into high reaches or

²²⁸ Cervone, 56-57.

²²⁹ "And then oure curteyse lorde answeyrd in shewyng full mystely by a wonderfull example of a lorde that hath a servant" (Julian, Rev. 51/1-2). This passage is her introduction to the exemplum of the lord and servant.

²³⁰ MED, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED28293>.

greater depth.”²³¹ If he sees her as systematic, in terms of school theology that is typically “inferential and linear, forward from premise to conclusion, ...then this is only a half-truth with Julian, for her theology is both linear and circular, and so spiral: hence, it is not the less inferential and linear for being also circular.”²³² Julian’s language and the layers of meaning, formed through metaphor, the accumulation of different meanings of the same word, and augmentation of other words and concepts, create her spiral approach to her visions. Memory tools and images help her to condition her readers to develop their own methods of interpretation with and through language.

Pictorial Representations of the Passion

Artistic representations of scripture and devotional material was as important as the written word during the Middle Ages. Using art, the devout Christian could feel, recall or “track down” passages relating to a particular scene, which aided memory. Art could also aid meditation because it could facilitate a deep level of participation. For centuries, the monastic orders taught that art could make events even more than they really were by helping viewers extend beyond the mere experience of seeing. Not only did artist and craftsmen know the symbolic codes in art, but the monastic orders were surrounded by the work of such artists, and in some cases, crafted the art themselves. The codes and symbolic meanings of art were passed down as means of contemplation. Moreover, the spiritual directors who guided anchoresses, other religious members, and even lay people, passed along knowledge of these codes and ways to use them in

²³¹ Turner, 4.

²³² Ibid, 4.

meditation. Just one example of the connection between art, prayer, and meditation survives in the sheer number of illustrations in Books of Hours. Within these popular books, “pictures were at least as important to their users as the texts they accompanied.”²³³ For the medieval Christian, artistic images were a central accessory to religious texts and sermons.

These pictures were not merely for ornamentation. There was a fluidity between text and image, especially on the pages of medieval manuscripts. The increase of marginalia in the thirteenth century is connected to evolving reading patterns, broad audiences and rising literacy. “Things written or drawn in the margins add an extra dimension, or a supplement, that is able to gloss, parody, modernize and problematize the text’s authority while never totally undermining it.”²³⁴ The result is a mixture of the serious and the carnival, often represented in pages of the Grey-Fitzpayn Hours. This manuscript features a scene of the crucifixion at the top left corner of the page, and at the bottom of the page, a veiled woman and man/lion exchanging coy and seductive glances, in which image comments upon text on the same page. The sins paid for through the crucifixion are being played out in the images on the *bas-en-page* flirtations. In the space of cathedrals, stone carvings commented upon sinners and saints. Monsters, the result of sinful thoughts or acts, curl around the doors, arches, and roofs of Cathedrals. An example is the woman who opens her cloak to reveal a dog-baby, an image in Rouen Cathedral that parades the virgin/child relationship fouled by sinfulness.²³⁵ To the

²³³ Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 11.

²³⁴ Michael Camille, *Image*, 10.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 89-90.

medieval mind, the border between sacred and profane was clear, but it existed on the same page or in the same physical space of church roof, arch, and altarpiece.

Artistic Narrative and Norwich

First, pictures organized time. Manuscripts and books combined words with lavish pictures. The separate scenes of Jesus' life, along with those of Mary and other saints, would have been familiar to those who owned or prayed with a Book of Hours. And many owned that book. From the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century, the top medieval best seller was the Book of Hours. No other medieval book exists in such large numbers.²³⁶ It usually featured a daily calendar and lists of prayers to be said hourly. This devotional practice gave rise to a form of prayer that established connections between ordinary time and spiritual, or divine time. Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and the Compline were regularly practiced in monastic settings. Books for the laity gave a personal and poignant connection between scenes in the life of Mary and the struggles of ordinary lay Christians as they faced life, illness and death. So scenes that divided parts of the life of Jesus or parts of the passion into clearly separate moments in time facilitated meditation. Early Books of Hours had established sequences with illustrations and illuminated pictures to mark the start of each book of prayers. As an example, one sequence of pictures arose from the Hours of the Virgin (Nativity and Annunciation at Matins, the Visitation at Laude, the Nativity at Prime, the Annunciation at Terce, the Adoration at Sext the Presentation at Nones, the Flight to Egypt at Vespers,

²³⁶ Wieck considers the reasons for the popularity of Books of Hours, especially since they were so popular and existed in such great quantity in the middle ages. Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: A Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 34.

and the Coronation at Compline.) But the second sequence included images for the suffering of Jesus, derived from a devotional work by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund of Abingdon, in the thirteenth century. It included eight hours (Agony in Garden at Matins, finishing with the Laying of Christ' Body in the Tomb at Compline).²³⁷ The devotional practice of experiencing scripture, not as text, but as separate pictures arranged in temporal order, was enhanced by bibles, psalters and Books of Hours. They formed a web of language and thought extending beyond words and shared by an entire community of believers.

Unprecedented Narrative in Norwich

Second, scenes and pictures organized space. A key example is in the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral. There, the sequence of some of the earliest bosses can be found in the east end of the cloisters. The rebuilding of the cloisters took place from 1297 – 1430. Those bosses from the passion series tell the story of the passion in five sections: the Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and Ascension. Another set of roof bosses, over one hundred, tell the story of the apocalypse in separate dramatic scenes, each occupying its own space in the vaulting; thirty-eight are located in the south walk and sixty-four in the west walk.²³⁸ Although roof bosses are found in many Norman churches, those in Norwich are unusual because so many of them form a narrative. That narrative occupies a temporal order, whose chronology establishes a time frame, and most important, organizes a specific order. This public space of the church

²³⁷ Duffy, 12-14.

²³⁸ Rose argues that the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral tell the narrative of the history of the world in over one hundred narrative scenes. See Rose, 23.

was transferred to the private meditation of the monks. Roof bosses in the cloisters were organized to benefit the monastics, who could contemplate the scenes while walking from their dormitories along a covered way as they went to their services.

The connections between iconography on church walls and references in texts create a web of symbolic meaning. Those images transferred information from private spaces of meditation to public spaces of worship and back again. The same images transferred basic elements of scriptural themes across media, carrying information from manuscripts held in the hand to crucifixes hanging on walls. This transfer of knowledge occurred when art specifically commissioned for small, personal projects, like Books of Hours, found its way to church walls, panels and statues. In the transfer, some meaning couldn't avoid being subject to interpretation by the craftsmen who produced the art and the patrons or bishops who commissioned it, as modifications of color, position and size were determined. The Tree of Jesse found on the velum pages of the Gornston Psalter and The Holkham Picture Bible, seems to unfurl its leaves in the stone roof boss at Norwich Cathedral. These books, especially The Holkham Picture Bible, served as copy books or models for art that could be used in larger formats.²³⁹

In Norwich Cathedral, illustrations in bibles and prayer books guided the artisans. The bishop and prior in Norwich certainly would have had access to them, and would have been likely to consult them before starting a major renovation or new building project. Norwich churches and priories were intended to contain ample art designed to evoke further meditation. Consequently, saints, scenes, and figures filled wall paintings,

²³⁹ Ibid.,38.

wooden panels and rood screens, decorated naves, apses, arch ways and altars. Miniatures were abundant in psalters and prayer guides. The Luttrell Psalter, the Queen Anne Psalter, the Ormesby Psalter and the Gorleston Psalter were among the illustrated manuscripts associated with East Anglia. The Gorleston Psalter was housed in Norwich in the fourteenth century, and the Ormesby Psalter contained miniatures painted by Robert Ormesby, a monk from Norwich. The church on one of the folio pages even resembles Norwich Cathedral.²⁴⁰ Also, picture bibles circulated. The Holkham Picture Bible was a complete picture book representing scriptural stories in art. *Meditations of the Life of Christ*, and versions of it, were produced for nuns and its images formed the basis of many other larger paintings in England and on the Continent.²⁴¹

Pictures and Organized Space

Although Julian never mentions a specific painting of the crucifixion, she does mention that she was advised to meditate on the “image of the cross” (Julian, Rev. 3:29). One image was installed in Norwich Cathedral as a high altarpiece, and was likely to be part of her visual world. It was made by local craftsmen during the episcopate of Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich from 1370-1406.²⁴² The frame contains his coat of arms and those of six families who financed the reconstruction of the eastern part of Cathedral

²⁴⁰ Bodleian Library, MS Douce 366, Folio 147v;
<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/zoom.php?id=360>.

²⁴¹ *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century from Paris, MS Ital. 11*, ed. and trans. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), xxxi.

²⁴² Alexander and Blinski, 516. The Despenser Retable contains the coat of arms of the following influential Norwich families: the Hales, Morieux, Clifford, Kerdiston, Gernon and the Howard. Alexander and Blinski, 516.

after the fall of the cathedral spire in 1362.²⁴³ The Despenser Retable, as it is known, was preserved over the years because it was turned upside down and used as a tabletop until 1847. Ironically, it was the repurposing of the altar into a table that preserved it. Its relegation to a new space preserved it over the centuries.

The Despenser Retable Marks Space and Time

The Despenser Retable is a model of art organizing space and time. It resonates with Julian's vision because both the crucifixion and passion are depicted as parts of a process, with separate moments. Each panel divides time into clear sections, and each unlocks access to spaces and settings for mediations. The altarpiece is divided into five stages: the Flagellation; the Road to Calvary; the Crucifixion; the Resurrection, and the Ascension.²⁴⁴ It includes figures at the foot of the cross who are elegantly dressed in styles of the fourteenth century, some of whom directly look at Jesus. The first panel depicts the scourging, clearly showing the nearly naked Jesus in humiliation and pain. The center panel, serving as a climactic turning point in the narrative of Christ's life, is the crucifixion. Although Jesus' body does not bear the marks of his scourging and punishment, nor does blood flow from him, as it does in Julian's vision, it could be a starting place or framework for contemplation. The last panel depicts Jesus ascending into heaven in a mandorla, with only his feet painted in the picture. The upper half of his body is not visible, since he has triumphed over death.

²⁴³ Ibid, 516.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 516. <http://www.cathedral.org.uk/historyheritage/art---collections-art-treasures-and-despenser-retable.aspx>.

Key to Julian's text is her ongoing rediscovery of the "meaning" of her vision. She puzzled over the meaning of each scene as a distinct moment with a separate message. Like her vision, the Despenser Retable's crucifixion and passion panels are depicted as a process, with "freeze-frame" moments. She "sees" his crowning with thorns, but only begins to understand the pain and humiliation of that moment. Then she "sees" the scourging of the body, and understands that part of the pain. Later, especially at the point of the crucifixion, she "sees" his dead body: "the body all deade, but I sawe him nott so" (Julian, Rev. 21/2). It is "death and not death." As in the panel painting, once Jesus is dead, he achieves a transformation. She arrives at this point through the interpretation and meditation of particular and separate scenes of her vision. As she contemplates the resurrection, depicted in panel four of the Despenser Retable, her language and words flow from the initial artistic representations she would have seen around her. In this section, Julian shifts from contemplating the violence and pain of the crucifixion to understanding the joy and bliss that comes as a result of it. To make this shift, she employs the metaphor of a cloth shaken in the wind.

Holy chyrch shalle be shakyd in sorow and anguyssch and trybulacion in this worlde as men shakyth a cloth in the wynde: and as to thys oure lorde answeyrd, shewyng on this maner: A grett thyng shalle I make herof in hevyn of endlesse wuyrshyppe and of evyrlastyng joye....3e...our lorde enjoyeth of the tribulacions of hys sarvanntes with pyte and compassion" (Julian, Rev. 28/6-11).

After this point, she changes her focus from the pain of Jesus' death to a discussion of his triumph. The church shaking the sorrow and anguish of the world into the wind is a refreshing, new turning point in her text. It marks the midpoint of the passion narrative. It is closely depicted in the pictures of Jesus in the Despenser Retable. Her final chapters focus on the power of forgiveness and redemption. As the wind carries away sorrow, it

breathes life into the rest of her text and meditation. So too, the iconography of the five panels isolates the crucifixion as the exact turning point of the narrative. The sinful pain occurs in events leading to the crucifixion, and the restorative freedom occurs after it. The division of time mirrors her own text. Her first thirty-four chapters focus on the suffering of Jesus, but the last fifty explore the unconditional love available to all during the end times.

Position and order was important because the medieval theologians emphasized the significance of numbers, placement and setting. In nearly every Roman Catholic church a crucifix dominates the central altar. Not so in Eastern Orthodox churches, where the Last Supper can receive attention as the central image of Jesus' feeding and nourishing his community. In nearly all medieval art, wherever Jesus is represented in a scene surrounded by his disciples, St. Peter is situated directly to the right of Jesus, because he is recognized as the most significant of the apostles. In scenes of the crucifixion, the Virgin Mary is usually to Jesus' right and St. John to the left.²⁴⁵ For the medieval craftsman, too, numbers were important. For instance, the octagonal form of the baptismal font is deliberately infused with meaning. Eight is the number of the new life. It comes after seven, which concluded the days of God's creation of the world, and thereby, signaled a new start.²⁴⁶

The importance of placement and number are part of the imagery of the Despenser Retable. In the crucifixion scene, Mary is at the foot of the cross, with her head resting on the shoulder of John, the disciple. Her expression suggests that she cannot

²⁴⁵Mâle, 6.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 14.

absorb the sorrow of her son's death. In many other crucifixion scenes, she is pictured on the right side of Jesus and John is at the left. In this depiction, however, they are together comforting each other. The position of her head is also unusual. Her head and neck mirror the same crooked angle as that of Jesus while he hangs on the cross. As her veiled head hangs down in the same angle as her son's, the artist suggests that their bodies are joined through an invisible thread. Their shared humanity, at one time clearly linked in their shared bodies, speaks to their roles as deeply connected beings. Julian refers to a similar, analogous idea of the two of them being "knitted together" of the two of them in love and pain.

The link between Mary and Jesus forecasts the concept of Mother Jesus that will surface in the later chapters. The connection between pain and love is explained in the scene of the crucifixion. An ongoing concept in Julian's text, she uses the child/parent bond between Jesus and his mother to explain the pain/love connection:

for Crist and she was so onyd in loue that the grettnes of her love was cause of the grettnes of her payne. ... for ever the hygher, the myghtyer, the swetter that the loue is, the more sorow it is to the lover to see that body in payne that he lovyyd (Julian, Rev. 18/ 2-10).

Mary and Jesus have shared pain, both in birth and in death. Their knowledge of each other, and their reverence for each other, leads to Julian's depth of pain and love. She saw "A grett onyng betwene Crist and vs, to my vnderstondyng: for when he was in payne we ware in payne" (Julian, Rev. 18/14-15). The word "onyng" represents a "oneness" or a "unity," and is often represented in a marriage, but in this case, it occurs in a dual embodiment, one in which pain and love are passed through to mother and child.

The visual iconography in the painted panel suggests this connection between Mary and Jesus. Julian's language creates another picture of the "onyng" between Christ and us. Julian continues the concept when she explains "he shewyth vs chere of passion as he bare in this lyfe hys crosse, therefore we be in dysees and traveyle with hym as our kind askyth. And the cause why that he sufferyth is for he wylle of hys goodness" (Julian, Rev. 21/21-24). Jesus helps Christians to bear the pain of disease and hard work because he is connected or "onyed" with humanity. This image of Mary and Jesus in similar postures at the cross is just another visual expression of language. Julian eventually expands upon a visual rhetoric of art to develop her very innovative concept of our Mother Jesus.

So too, art provides an access to emotional engagement. By helping viewers feel the experience with an emotional immediacy, a picture could transport them to a different place and time. "Art, like music, can provide an immediacy and profundity of access to the senses and to emotional response."²⁴⁷ Jesus' scourging at the pillar does this for Julian. The emotional engagement with art serves two purposes. First, it helps a person enter into a deeper form of meditation, and it forms a clear memory of the scene.

The feyer skynne was broken full depe in to the tendyr flessch, with sharpe smytynges all a bout the sweete body. The hote blode ranne out so plentuously that ther was neyther seen skynne ne wounde, but as it were all blode... this was so plenteous... it shoulde haue made the bedde all on bloude (Julian, Rev.12/ 2-12).

The scourging engages multiple senses with the tearing of the flesh, the flowing of hot blood, and the sharpness of the iron hooks. It helps her to explore the degree of his

²⁴⁷Brown, 1.

suffering, but also to remember the pain. Her innovative use of language slows down time, lengthens the experience, and creates ever more complex webs of meaning and feeling. Her language draws upon a reservoir of visual rhetorics meant to aid emotional involvement and long-lasting memory.

St. Andrew Chapel Crucifixion and Micro-Detail

The Painted Panel of St. Andrew's Chapel in Norwich Cathedral depicts a blue-faced Jesus crucified on the cross. At the foot of the cross is Mary Magdalen and John the Evangelist.²⁴⁸ A wall painting located in the side chapel, the scene depicts two aspects of Christ's crucifixion. First, the face is a noticeable blue color, representative of the face Julian describes. Second is the dying and drying of the skin on his face that depicts a man who has been violated, isolated and nearly abandoned. These characteristics are not actually mentioned in scripture passages, yet they figure into the visual rhetorics of the crucifixion found in Norwich. Art provides reservoirs of language to be gathered and collected into text, which Julian does.

The interconnection between art, text and drama were abundant in Norwich. For example, the amount of scourging, bleeding and torn flesh is not specifically mentioned in the gospels, but this graphic detail is found in the *N-Town Crucifixion* and in later fourteenth and fifteenth century depictions of the tortured Jesus.²⁴⁹ In twelfth century crucifixion scenes, Jesus' flesh is barely touched, but in the Holkham Bible, for example, his flesh is torn from head to toe. The same phrasing of Christ being torn from head to toe is found in the *N-Town Crucifixion* monologue of Mary as she stands at the foot of the

²⁴⁸ Hill, Plate 13.

²⁴⁹ *The N-Town Plays*, 272, lines 238-240.

cross. So too, the body of Christ in the Holkham Bible is pricked like a tapestry, suggesting the honey comb holes mentioned in Christ's body in Richard Rolle's work, and the bleeding from Jesus' side, is profuse. In the Gorleston Psalter and the Despenser Retable, Christ is nailed to the cross, but in the *N-Town Crucifixion* and the Holkham Bible, his body is stretched and drawn.²⁵⁰ In the Holkham Bible, the blacksmith's wife forges the huge nails in the fire.²⁵¹ Similar extra-scriptural detail appears in the textual dialogue of the *N-Town Crucifixion* as the nailers harass each other when they stretch and tie Jesus' body to the cross with ropes. The action of pounding the nails into Christ's body is described in the everyday language of the nailers who act out the blows in the *N-Town Crucifixion*.²⁵² Jesus' conversation with Mary and John, and the sight of Mary Magdalen at the cross are more fully developed in late fourteenth century medieval plays and pictures than in earlier art. The story of Veronica, common in many visual depictions and part of the Arma Cristi is not specifically mentioned in the gospels. These are the result of increased meditation on the passion, with a special focus on the affect or feeling of Jesus' pain, and the need for others to experience the passion of Christ (Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe). Clearly, the art and drama in Norwich offered ample graphic sources for this language.

Julian draws special attention to Jesus' face and the language to describe it. She portrays the drying of his face in color, tone and elasticity. As she does, she describes the

²⁵⁰ London, British Museum Library, MS 47682, fol. 31r

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r Fol. 31r.

²⁵¹ London, British Museum Library, MS 47682, Fol. 31v.

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r. Fol. 31v.

²⁵² "Fest a rop, than, to his feet/ And drawe him down long anow." *The N-Town Plays*, 770, lines 73-74.

details of a person who is becoming ever less alive. Art, especially color, is a vehicle for memory and meditation. “I saw the swete face as it were drye and blodeles with pale dyeng and deede pale, langhuryng and than turned more deede in to blew, and after in browne blew, as the flessch turned more depe dede” (Julian, Rev.16/3-5). Her description of Christ and his “nere dyeng” shows a decline from his previously sweet face. Her description progresses to even less personal references with the “blodeles and pale dyeng.” By the end, she is not describing Christ or even a person, but just flesh turned a deep blue color. Each color represents an increased loss of humanity, since Jesus is losing his human-ness. He is becoming a piece of flesh, dying and drying in the open air, exposed to elements and insults. The pun between “dying” and “drying” is meant to heighten the difference between a person dying and a thing, like a cloth, drying on the clothes line.

Her images continue with an atomistic, micro-detailed description. Her talent for capturing visual detail amplifies features of Jesus’ body. His two air passages, through the lips and the nose, actually keep him from breathing. His lips shed their color and his nose closes together as part of a “peinflulle changing.” His pain is painted on his face, namely in his lips. They turn to “iiij colours: tho þat were be fore fressch and rody, lyvely and lyking to my sight. This was a peinflulle chaungyng, to se this depe dying, and also hys nose clo(n)gyn to geder and dried to my sight” (Julian, Rev.16/1-9). Using tools of words as a painter would use oils, she accurately describes slight shifts in color and tone. This micro-level detail actually slows the reader and alters time as she describes each step of the dying process. Her innovative use of language, in this case, using the alliterative

rhythms of poetry, “Lyvely and lyking,” “depe dying” fill in details of a picture and also alter time.

Her talent for describing pain in detail, and her keen ability to articulate its meaning, is clear. She describes the marks of embedded violence and trauma recognized in the minute and gradual decomposition of his body. He is in extreme isolation, is alone and exposed. She feels helpless as she watches him cross from the boundary of life into death as a victim without any protection. Her language articulates feelings of pain, powerlessness and violence through visual language of color and detail. Then, she explains a second stage of his drying and dying, which also slows up natural time to create an even larger space for prayer. In Chapter 17, she alters time as she slowly paints a picture of his drying body as he thirsts for water:

The blessyde flessch and bonys was lefte alle aloone without blode and moyster. The blessyd body dryed alle a loon long tyme, with wryngyng of the nalyes and weyght of the body; for I vnderstode that for tendrynes of the swete handes and the swete feet by the grete hardnes of grevous of the naylys, the woundys waxid wyde, ... And furthermore I saw that the swet skynne and the te(n)dyr flessch with the here and with the blode was all rasyd and losyd aboue with the thornes and borkyn in many pecis, and were hangyng as they wolde hastely haue fallen downe whyle it had kynde moyster (Julian, Rev.17/6-20).

The alliterative rhythm and the parallel structure of these passages echo Richard Rolle’s writing. In Rolle, the scene is described similarly: “Thynke on þat scharpe coroun of thorne þai [had] corouned hyn with, þat made his lufly face streeme all on blod. And of þat bitter aysel menged with galle, þai gaf hym to drynke whene he pleyned hym of threst, als he þat mykel had blede.”²⁵³ Julian’s description is fraught with an underlying

²⁵³ Richard Rolle, “Meditation on the Passion,” in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and His Followers*, ed. Carl Horstmann (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895), 113.

anxiety about the necessity of Jesus' death. She does not avoid the hardness of the nails nor the open wound in his side. The violence of the event is captured in its extreme depiction of isolation as she details the "blode all rasyd" and the thorns and broken flesh "hangyng as they woulde... have fallen down." The violence, trauma, and details in minute segments, unsettle the reader. The content of her vision alone, is unsettling. The graphic nature of the scene is unusual in the amount of detail she employs to recreate feelings of violence and the extent of that misery. Her descriptions of this scene are more vivid and extreme than Rolle's. Whereas Rolle describes the torture to Jesus in terms of the blood and the crown of thorns, Julian amplifies the pain by describing the "wryngyng of the nalyes and weyght of the body." Even the flesh and the thorns are broken and torn. The passage can be read two ways. The first suggests that Jesus' flesh was torn and about to fall, but the reference to the thorns also suggests they are broken and are falling on Jesus face: the "flessch ... was all rasyd and losyd above with the thornes and borkyn in many pecis, and were hangyng as they woulde hastely have fallen downe whyle it had kynde moyster" (Julian, Rev, 17/18-20) Her ability to refer to both images, the broken flesh and the broken thorns amplifies her passage, producing layers of meaning that can be used for further experience of the passion and meditation on suffering.

Julian's writing was part of a devotional movement that shifted in its interpretation of scriptures. The development in visual art accounts for significantly different depictions of the passion narrative in art as one moves from the twelfth through the fourteenth century. In the twelfth century, depictions of the crucified Christ focus on his divine nature. He is clothed in a purple mantle with few or bloodless wounds. In thirteenth century versions, the central body fluids flow. Jesus' wounds are depicted as

the water, honey, and milk that flow from the side wound. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, versions of the body liquid is plentiful, usually showing blood flowing, pooling, and spilling over the world.

Many of these iconographic themes associated with blood veneration are late fourteenth and fifteenth century creations: the dead or bleeding Man of Sorrows; the instruments of Christ's passion (Arma Christi); the wounds of Christ or his separated body parts; the mass of St. Gregory; the figure of the dead Christ on his mother's lap, especially their version in which the body is covered with blood; crucifixion in which angels catch streams of drops, shed from all five of Christ's wounds.²⁵⁴

As affective meditative practices developed, a heightened interest in feeling and imagining the pains of Christ became the focus of meditation. Extra-scriptural details were added to the core Gospel story. These added details were “drawn directly from Old Testament prophecies and types. . . . The authors of late medieval passion tracts had contrived to see the literal fulfillment of Old Testament imagery in elaborated accounts of Christ's sufferings.”²⁵⁵ Iconography of the passion moved from a depiction of scenes from the New Testament gospels to depictions which included details far beyond those mentioned in the New Testament. Frederick Pickering found these as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies that worked themselves into parts of mystery cycle plays and art,

²⁵⁴ Bynum argues: “Blood is the specific religious concern in a number of regional and philological contexts scholars have tended to study only apart from each other. But I shall also argue that interpretations of late medieval spirituality need to disaggregate phenomena often telescoped under terms such as ‘affective,’ ‘devotional,’ ‘expressionist,’ or ‘violent.’ Blood as theme links many things we have not usually linked, but we need to look at specific texts and contexts in order to understand what precisely it symbolized or evokes.” Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 6-7.

²⁵⁵ Marrow, 5.

but Pickering also found their origins in the medieval passion narrative, particularly *Meditations on the Life of Christ*.²⁵⁶ The movement in art finds its way into Julian's text.

The Gorleston Psalter Inserts Regional Lore

Regional devotional practices surfaced in art and text. An example of the shifting attitudes toward extra-scriptural material appears in the Gorleston Psalter. Written in Latin around 1310, the Gorleston Psalter is recognized as much for its illuminated marginalia and visuals as for its written context. The substantial amount of text includes psalms, a calendar, a prayer, canticles, a litany and an Office of the Dead. The manuscript passed to Norwich Cathedral Priory between 1320 and 1325, when a litany and a miniature of the crucifixion were added, along with a few other changes. The miniature crucifixion emphasized a devotion to Mary Madgalen, a saint with a noteworthy following in Norwich. Illuminations, *bas-en-page*, ornamental letters and an elaborate depiction of the Tree of Jesse provide insights into the medieval imagination. The relationship between the text and the elaborate images has been the focus of recent study, as some scholars have asked about the appearance of characters in vulgar positions that peer out from the bottom or corner of the sacred text.²⁵⁷ Although some of the images portray exposed hindquarters, bottoms, scatological and sexual activities, many depict the

²⁵⁶ Frederick Pickering's research gives a framework within which "all narrative passion imagery of the late Middle Ages will have to be reconsidered. The subtexts to be considered are the artistic and literary treatments of the passion from the arrest of Christ to the crucifixion," *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵⁷ London, British Library, Add MS 49622 f. 7r.
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_49622_fs001r Fol 7 r. Reproduced with permission © of the British Library Board. Further information and images available on *Sacred and Profane*. <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2012/10/more-gorleston-psalter-virility-profane-images-in-a-sacred-space.html#sthash.Tufiib00.dpuf>;

ordinary lives of everyday farmers, plowmen, and merchants. Of course, religious scenes are also included. The variety of images, and their purposes or contexts, suggest that the drawings are more than a distraction or frivolous ornamentation, but are intentional. The margins and other miniatures may have been a safe outlet for artists to include criticisms about social and cultural norms.

The added crucifixion scene may include commentary about cultural and religious norms in Norwich. The scene depicts a crucified Jesus high on the cross. Mary, Jesus' mother, and John, the disciple, are positioned at the foot of the cross (Figure 2). They both stand to the side. Significantly, Mary Magdalen clutches the base of the cross, her garments soaking up the blood of Jesus as it flows from his body. Her place at the foot of the cross is not usually seen in paintings, especially in an emotional state that rivals the intimacy usually afforded to Mary, Jesus' mother. Mary Magdalen's prominent placement at the cross accentuates her posture and her facial expression. It invites the viewer to question her presence and to find meaning in it. Why is she gripping the cross? Why is she physically in closer proximity to Jesus' body than Mary, his own mother? Mary Magdalen's place seems to connect her to Jesus in ways that privilege her role, even over the Virgin Mary and John. Unlike the Virgin, she had lived with sin, and she understood its shame. Unlike John, she remained with Jesus' earthly body as she prepared it for burial. She also was one of the women who first saw his resurrected body.



Figure 2: Miniature of the Crucifixion. London, British Library Board, Add MS 49622 f. 7r.
Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

By the early Middle Ages, Mary Magdalen was a saint whose story served multiple purposes to diverse audiences. Her story was a combination of the lives of three women in the bible: first, Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha; second, Mary Magdalen, the woman of the gospels who prepared the body of Jesus after death; and third, the unnamed sinner who washed the feet of Jesus.²⁵⁸ Although she was not identified as a prostitute in the gospels, the stories and her vita make that claim. It seemed to be exegetically natural for medieval preachers to assign her the sin of sexual misconduct.²⁵⁹ The sketchy details of her life allowed preachers to assign qualities of misconduct to hers, all in an effort to teach about a woman's place in society and the problems associated with prostitution. Textual evidence of her story is found in the *Old English Martyrology* (c. 900), the *South English Legendary*, John Mirk's sermon written for her feast day and the Digby play, *Mary Magdalen*. The widespread proliferation of this material by the fourteenth century suggests that her story was recognized across Germany, France, England, and the Low Countries. Her following in France was helped by the location of her pilgrimage shrine, which was also on the route to St. James Santiago in Compostalla. The various themes of her legend appealed to a variety of audiences. For women, she represented faithfulness to the end. To the monastic, part of her story told of her choosing the better side by listening to Jesus rather than attending to the household. For preachers, her efforts to spread the gospel to Europe, encouraged them to do the same. For those

²⁵⁸ *The Legend of Mary Magdalen, Penitent and Apostle: Introduction*. Ed. Sherry L. Reames (Robbins Library Digital Project. *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publication, 2003).

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/11sr.htm>

²⁵⁹ Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999), 146.

who did corporal works of mercy, such as feeding the hungry and caring for the sick, she became a model of compassion. By the fourteenth century, she offered hope for the sinner who was redeemed, and she represented an illustration of God's love and forgiveness, as well as his intimate connection with humanity, including women. She represented renewal, rejuvenation, and restoration. A sinner could repent, be forgiven, and gain a favored seat near Jesus.

Julian herself invokes Mary Magdalen to be a source of inspiration as she begins her first short text, *Showings*. She pictures herself like Mary Magdalen, who suffered with Christ and experienced the "bodily" passion, a part of the legend of Magdalen. Julian asks to suffer with him as "othere dyd that lovyd hym:"

Me thought I hadde grete felynge in the passyonn of Cryste, botte zitte I desyrede to haue mare be the grace of god. Me thought I wolde haue bene that tyme with Mary Mawdelyne and with othere that were Crystes loverse, that I myght have sene bodylye the passyonn of oure lorde that he sufferede for me, that I myght have sufferede with hym as othere dyd that lovyd hym.²⁶⁰

Mary Magdalen, with her involvement in Jesus' life and death, was a fitting saint to emulate. The lore about Mary Magdalen's life centered around her strong feeling for Jesus, both during and after his life. Naturally, Julian would want to share in an intimately involved and embodied connection with Jesus, as had Mary Magdalen.

Julian begs to step into the scene of the passion, as a woman who empathizes with Jesus and actually suffered with him. It was by no accident that Mary Magdalen also became the patron saint of many institutions that cared for the sick and injured. It was precisely because she washed his feet before the Last Supper, and she prepared his body

²⁶⁰ *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, Part 1, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 201, 1/8-14.

after death that she is associated with those who nursed the sick and performed other acts of mercy in Norwich. These groups were prompted to do such work because their members saw the need to show compassion and care for those who were ill or dying. Mary Magdalen's physical connection to the body of Christ is similar to the imagery Julian describes in her vision, and Julian would have known about the devotion residents of Norwich had to Mary Magdalen.

Julian also took the symbol of Mary Magdalen as a representation of rebirth and rejuvenation. In scriptural accounts, Mary Magdalen understood the resurrection as an event that could only happen after sin and death. One iconographic symbol of this type of resurrection was depicted in the plentiful blood of Jesus. The bleeding of Jesus, mentioned during his scourging at the end of Julian's Chapter Twelve, also matches the visual imagery of the blood flowing to the foot of the cross where Mary Magdalen kneels. This connection to the restorative and life-giving quality of his blood and the amount of it becomes a central part of Julian's text.

The precious plenty of his dere worthy blode ovrflowyth all erth, and is redy to wash all creatures of synne, which be of good wyll, have ben and shall be. ... And ovyr more it flowyth in all heauen enjoying the salvacion of all mankind that be ther and shall be, fulfylling the number that faylyth (Julian, Rev. 12/24-31).

For Julian, Jesus' blood is capable of flowing through the whole world to cleanse all people of sin. Only after death and the letting of precious blood, can the world be washed clean of sin. For Mary Magdalen, a sinner who understood the symbolic importance of washing the feet of Jesus, even though none of his other disciples did, the potency of blood as a source of redemption privileges her place with him. This concept of redemption and renewal is especially crucial for Julian, since the theme will also weave through the rest of her text.

Later, the theological struggle between the sinner and the forgiving God is explored in Julian's text. The images of a redeemed sinner resonate with Mary Magdalen's story.²⁶¹ Near the middle of Julian's text in Ch. 50, she begs to know understand how sinfulness can be juxtaposed against God's all-forgiving nature. She puts the paradox to Jesus:

For I knew by the comyn techyng of holy church and by my owne felyng, that the blame of our synnes contynually hangyth vppon vs, fro þe furst man in to the tyme we come vppe into hevyn. Then was this my merveylye, that I saw oure lord god shewyng to vs no more blame then if we were as clene and as holy as angelis be in hevyn (Julian, Rev. 50/10-15).

The questions that drive the second half of her text sit with this paradox. How can God reconcile sin? Can he really forgive it all? Why does it exist in the first place? Her answer comes in the form of the exemplum of the lord and the servant.

Even if Julian had never seen the Gorleston Psalter page, material artifacts remain throughout Norwich that suggest that the city itself supported a cult of Mary Madgalen. A painted panel of her hangs in the Chapel of St. Andrew in the north transept of Norwich Cathedral.²⁶² She is also a dominant figure in the Digby cycle of plays, as well as the *N-Town*, with sections of plays devoted to her story. Moreso, the community of Norwich substantially supported the work of the women who helped in the many hospitals there, who placed Mary Magdalen as their patron saint. Late medieval Norwich robustly supported such works, with records of wills and testaments placing a third of all

²⁶¹ "Mary Magdalen's unique and symbolic role derived from her status as one who had daily served, then accompanied, Christ on his journey from one world to the next, from earth-bound teacher to heavenly lord. Her relationship to him, therefore, became an outward expression of her own transition from a sinful life in the flesh to that of the interior world of the spirit and thus to penitence and the redemption of that same body and spirit. The rags to riches experience of the Magdalen was the prize offered to all sinners who were penitent and much loved." Hill, 91.

²⁶² Ibid, 13.

donations toward such hospitals and shelters.²⁶³ Julian accessed and transformed this lore and the support of Magdalen to add depth and richness to her own theology.

Julian tapped into a rich reservoir of language. Regional devotion to the saints provided communally shared narratives ready for transmission. Layers of visual and oral references filled her text. She drew upon scripture, sermons, prayers and dramas, but seemed to have an artists' instinct for detail, scene, portraiture and color. So too, her ability to alter time through language, to heighten emotional involvement, to build layers of meaning from multiple sources, and to use etymology and puns as structures were all facets of her innovations. Moreover, her use of pictures to fuse memories and build logical and associative pathways of meaning were innovative. They all establish her pioneering use of language. Her theological themes of the passion or of Mother Jesus is not unprecedented, but her clear and variant descriptions of them in her vision are. Her insistence on unconditionally loving God, her description of him as the ever "Gladde Geaver," and her description of a joyful God find new meaning in her text through language. She built many rooms that were previously unknown before in the same way. The hazelnut, the house of the lord, Magdalen's hair, the side wound, the womb of Jesus, all remain the fruitful gifts of her work. In the end, there is something about her layering of language – the sounds and the images in written and non-written forms – that developed methods especially appropriate to express the anxieties and the aspirations of Christians living in the fourteenth century.

²⁶³ Ibid, 123.

IV

Visual Rhetoric of the Last Judgment

Before medieval Christians even entered a church, they most probably encountered a tympani of the Last Judgment. If that was not enough, the scene hovered over the most obvious place of all, a space directly above the church entrance. The Last Judgment also occupied the space above the chancel arch. Of all the scenes depicted in the medieval church, the largest and most fundamental is the pictorial representation of the Last Judgment. In England, at least seventy- eight extant representations can be found.²⁶⁴ The figures, in their placement, their clothing, their gestures and facial grimaces, were meant to evoke a lasting impression on the viewers. Their purpose was to cause parishioners to consider their virtues and vices.²⁶⁵ Like all medieval communities, Norwich had dozens of depictions of the Last Judgment: carved in the stone of Norwich Cathedral; unfurled on the manuscript pages of the Ormesby Psalter (a Norwich product); illustrated in prayer books such as the *Meditations of the Life of Christ* and the Holkham Bible; and drawn in texts that circulated in East Anglia such as the *Biblia Popularis*. These books were likely sources for the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral.²⁶⁶ No mere ornamentation, these images were intended to encourage meditation and self-reflection, but also to blend regional influences with scripture and church teaching. Norwich had its

²⁶⁴ A. Caiger-Smith. 31.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 31.

²⁶⁶ Rose and Hedgecoe establish the connection between the Norwich Cathedral roof bosses and The Luttrell Psalter and the Ormesby Psalter. Rose and Hedgecoe, 30. Peter Hâppé also connects the drama cycle plays with the Norwich Cathedral bosses. For visual manuscript images, see The Ormesby Psalter. The Ormesby Psalter bears a close connection to Norwich because it was presented to the Norwich Cathedral Priory in the early fourteenth century. Bodleian Library. MS Douce. 366. Or at <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/zoom.php?id=360>.

own conflicted history between the townspeople and the monastery, and it claimed particular allegiance to regional saints. One of these saints, St. Edmund, is enfolded into Last Judgment images in Norwich. Julian of Norwich internalized these painted representations of the Last Judgment surrounding her and used them as a sourcebook for her own language of inclusion.

Images of the Last Judgment, either in tympani or religious manuscripts, reflected changes in approaches to religious piety. Christian ideas of the Last Judgment scenes usually derive from two narrative sources. One is from the Gospel of Matthew 25, which contains the image of Christ's return to earth at the end of time when he will preside over the judgment of souls. The other is from the apocalypse of St. John, which contains a series of calamities to occur at the Last Judgment.²⁶⁷ Before the twelfth century, Christ usually was depicted as a superior, transcendent ruler seated above the chaotic activities on the world depicted below his feet.²⁶⁸ In contrast, during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, Christ is depicted with human qualities, with his wounds exposed, his face evoking mercy, and blood oozing from his side. In nearly all, he stands above creation, with hell at his feet. In England, France and Italy, Last Judgment scenes depicted three tiers of activity. A thirteenth century mural, the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, painted by Giotto (1306), carefully arranges the order and placement of people in the scene. In the upper half of the mural, Christ sits with his apostles, and below him, covering the entire bottom half of the painting stand two angels, who separate the sinners bound for

²⁶⁷ Caiger-Smith, 31

²⁶⁸ Ibid, Plate XVI.

purgatory from the elect.²⁶⁹ Christ sits calmly, with open arms, fully clothed and impartial, separated in his divinity from the chaotic scene by a ring of angels. In contrast, the fourteenth century Stanningfield Doom Painting evokes violent images reminding viewers of Jesus' humanity, and of course, their own mortality. Jesus raises his bloodied right arm and bleeding left hand. A grinning skull and scattered bones are strewn in the left bottom of the archway and near the middle of the painting. A full skeleton, thrown uncovered on the ground on the right side of the painting, stares blankly in the space above him.²⁷⁰ The macabre images of twisted bodies or scattered bones stare from just above the scene. These pictures were easily visible to Christians walking just below them to enter the church.

Another memorable feature of these paintings is the representation of hell. It often depicts the monstrous mouth of a whale or sea-serpent, which recalled Jonah's whale from the Old Testament. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the sinners are depicted as they struggle to escape the jaws of hell. This was a familiar feature, still seen on carved tympani in cathedrals, and illustrations in psalters and Books of Hours. Characteristic items in these scenes, too, are the scales of justice and angels who weigh the souls' sins. Doors are propped open in the lower tier, and the damned are dragged into the mouth of hell, where sinners are consumed with fire, or wait in burning kettles of

²⁶⁹ Giotto, Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. Artable.

http://www.artble.com/imgs/b/0/5/523324/scrovegni_chapel_frescoes.jpg

²⁷⁰ Caiger-Smith.33, Plate XVI. Also at Stanningfield Doom.

https://www.google.com/search?q=Stanningfield+Doom&espv=2&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=dKboVL3IHInXggSciYLACg&ved=0CB8QsAQ&biw=1366&bih=667#imgdii=_&imgc=eZNgCaxH-MpOtM%253A%3B3Sh7xoqwH6Yy-M%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fnews.bbcimg.co.uk%252Fmedia%252Fimages%252F58805000%252Fjpg%252F_58805106_stanningfielddoom.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.bbc.co.uk%252Fnews%252Fuk-england-suffolk-17219175%3B464%3B261

water or are stalked by animals. Dragons, dog-like devils with pitchforks and spikes, grotesque hybrid animals, and a chaotic array of creatures on the margins of human and animal pedigree, populate the lower tier. Those souls in heaven often go to a half-open entrance or even a trap door at the floor leading to the next tier of heaven.²⁷¹ A common feature of these scenes are leaping tongues of fire and sinners waiting at a narrow door to pass into the gates of heaven. Doors and rooms seem to have exceptional significance.

Pictures of the fourteenth century amplify the social order and the classification of sinners, both on earth and in the afterlife. “The pictures of the Last Judgment present, in this manner, the image of an ideal order sanctioned by divine verdict, where all the individuals depicted are assigned the exact positions they merit.”²⁷² The images of sinners and their appropriate penance reflect a preoccupation with assigning the sin to the exact punishment. The assessment is based on the number of sins, the type of sin, the occasion of sin, and the person with whom or against whom the sin was done. The following Ash Wednesday sermon articulates the careful assessment of sin and punishment:

The priest confessor... [is] like a surveyor who measures the land or other things. Like a surveyor, who takes his measuring stick and compass and measures with them the length and breadth, the curvature and angles of things, a confessor, after hearing the complete confession, should, with the measuring stick of his reason, measure the circumstances of the sins ...the priest must have discretion, so that he may enjoin a penance that is appropriate to the sin. For some sins bodily mortification is appropriate, for others almsgiving, and for yet others subduing the flesh and devout prayer.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Ibid, 36.

²⁷² Iris Grotecke, “Representing the Last Judgment: Social Hierarchy, Gender and Sin,” *The Medieval History Journal*. 1 (1998): 233, 234.

²⁷³ Siegfried Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2008), 93. Ash Wednesday sermon by anonymous author. The original source is the Worcester Cathedral, MS F. 10 fols. 132rb-133v.

What is remarkable is that the art depicting the Last Judgment reflected the concern for hierarchical order, including the classification of sin and sinner. Social status, religious teaching and communal norms fueled a deep sensitivity to correct behavior. These images of the Last Judgment “enabled their viewers to gage the norms by which their own conduct could be evaluated, for in contrast to earlier depictions, the details of the Judgment itself, as also the consequences of the verdict, were accorded considerable pictorial space.”²⁷⁴ In many of these images, the verdict, a lasting one, established an ordering of the afterlife, which taught the Christian the expected consequences of an unexamined life. Artists chose to portray sin through the “depiction of punishments which refer to the offence committed...hanging a miser on the rope of a money-bag, starving gluttonous persons by placing them in front of a table laden with food, or injuring the genitals of the unchaste” would be appropriate.²⁷⁵ Such a focus on sin, both in this world and in the afterlife, sustained a hyper-consciousness about normative behavior. Deviant behavior, in turn, also received heightened attention, since it could lead to eternal damnation. Not surprising, depictions of deviancy received nearly as much attention in the Last Judgment images as did pictures of mercy and piety.

The disruption of political order and class distinctions loomed in the background of Julian’s texts. As an influential landlord, Norwich Cathedral participated in the political and social affairs of the region. It was constantly in legal negotiations to protect or regulate the use of its lands. As an influential corporation, it leased land, excised taxes, held jurisdiction over key pastures and riverfront areas, negotiated monetary exchanges

²⁷⁴ Grotecke, 233-234.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 250.

for manor houses, and arranged a per-cattle fee for the use of grazing fields. Their litigious behavior resulted in the priory and convent appearing through their attorneys “before the royal justices on average at least once every twenty-seven months throughout the thirteenth century.”²⁷⁶ Pressures from these disputes spilled over into social behavior. Since the church provided spiritual instruction about living a good life and working toward heaven, spiritual direction in the form of sermons and art provided implicit or explicit criticism of political events. The Despenser Retable, a fourteenth century altar piece in Norwich Cathedral, depicts Christ being beaten by men dressed in peasant garb. The association of peasants with the persecutors of Jesus implicitly placed the peasant class in conflict with the established social order. Peasants weren’t the only class criticized in art. Numerous Last Judgment scenes show popes, bishops and nuns wallowing in fires of hell. A punitive culture, one which measured, weighed and divided sin, and could assign the appropriate punishment for it, did not seem to be the best soil for Julian’s message of an all-forgiving God. The litigious nature of ecclesiastic and secular authority did not seem the most open place for Julian’s understanding of sin that could be transformed to redemption. Her message of all-giving love and all-understanding inclusion, even for marginalized women of her time, stood in contrast to the disrupted political and cultural climate in which she lived.

Even so, division and conflict are significantly missing at the arch above the Prior’s Door at Norwich Cathedral. The arch leads into Norwich Cathedral from the adjacent cloisters. Missing are any scales of measurement, an angry Jesus, ominous jaws

²⁷⁶ Christopher Harper-Bill, “The Medieval Church and the Wider World,” *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096-1996* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), 313.

of hell, a listing of vices or virtues, or the lines of dead souls waiting to be judged. Jesus serenely gazes outward with angels, apostles, and saints surrounding him. Unlike the wrathful, angry God, Christ looks on with pity and mercy.²⁷⁷ His left arm shows his wounded side and the other arm, broken, is extended in greeting. Leaders, who guided people through the centuries, rim the archway. On Jesus' left side, Moses carries the Ten Commandments; at his right John the Baptist and St. Peter stand over the arch. St. Edmund, the English martyr, fits in amongst the leaders of Old and New Testament. The arch, an important portal in the cathedral, marks the end of one set of the roof bosses depicting the scenes of the passion, and it marks the beginning of the Norwich Cathedral nave, where the roof bosses tell the narrative of the world from the creation to Doomsday.

The Priory Arch depicts a scene of impartiality and mercy, for sinners in general and for East Anglian Christians in particular. It depicts the human Jesus, who reveals his open wounds as he sits beside two angels holding the instruments of his torture. His cross, a symbol of defeat at the hands of his tormentors, is at his right side as a reminder of the sinfulness that led to his torture and death. St. Edmund, the saint who drove out the Danes in East Anglia, sits opposite St. Peter in the arch, included as a regional saint into the ranks of Old Testament prophets and New Testament church leaders.

Art and Text

Julian, like the artists of her time, wrestles with a problem when explaining the Last Judgment. The Last Judgment demands considerable effort from a writer or artist,

²⁷⁷ Marital Rose, *Stories in Stone*, Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHycrFcD0ew>

since it is a catastrophic event of universal proportions, covering history from the beginning of creation to the end of the world. In Norwich, writers like Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton used rhetorical figures of language to describe these events, and actors used performative scenes to describe them in cycle plays. Artists designing the roof bosses and panel paintings used visual rhetorics of movement, symmetry and color to capture the scope of doomsday. Although an analogy between the tools of visual art, drama, and writing is challenged by differences in terminology and process, the analogy is useful to examine how medieval art forms presented a particular subject, solving similar problems of scope and size, particularly on the topic as vast as the Last Judgment. “The arts borrow one another’s methods; the pictorial arts make extensive use of narrative techniques far more commonly than in more recent art, whereas drama is pictorial to a degree that we find hard to imagine today.”²⁷⁸ All the arts addressing the Last Judgment relied upon scripture as a base. The cycle dramas elaborated upon scripture in a performative and visual narrative. Julian, among other writers, elaborated upon the narrative homilies and dramas that lent themselves toward pictorial schemes. The similarities of the sister arts (drama, painting, and writing) freely borrowed methods and techniques from each other.

²⁷⁸ Pamela Sheingorn and David Bevington, “‘Alle This Was Token Domystry to Drede’: Visual Signs of Last Judgment in the Corpus Christi Cycles and in Late Gothic Art,” in *Homo, Memento Finis: The Iconography of Just Judgment in Medieval Art and Drama* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1985), 123.

The Effect of the Art of the Last Judgment

The pictorial elements of Julian's exemplum impress the reader with concrete scenes of forgiveness. The setting is of the lord, alone in a wild desert, watching the servant fail at the task given to him. Color, scene, background, foreground and the facial expressions of the lord are described as in a painting. She begins with the setting:

The place that the lorde satt on was symply on the erth, bareyn and deserte, aloone in wyldernesse. His clothyng was wyde and syde and full semely, as fallyth to a lorde. The colour of the clothyng was blew as asure, most sad and feyer. His chere was mercifull, the colour of his face was feyer brown whyzte with full semely countenanncce, his eyen were blake, most feyer and semely, shewyng full of louely pytte, and within hym an hey²⁷⁹ ward long and brode, all full of endlesse hevynlynes. And the louely lokyng that he lokyd on his servannt contynually, and namely in his fallyng, me thought it myght melt oure hartys for loue (Julian, Rev. 51/120-130).

This description characterizes Julian's innovative stance on a theology of unconditional forgiveness. A tolerance toward sin, or rather an understanding of how and why it occurs, underpins this passage in Julian's vision. The lord not only refuses to punish the servant, but he admits it would be a failing on his part if he did not give the servant a gift or reward for his effort. As if she paints a portrait, she lets the language and details set the mood and establish a context for the story. She plunges into descriptions of color and shape of his clothing (his clothing is "wyde and syde," "full semly," "blew as asure").²⁸⁰ She details facial expressions ("his face was feyer," "brown.. with seemly countenance," "his eyen were blake, most feyer"). Like a painter, she uses external expressions to

²⁷⁹ Colledge and Walsh note that Julian was referring to a "hey ward," or a "high place of refuge." Julian may have had in mind II Kings 22.3, in which a high tower is associated with the sixteenth revelation. See *Showings*, eds. Colledge and Walsh, 523, n. 126.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 523. "Wyde and syde" mean "ample." The two terms are synonymous, and reference occur in ancient and traditional examples.

convey the internal feelings of the lord (“shewyng full lovely pytte,” “full of endlesse hevynlynes”). She even shows how his face and posture evoke feelings in the viewer (“lovely lokyng,” “might melt oure hartys for love”). His “lokyng” is transformative. While these techniques mimic forms of description found in traditional and classic paintings, in her writing they topple together in a cascade of language. The words splash an image on the mind with a picture full of detail and layers of color. The picture is not a mere representation of an event in her vision. Rather, it stimulates the reader and evokes specific emotions and responses. The expressions and textures are to be absorbed gradually. They produce the mood, characterization, and scene essential for the theological discussions she asserts later in her text. This setting opens the door toward a discussion of God’s tolerance toward sin. The setting, at the very least, frames a discussion of sin, both how and why it occurs. The lord not only refuses to punish the servant, but he admits it would be a failing on his part if he did not give the servant a gift to reward him for his effort. When juxtaposed against the harsh sermons of the time, this description springs from a deep pool of language in art and scripture that exposes the ambiguous and complex nature of sin.

The depth of Julian’s theological problem surfaces in the way she addresses the ultimate and unconditional forgiveness of God at the end of time. She bypasses the traditional classifications or categories of sins and their corresponding punishments. For her, Christ’s empathy for the human struggle leads him to promise a reward that will equal or even surpass the pains of mortality. In fact, love, and not reckoning or reprisals, impels forgiveness:

that his deerworthy servannt, whych he lovyd so moch, shulde be hyely and blesydfully rewardyd withoute end, aboue that he shulde haue be if he had nott fallen, yea, and so ferforth that his fallyng and alle his wo that he hath takyn there by shalle be turnyd in to the hye ovyrpassyng wurschyppe and endlesse blesse (Julian, Rev.51/ 56-61).

The failure of sin has a potential of transformation. Unlike preachers, who view the failure of sin as a catastrophe that is punishable, offensive, and shameful, Julian's vision frames the sin as an opportunity for change. The failure of sin can be turned into worship and bliss. She deconstructs the order established and perpetuated by the Church, which stresses a polarity of sinfulness and sanctity. She reestablishes Christ's connection between sinfulness and forgiveness, between punishment and reward. Instead of sin leading to punishment, in her vision, sin and "fallyng" lead to a reward and a gift of endless bliss. The servant/sinner is not degraded, mocked or scorned because of sins. Instead, Julian acknowledges the sin, but stresses its necessity. The sinners, for whatever reasons, suffer as a result of their participation in it. Furthermore, for their suffering, sinners are compensated and rewarded.

Julian does not focus on the causes of sin, but focuses instead on the suffering it creates. Her disinterest in the cause of evil is most noted in the fact that she never references the seven deadly sins, like the author of *The Ancrene Wisse*, or like her contemporary, John Gower, who references the variety of sins and illustrative tales in the *Confessio Amantis*. In this sense, she is more "tolerant" of sin, meaning she accepts it as an inevitable part of life. She recognizes a need for contrition, but the sinner is never demeaned or degraded because of the sin. She acknowledges the harmfulness of sin, and recognizes the potency of evil, which takes the shape and smell of demons in her vision.

Her focus, however, is on redemption of sinners. Although she acknowledges wrongdoing, she is ambiguous about the specific details of the nature, causes, and agency of sinfulness.

Politics and the Cathedral

Art is a source of her broad view of humanity. I suggest that her reluctance to resort to absolutes is grounded in the complex history of Norwich citizens and ecclesiastic authority housed there. The townspeople of Norwich had a tumultuous relationship with the Church in its midst, particularly Norwich Cathedral and its priory. Violent conflict and resolution was part of community life for over a century. Resistance to the priory began from its inception when Herbert de Losinga, a Norman, purchased the land, located on a prime mercantile river route, and had jurisdiction over it. Access to the River Wensum, to fertile fields, and to grazing areas were withheld from the townspeople.²⁸¹ The purchase of the property removed a center of a late Anglo-Saxon market and gathering area from the free peasantry of Norwich, which in Post-Conquest England may have been painful, since Norwich was already a prosperous town. Various disputes ensued until August 11, 1272, when townspeople set fire to the monastery, the cathedral church, and all its relics. The buildings were reduced to ashes in most parts, and some members of the monastery household were killed.²⁸² From that point to the sixteenth century, conflicts continued, mainly because the royal charters granted to the priory and to citizens were essentially incompatible. A similar conflict erupted between

²⁸¹ Norman Tanner, "The Cathedral and the City," *Norwich Cathedral: 1096-1996*. eds. Atherton, Ian, Eric Ferine, Christopher Harper-Bill (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 257- 258

²⁸² *Ibid*, 259-260.

Bishop Despenser and the town of Norwich, primarily over jurisdiction of the prior and convent on their own manors and the right of the bishop to intervene in the internal affairs of the community.²⁸³ In the fourteenth century, the institution of a frankpledge, which assured that the priory invested in its own property and jurisdiction, promoted relative peace and collaboration.²⁸⁴ Reconstruction of the cathedral also necessitated the skills of craftsmen, masons, and guildsmen, who gained employment at that time, but also included their own interpretation of religious concepts.²⁸⁵

Two centuries of tension were never far from the surface. Since the 1430s and 1440s, resentment on the part of citizens resulted from agreements or disagreements between the government and the priory. These conflicts resulted from political maneuvering between the king and the church, who both sought jurisdiction over considerable amounts of property. Control of property, situated in prime locations with economic potential, fueled power struggles. Tensions seeped into religious images: patronage, politics and church patriarchy are found in church walls, stone work, panel paintings, mosaics and illuminated prayer books, psalters, and bibles.

It is not accidental that the coat of arms of some of the most prominent families in Norwich are embedded in the Despenser Retable, an altarpiece depicting five stages of the passion of Christ. Sarah Stanbury argues that the retable is “a framed narrative about social disruption and the restoration of order—a story as much about orthodoxy,

²⁸³ Christopher Harper-Bill, “The Medieval Church and the Wider World,” *Norwich Cathedral: 1096-1996*. Ed. Ian Atherton, Eric Ferine, Christopher Harper-Bill (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 297.

²⁸⁴ Tanner, 262.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 262-263.

community, and class in late fourteenth-century Norwich as it is about the passion.”²⁸⁶ Images on the left side depict peasants flogging Christ in an open disruption of social order. The right side depicts the restoration of hierarchy with Christ’s victory over death. The retable draws the connection between the wrongful death of Christ, and the disruption of medieval social order during the Peasant’s Rebellion of 1381. The role of Bishop Despenser is unclear and questionable. He apparently restored social order and subdued the peasants, but Capgrave notes that Despenser’s restoration of political and social order were made in ways that reinforced class distinctions. After the lords involved in the revolt were spared death, the rebels were executed, all with Despenser’s knowledge.²⁸⁷ Social and political conflict, perhaps perpetuated by ecclesiastic authorities, could have prompted Julian, or anyone of her time, to question church hierarchy. It would cause anyone to puzzle over issues of justice, punishment, and redemption.

A further example of the tension between Norwich past and Norwich present is carved in the church. Conflict looms in the mingling of pagan imagery of Anglo-Saxon origin and Christian imagery with Norman influences. The construction of Norwich Cathedral began in 1096 in the style of Chartre Cathedral.²⁸⁸ Details in the interior, however, contain elements of Saxon pagan images. The roof bosses, carved during the reconstruction of the cathedral, depict leafy ornaments of the forest, grapes, and vines of the garden, and ancient signs of fertility, acorns, fruits, and wreaths. A Green Man, a

²⁸⁶ Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia. Pennsylvania University Press. 2007), 93.

²⁸⁷ Stanbury, 234.

²⁸⁸ Tanner, “Cathedral,” 258.

figure retained from pagan lore, peers from a bed of foliage, blending into the roof of the cathedral.²⁸⁹ Even the roof boss depicting the scene of Adam and Eve in the garden, and Jesus carrying his cross, contains the leafy greenery of the forest, a sign of potency of natural powers that were worshipped in pre-Christian days.²⁹⁰

The blending of pagan and Christian images carries subversive tensions. The foliage and Green Men represent a pagan-centered respect for the powers of nature enclosed within a cathedral, which is a product of an established political authority. These tensions unfold in other dualities, such as the tension between the human as an organic, natural creature surrounded by leaves and the human as a spiritual creation of God, who will be judged for his misdeeds. Tensions between monsters and saints appear in the roof bosses depicting St. George, as he struggles with the dragon, or Eve, as she encounters the serpent. An ongoing struggle to define human-ness, and the failed effort of humans to be holy, literally leaps from the roof bosses.

Julian has a broader view of theology than the church does, and it is included in ecclesiastical art in Norwich. Norwich was not alone in its complex representations of beliefs. Images stirred ambiguity, as the gargoyles and monstrous figures located on the margins of the cathedral building indicate. They suggest a way to fend off sin, or at least to remind visitors of the consequences of sin. Sin, and the distortions it brought to the sinner, are depicted in grotesque statues of distorted people or animals. At the Rouen Cathedral, for instance, lay Christians and non-believers were reminded of the distortions of sin when they saw carvings above them in cathedral arches: animals with human

²⁸⁹ Rose and Hedgecoe, 9.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, Cover and 12.

heads; humans with hoofs; and mythical beasts. But the images were more than moralizing reminders to be good. Such hybrid figures reminded humans just as much of their animal nature as their divine potential for good. Across Europe, craftsmen shared techniques, methods, and tools to develop depictions of scripture and saints on church walls. Much mingling of imagery was cultivated and exported via craftsmen and guild workers who traveled to Norwich, an active mercantile center with a port to supply its businesses. With Julian's own keen awareness of images and scripture, she would have "read" the meanings of such complex representations of sin - images that were human, and yet not human. Their blurred characteristics represented an unclear attitude toward the unavoidable issue of sin within humans, who could aspire to be "God-like," but often could succumb to lower, and perhaps natural instincts.

Manuscript Art

Blending of pagan, classical and Christian concepts in manuscripts mirror the stonework in churches. It is evident in gothic cathedrals, especially since images drew upon similar manuscripts with ambiguous meanings. The *Biblia Pauperum* (The Bible of the Poor), and the *Seculum Humanae Salvatonis* (The Mirror of Man's Salvation) were probably to be found throughout Europe in workshops associated with major ecclesiastical building projects. So the iconography found in the manuscript was often transferred into stone, murals, or tapestry.²⁹¹ The iconography used in the Norwich

²⁹¹ Brown, 7. Outside of Norwich, a book like the Hohlkam Bible was more than a picture book for the illiterate, as once thought, but was most likely a model guide which craftsman used to show patterns would be used as transfers onto woven materials, such as vestments, tapestries, altar clothes and rood screens.

vaulting and in the stained glass of the Chapel at King's College are both drawn from similar earlier medieval picture books, most notably the *Biblia Pauperum*.²⁹² The process of thought, with the interpretation and conversation between text and image in manuscript was transferred to larger pieces of art in the church. In fact, in 1346 a book picturing the apocalypse was bought for the Norwich Cathedral, even though nearly a third of the bosses had been carved by then.²⁹³ Perhaps it was only one of the books purchased for this project.

Text and Image: Art as Illustrative

Text was privileged in manuscripts, but images occupied the margins of cathedrals and prayer books. Pictures existed at the edges of the page, both literally and figuratively. Images in illuminated manuscripts provided more than ornamental adornment; they commented upon or evoked memorial triggers for words on the pages. On the most basic level, they were illustrative of prayer practices, as in the case of the scenes depicting monks kneeling in prayer²⁹⁴ (Figure 3) or ladies kneeling in prayer²⁹⁵ (Figure 4). *The Orchard of Syon*, a Middle English translation of the *Dialogue of St. Catherine* features a brief prologue, which directs the nuns on reading practices. The translator instructs them to read as if they were in an orchard filled with fruits and herbs. “Assaye and serche þe hool orchard, and taste of sich fruyt and herbis reasonably affir zure affeccoun, & what 3ou likeþ best, afterward chewe it well & ete þereof for heelp of

²⁹² Ibid, 59.

²⁹³ Martial Rose, *Stories in Stone*. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHycrFcD0ew>

²⁹⁴ London, British Library, Add MS 42130. Fol. 174r.

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_fs001ar.

²⁹⁵ Ladies in Prayer. Luttrell Psalter. British Library. Add MS 42130. Fol. 174r. (June, 2014) [www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_fs001ar fol.205v](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_fs001ar_fol.205v).

zoure soule.”²⁹⁶ The illustrated cover depicts an image of twelve nuns listening as another nun reads to them.²⁹⁷ Here we have again a moment where the text and the image illustrate a method of communal learning and reading familiar to the nuns at Syon.



Figure 3: Monks in Prayer. London, British Library Board, Add MS 42130. Fol. 174r. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

²⁹⁶ *Orchard of Syon*. 1.

²⁹⁷ *Orchard of Syon*, Christies.com. (June, 2014) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/catherine-of-siena-3934563-details.aspx?intObjectID=3934563>.



Figure 4: Ladies in Prayer appear in The Luttrell Psalter. London, British Library Board, Add MS 42130. Fol. 174r. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

Text and Image: Art as Nuanced

Visual rhetorics, true to the medieval penchant for classification and order, draw upon symmetry, whose counterpart is the rhetorical figure *oppositio*. The placement of

visuals forces oppositional tension across the page, usually with balanced and visual symmetric hierarchy. The virtues in a manuscript could be illustrated on the right side of the page, while the vices could be on the left side of the page.²⁹⁸ The left side would tell the virtues and the right side, the vices. Purity, joy, and charity are presented on the left side of the tree, representing virtues, while malice, wrath, vanity and gluttony are on the opposite page. God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are on the bottom left each swaddling children in their cloaks as they sit at the base of the tree. In a similar format a different manuscript, the De Lisle Psalter, one entire page depicts the virtues, while the opposite page illustrates clusters of vices, springing like fruits from the branches. The vices sprout from the tree's base, and writhing near the bottom, a snake curls itself around the trunk. A naked Adam and Eve wrap their arms around the trunk, while Eve reaches up to take the apple from the serpent's mouth.²⁹⁹ The visual symmetry of the tree puts in picture form what the words express. In these examples the text and image support each other as illustrations of a classification system based on symmetry and opposition. Even within a single page, opposition could still raise its presence.

Art is not bound by the limitations of script. Even within a single page, images could be juxtaposed with the text and directly imply opposition to each other. The position forces the two to be read together to construct a new meaning. An image in a bas-en-page could subvert the text resting directly above it. In some manuscripts, the

²⁹⁸ London, British Library, Additional 30024 f. 2.
<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/zoom.php?id=730>.

²⁹⁹ London, British Library, Arundel 83 fols. 128. This manuscript contains one page of the Tree of Virtues and a separate page with the Tree of Vices.
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IIIID=7111> Fol. 128. <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IIIID=7112> Fol. 129.

scribe occasionally constructs an oppositional tension between the text and the image, drawing actions contrary to the advice given in the text. For instance, a nun suckling a monkey on a page of the *Lancelot Romance* indicates the subversion of the idealized holy nun who should be a chaste follower of Jesus. The image's message is the opposite of the text directly above it. It calls upon a reference to the nun who has committed a sin, giving birth to the hideous monkey that is her child. The rhetoric of the image is not included in the psalter as a mere illustration of the text nor as a mere ornament. The visual rhetoric is in conversation with the textual knowledge it relies upon for meaning. A nun suckling a monkey seems disrespectful, sarcastic or at best, paradoxical. But it is more than mere parody. In its mimicking of the opposite behavior of chastity among the religious orders, the image disorients the reader and then reestablishes the power of the text. By showing the hideous and monstrous, it refers back to the conventional rules it is supporting.³⁰⁰ The obvious grotesqueness or shock of one image, just by illustrating condemned actions, actually supports the normative behavior in the text.

Chaucer and Deconstructed Art

Art was not just art; art was language. In "The Knight's Tale" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Theseus constructs an amphitheater to the god of war, the goddess of love and the goddess of the hunt. The knight Arcite prays at the temple of Mars for victory in the battle. Palamon, his cousin, prays at the temple of Venus for Emily's love. For each temple, Chaucer constructs - and deconstructs - the visual art painted on the respective walls of each temple. He constructs the visual art on the painted walls of each

³⁰⁰ Camille, *Image*, 29-30. The original is in *Lancelot Romance*, John Rylands Library, Manchester, MS fr2fol.212r.

temple, like saints and scenes would be painted in churches and cathedrals. Chaucer deconstructs the myths using the text and art in his language. Chaucer's visual descriptions represent, or rather, misrepresent the aspirations of each knight. Each knight gets his wish fulfilled, but not in the way he expects it. Both knights disregard the message of the art. Mars, the god of war, is not only powerful, but he is destructive. What readers learn from murals is this: the visual to textual content shows up with the bad consequences of war: the disease, the famine, and the cost. Arcite misses these tensions because he is only focused on some of the images in the following example. Palamon prays to the goddess Venus, the goddess of love, in the hopes that he will win the love of Emily. He completely misreads the scenes painted on the walls of the temple, which all point to disastrous outcomes. So the visual codes are outlined one way, and in the text, the knights only partially interpret them. Here, the true meaning of the consequences of love and war are explained in the juxtaposition of both art and text. The text does not stand alone, nor does the art. Both are tools used frequently by Chaucer, whose work examines how human desires lead the knights to misinterpret both text and context.

Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
 The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,
 The sacred teeris, and the waymentyng,
 The firy strokes of the desiryng
 That loves servantz in this lyf enduren;
 The othes that hir covenantz assuren;
 Plesaunce and Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse,
Despense, Bisynesse, and Jalousye,
 Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
 Of love, which that I rekned and rekne shal,
 By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
 And mo than I kan make of mencion. ³⁰¹

³⁰¹ Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," lines 1919-1135.

The broken sleep, the sick colds, the foolhardy desire, the busyness, jealousy and flattery of love will lead to a misguided misery, but Palamon fails to recognize the problems of a life driven by love and desire. Chaucer's knight tells us the story to deconstruct the love-sick behavior of Palamon, but his message more profoundly conveys the human tension of misreading the visual rhetorics. The lesson suggests that Chaucer's readers were responsive to the counter balance of visual rhetorics and the texts they referenced. In fact, the meaning of the section of Palamon's prayer depends upon the tension of the visuals that are in the mural, juxtaposed against the words of the young love-sick knight. The interplay of text and visuals are well established. Visual rhetorics were informed by texts and stories they drew upon, and the visuals, in subverting these stories, reinforced the social conduct they were inevitably establishing.

Art Opens Fissures

Even so, language and anti-language are not just oppositional rhetorics as a means of evoking parody; they open a fissure between words and images. They deliberately disrupt normative order to create ambiguity, forcing the type of intellectual questions Julian raises. Her primary theological questions focus upon the end times and the impossible contradiction of sinfulness and unconditional forgiveness. How can there be sin when sinners are not blameworthy? Why does she feel fearful when Jesus has told her she will not be blamed for her sins? Even moreso, why can't she understand this apparent contradiction? These questions plague her throughout much of the long text. She pleads,

I culde haue no pacience for grett feer and perplexite, thyngkyng, yf I take it thus, þat we be no synners nor no blame wurthy, it semyth as I shulde erre and faile of knowyng of this soth. And yf it be tru that we be synners and blame worthy, good lorde, how may it than be that I can nott see this truth in the, whych arte my god? (Julian, Rev. Ch. 50/22-28).

The binary opposition presented in her questions, regarding those of patience and fear, blame and forgiveness, knowing and unknowing, does not fit in the symmetrical patterns etched in the visual iconography of virtues and vices, for instance. It suggests the possibility of more than two ways of looking at the Last Judgment.

The tension between visual images and text bear witness to the complex understanding of topics such as sin in the Middle Ages. Julian tries to navigate the tumultuous teaching on sin, mercy, and forgiveness. Her language reveals open fissures: either humans are sinful and blameworthy or they are not. Yet, of course, humans sin. And to add to the complexity, her vision and words from Jesus tell her there is no blame. She is at a loss for words. Her understanding of Jesus' message cannot be articulated in words alone. This fractured reasoning leads to her frustration in part because the language to express it is not broad enough to form a new construct. Scholars, including Mary Catherine Bodden, identify two consequences to treating language as fractured.

It emphasizes language as an artificial construct, non-organic, and it directs attention to speech as an act of vocalizing a set of arbitrary sound units (whether intended or not, it also points to the power of these units of sound to shape religious beliefs)... When language is revealed as constructed, one becomes aware of its problems as an epistemological tool.³⁰²

When language fails to articulate a clear idea of a religious event such as the Last Judgment, it exposes language as an inadequate tool. Especially in the context of Julian's transformative vision, one requiring nearly twenty years of meditation, language becomes arbitrary, artificial, and imprecise. She, like other medieval people, draw upon other constructs, such as art, to examine the fissures unfilled by language.

³⁰² Mary Catherine Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt in Medieval and Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 15.

Art and Inadequate Language

Visual images and text together bear witness to the fractured, illusive limitations of language. Illustrated manuscripts, particularly those in texts rimmed with profane, irreverent pictures of copulating animals, defecating beasts, and exposed bottoms, pierce the text with their ambiguity. “We should not see medieval culture exclusively in terms of binary oppositions - sacred/ profane, for example, or spiritual/worldly – for the Ormesby Psalter suggests to us that people then enjoyed ambiguity.”³⁰³ The psalter’s page with Psalm 109 illustrates the tensions between forgiveness and mercy. Condemnation and mercy oppose each other in both the text and images. Medieval writers plunged into ambiguity with a rigorousness and playfulness, treating arguments as high-stakes games. “Juggling elaborate systems of contraries was a celebrated strength of the high middle ages...intricate claims and distinctions within arguments and counterarguments drew admiring students and disciples to the scholastic philosophers engaged in these movements.”³⁰⁴ When the counter arguments appeared in the text, the marginalia nearly jumped off the page to initiate ambiguous play-acting. Psalm 109 in the Ormesby Psalter illustrates the opposition. The psalm asks God to pluck humans from the harsh penalty of condemnation under the law and instead, to show mercy to sinners.³⁰⁵ The marginalia on this page of the psalter is filled with people, animals and hybrids twisting and turning, looking back over their shoulders to plead for mercy. Characters lunge forward and look backward. On the left margin, a man holds a horn, craning his

³⁰³ Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 29.

³⁰⁴ Bodden, 11.

³⁰⁵ Bodleian Library, MS Douce, 366. Fol. 147v.
<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/zoom.php?id=360>.

head to the left of the page, while he walks forward in the opposite direction, exposing his naked bottom. He contorts his body to look back behind them. Another man, tucked in the left corner, falls on a knee (an image of sinfulness), moves forward, but he twists his neck backward in the opposite direction. Here too, at the top of the page, an owl looks backward while sitting on the back of a hare that is running forward. The owl, wide-eyed, peers over his shoulder, looking for past sins. Are they all asking for mercy, as the text suggests? Are they looking backward behind themselves at their past sins, so they will not be condemned? What are their fears, if they hope to secure mercy? Perhaps the artist drew the images to disrupt the permanence of the text, poking holes at the ambiguity of words.

Moreover, the mingling of images, drawing from human, hybrid, biblical and fantasy sources, layer meaning and stimulate imagination. Some illustrations on the page are beyond oppositional and are metaphorical, like the monkey with the implements of hawking at the top. They suggest that the secular activity of training the hawk to hunt is like the spiritual exercises needed to train the Christian to resist temptation. The hybrids at the bottom of the page, the bear and the lion opposing each other, are engaged in the metaphorical battle of good and evil. They also exhibit tensions between animal-like failings and divine inclinations hidden deep in human nature. Even the birds and insects flying up to the top of the page suggest the metaphoric germination of ideas. Spiritual ideas are like those in the natural world, where one idea leads to another in a few forms, partially recognizable and partially unfamiliar.

Julian's rhetorics combine ambiguity and honesty. The absoluteness and finality of punishment was everywhere in abundant forms.³⁰⁶ Like many medieval people of her time, she saw the horrible and fanciful images of apocalyptic violence set in contrast to the eternal reward of heaven. The roof bosses at Norwich Cathedral portrayed the events in detail. Any medieval viewer would have made the connection between the text and the roof boss. One such roof boss places Jesus in the right corner of the scene, extending both hands. The four angels gather together in green sea, ready to descend into the earth, just as in the passage from Revelation.

...and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden alter which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared for the hour and the day and the month and year, that they should kill the third part of men.³⁰⁷

Not only does the roof boss act as memory tool evoking the scriptural passage, but the power of the angels and the apocalyptic forces they represent strike fear into viewers.³⁰⁸

Art and Ambiguity: Hybird Creatures and Bloody Battles

Between sin and redemption, the complex connections are challenging. Visual images do the cultural and theological work of making that challenge. The tension between human nobility and animal-like urges are stamped in the Howard Psalter, a

³⁰⁶ Punishment, payment, and redemption are addressed in Julian's text. "Then seyde Jhesu our good lord: If thou arte apayede, I am apayde. It is a joy, a blysse, an endlesse lykyng to me that eveyr I sufferd passion for the; and if I might suffer more, I wolde suffer more" (Julian, Rev. 22/5-8).

³⁰⁷ Revelations 9: 13-15.

³⁰⁸ Rose and Hedgecoe, 23-24.

prayer book (c. 1330-1340) of East Anglian destination.³⁰⁹ The images produce easily remembered battles drawn in fanciful and startling details. There, an image depicts a Last Judgment scene tucked inside an initial “S.” Inside the “S” sits a ball bifurcated by a blood red line. Jesus calmly sits with his right hand extended and his left hand holding a globe above the line. A sinner, whose green fish-tail curls its scaly fins around the bottom of the sphere, lives below the fluid red line. The pathetic sinner holds his hands up in prayer while his body is propped against a turret with a narrow, oblong door. His naked human body sits upright above the waist, but below, his fish-like body wriggles out of control. Two hybrids at the bottom of the page use their human hands and feet to walk on all fours and still, to extend human-like greetings, blessings, or pleading requests to each other. Their shapes, one with the face of a man and the body of a lion, and the other with the appendages of a man and the face of a ram, depict contorted traits of human and animal behavior. Their gestures may mock the gestures of Christ, as they extend their arms/legs in blessing. Or they may be greeting each other. They may be pleading with each other for mercy. They create an unsettling anti-image of human behavior, since they walk on four legs like animals, but their gestures and faces assume human qualities. Their shocking forms force human readers to recognize their own animal-like natures. They stop the viewer and dialogue with the text and other images on the page, including the “fish-man” in the initial “S.” Sitting on the *bas-en-page*, they are the mirrored representations of behavior that mingle human and animal traits. The entire scene commingles human and animal, prompting complex and ambiguous thoughts regarding

³⁰⁹ London, British Museum, MS Arundel 83 Fol. 47r.
www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMINBig.ASP?size=big&IllID=7085.

human nature. Although the human and animal mingle, they are often in battle with each other in easily remembered images.

Ambiguous human/non-human creatures often populate Last Judgement scenes. The human/animal hybrid reminds Christians of the behaviors they may not be able to control (or control well). The vices and sins recalled in sermons and visual art stem from the nature of humans (the interest in flattery, money, good food, gossip) and may seem harmless distractions. Then, can sins of gluttony, jealousy, or anger actually be avoided? Julian would admit these sins may not be avoided, but church teaching insists that they absolutely should be avoided. Last Judgment scenes suggest that sins will be punished appropriately. Julian struggles with a vision that indicates her sin will be forgiven, understood, and, in an odd twist, will even be a source of transformation. She does not see the Last Judgment in terms of a battle.

Even so, Last Judgment art usually forecasts a battle for the ages between virtue and vice. What better stage for the apocalypse than well-recognized battles from antiquity? Prudentius' *Psychomachia* is one of the most shocking texts known to medieval people. It is a memorable source because it contains visuals and text in dialogue with each other. *Psychomachia* relies upon sets of graphic and violent scenes (Abraham fighting for Lot, Faith combating Idolatry, and Pride trampling Humility). Together, they provoke further mental attention, in part because they are visual descriptions of memorable scenes (Pride has her head pulled by the hair, and her head is cut off quickly.) At the beginning of epic combats, the reader is urged to "see" the pictures of the poem. In these battle scenes, the mind is provided a set of images to be stored as a narrative

whole.³¹⁰ They can be stored in parts and pieces to be linked later, and they can be used for different purposes. They can be interpreted for their method of teaching virtues and vices – Christian values taught in an overlay of classical Virgilian verse. So too, they directly recall another set of classical stories and texts about victory, courage in battle, and bravery in the Aeneid. Furthermore, an orchestration of allegorical or metaphorical language used in Latin and English provide additional storage rooms, passageways, and systems for retrieving language through memory. These scenes are available to the viewer as the “furnishings” or theatrical rooms in the mind where the Christian can recall passages of text, other stories, similar pictures, and recent events all in one series of memories.³¹¹ Last Judgment murals in manuscripts and cathedrals built, sorted, and organized scriptural stories of battles between virtue and vice, sin and redemption, all represented in scenes from the apocalypse. The scenes also model virtuous behavior in lives of devout Christians: saints, martyrs, church teachers, as well as devotional and spiritual writers, who shed their blood for faith. Devotional writers imitated and modified the same process of recognizing and recording emotionally-charged scenes. Julian’s description of Jesus’ blood as “pelettes,” or round pools of liquid, falling like rain from the eaves, or drying like a cloth in the wind, remain in the memory because they evoke disturbing feelings of violence and abandonment. The violence is often couched in a battle between good and evil.

Julian’s anxiety is heightened with the seriousness of sin in the passion. She understands the pain and suffering it causes, not only to sinners, but to Jesus. She shares

³¹⁰Prudentius. *Prudentius*, Two Vol. ed. and trans. H. J. Thomson. Loeb Classical Library. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1947), 1953.

³¹¹ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 58-59.

broad cultural anxieties about the role humans played in the violence inflicted upon Jesus during his death and the events leading to it. Anxiety about sinfulness could not be ignored. Blood frenzy, access to the Eucharist, and apparitions of bleeding hosts were signs of the elevated anxiety in Germany that also spread to England. So too, violence toward Jesus became increasingly emphasized in the fourteenth century. Drama cycles acted out extended scenes of bleeding as a result of Jesus' scourging, the use of the crown of thorns, and the driving of nails into his hands. The visible amount of blood on Jesus' body showed up in the art of the fourteenth century, as crucifixion scenes became increasingly grizzly with depictions of dripping and clustering blood, along with weeping flesh.³¹² The cycle dramas, for instance, included a scene in which the guards nailed Jesus to the top of the cross while his legs were stretched until the stake could be driven through his feet.³¹³ Julian's intellectual insistence demands an underlying meaning to such a cruel reality:

I culde haue no pacience for grett feer and perplexite,... I cryde inwardly with all my myght, sekyng in to god for helpe menyng thus: A, lorde Jhesu, kyng of blysse, how shall I be esyde, who shall tell me and tech me that me nedyth to wytt, if I may nott at this tyme se it in the? (Julian, Rev.50/22-39).

This part of the text is a turning point. Before this point, the earlier narrative sections describe her participation in Jesus' passion. Here, her question –or plea – to learn how God sees us in sin dominates her text. She cannot understand how humans can sin and be blamed, and also not be blamed and not sin. Church authority teaches her that sin will be

³¹² See Bynum, *Wonderful Blood* and Enders, *Theater of Cruelty*.

³¹³ "Fest on a rop and pulle hym long,/ And I shal drawe thee ageyn./ Spare we not these ropys strong/ Thow we brest both flesch and veyn." *N-Town Plays*. 206, ll 65-69

punished, but her vision tells her sin will not be punished. She must understand church teaching, but also remain true to her vision. At this point, the two cannot be reconciled. Stylistically, it is a turning point because the passion narrative ends and the next chapter begins with the exemplum of the servant and the lord, which will be interpreted and reinterpreted by her in the remaining chapters of the text. Highly allegorical on several levels and open to numerous interpretations, the exemplum signals a shift from a recording of her own narrative to a reconsideration of her exemplum. She no longer can digest the “alle will be well” statement about sin. This is the passage in which she most vividly describes “perplexity” and “feer” associated with the day of doom. She cannot reconcile her fear of punishment with her hope for unconditional forgiveness. It is the one place where the “voice” of Julian as a frustrated, faithful person thrashes against the ambiguous logic of church teaching. She teeters on the edge of orthodox teaching. She knows there are consequences for denouncing or diminishing the gravity of sin in church teaching. She may be reprimanded, publicly and privately, for such subversive thoughts that undermine traditional church teaching. Visual art underscores her “feer” and “perplexity.”

Text and Visual Rhetoric

Her text is in conversation with many of the visual rhetorics surrounding her. Anxieties about sinfulness fuels details about the horrible pains of the Day of Last Judgment. Her fearfulness is perhaps a reflection of these apocalyptic scenes. One such medieval doom is painted in the Guild Chapel at Stratford-on-Avon. It could make a practical design for a staged Hell in a cycle play. From a square tower at the top of a

castle, devils blow their horns, only to keep the flames of the hell mouth burning. This picture portrays six different strata of hell. One naked sinner, pulled by a dragon toward a group of people enchained in a circle, awaits his turn with the others. They all peer into the actual hell mouth, constructed on the next level of the stage. Another group, locked in an upper room, is hung from a rope in the ceiling and burned by flames. Below, the two remaining groups are either being consumed by flames or are being held in a turret for possible incineration in a giant brick oven/caldron.³¹⁴

Stage props known as “helle-carts” belonged to guilds, like the Guild of St Luke. Evidence of such a hell-mouth used in 1527 in Norwich Cathedral attest to their construction. Several authors, including M. D. Anderson,³¹⁵ and Peter Hâppé,³¹⁶ see evidence of a dramatic cycle of plays, now lost, known as the *Grocer’s Cycle*, in the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral. Dozens of roof bosses depict scenes found primarily in drama cycles and not in scripture. Those extra-scriptural details, such as the protracted stretching of Jesus’ body on the cross with ropes and nails, suggest that dramas provided a corpus of shared community discourse, reproduced in text, performance, and art. Scenes, especially those elevating the horror of the crucifixion and Last Judgment, heightened the awareness of medieval Christians to the uncompromising nature of sin. Julian would have been aware of some of these tensions and uncompromising attitudes.

³¹⁴ See image in M.D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963, 129.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 127-129.

³¹⁶Hâppé, 80-92.

Art and the Garden

The images functioned as forms of discourse, moving between visual and textual rhetoric to increase meditation. Specific evidence of this phenomenon is in verbal and visual puns used in monastic circles. The interplay of visual and textual puns, as Carruthers notes, perfected a technique essential to memory and contemplation:

The idea returns to the monastic presumption that a person must prepare to read and not blankly ingest or copy the words on a page. Liminal creatures and activities, including sexual scenes, jousting games, fights, hybrid creatures and scatological functions fill the borders of texts, where pictures invite a context for memory. Examples of fertility pun upon the need to be fruitful, (flowers, buds, nuts, eggs, plowing, seeding, and copulating) suggest multiple pathways to memory and meditational cues. The weaving of vines, the gathering of flowers, the moving of earth, all cue one to tend one's garden.³¹⁷

Vines, flowers, and acorns planted specific ideas in the mind, and were commonly found in psalters (Luttrell, Howard and Ormesby) and in church stonework or carving (sculpted vines, chiseled birds, and unfurled leaves). While these may have seemed to be ornamental, they also signaled a reminder of fertility of mind, spirit, and soul. They prompted new or renewed prayer, the tending of the soul, and a continual effort to labor in the field to earn eternal life.

Monastic practices could open up new and problematic connections. One of the reasons prayer guidebooks were written was for the medieval church to maintain authoritative controls over men and women anchorites, who were not under the auspices of the monasteries. The *Ancrene Wisse* author reminds his readers to maintain daily prayers in a particular order to be prayed at particular times. He reminds them to regulate their words and behavior, and he uses memory and organizational tools (sin through the

³¹⁷ Camille, *Mirror*, 45. Camille is responding to comments in Carruther's text, *Book of Memory*.

five senses) to help them interpret and recall their own actions. The process of using memory to store, resort, and to organize information for quick retrieval could be the door to misinterpretations. When lay men and women invested themselves in spiritual exercises and prayer, they could arrive at different conclusions than what church teaching provided. One only needs to remember the Wife of Bath's interpretations of St. Paul's views on chastity to realize that she did not see the logic of women remaining virgins. The growth of Christianity depended upon procreation. So too, Margery Kempe interpreted scripture to mean that Jesus urged women to tell others of his miraculous deeds, and therefore, could preach. The sorting of scriptural passages by theme and image allowed for variations on church teachings. This tension arises in Julian's text and explains her concern about being misunderstood and about misunderstanding her own vision. Her twenty year process of meditation is reflected in her images of watering, working, and gardening.

Meditation about sin explains why Julian is fascinated with the garden. Digging, planting, gathering, and watering fill the laborer's day. The servant, or Christian, "shuld be a gardener, deluyng and dykyng and swetyng and turning the erth up and down, and seke the depnesse and water the plantes in tyme. And in this he shule contynue his traveyle, and make swete flodys to rynne" (Julian, Rev. 51/193-196). From the slime of the soil, an entire world will grow. She refers to creation in words of the garden: God "toke the slyme of the erth, whych is a mater medelyd and gaderyd af alle bodily thynges, and therof he made mannes body" (Julian, Rev. 53/43-45.) Even the resurrected body comes from the ground in the garden. A new eternal birth only happens after the body has died and been buried/planted in the soil. She sees that out of the "swylge stynkyn myrre,

and sodeynly out of this body sprong a fulle feyer creatuere, a lytyyle chyld” (Julian. Rev. 64: 32-33). As a continuous theme weaving through her text, life and resurrection comes after death. As a result, “dying” and “hanging to dry” are central. A potential world rests within the garden, and the “dying and drying” of Jesus body on the crucifix restores the entire world. Feeding, eating, masticating and defecating are natural components of obtaining and sorting new information or experience. With Julian, Jesus feeds his people, nurses his children at the breast, and after giving birth to them, cares for them spiritually and physically. Christians must reorganize to learn new information: “gather together, fight against, conjoin, reject, observe by likeness and unlikeness, gather bits of memory and sort and store in other places. Even the shocking or monstrous can force or create a powerful memory.”³¹⁸ In Julian, the “mother Jesus,” for instance, is not a contorted figure per se, but it is a conjoining of two genders, a sorting and combining of likeness and unlikeness, a tool to force a potent and undeniable fertility, along with an unforgettable memory. Here, language of the garden is used as an epistemological tool, using metaphoric language, but also constructing the garden as a “holding place” in the mind. It helps the reader sort, resort, and align fissures in church teaching. The garden is a source of life, but also a place of death and burial. New life comes in a form that is familiar - and not familiar, especially in the form of Mother Jesus.

Such “word-pictures” or “memory-images” explain the majority of marginalia in texts like the Luttrell Psalter, but not all. The complex interplay between visual and textual rhetorics exposes deeper tensions in medieval culture. The Luttrell Psalter is not just a grouping of religious texts arranged and presented with visual equivalents clustered

³¹⁸ Ibid, 162-164.

in the margins. The pictures show “tensions or disjunctions that arise between the psalms, and their monstrously distorted, and always allusive, pictorial progeny that are most important. It is in the fissures or cracks between visual and verbal discourse, the ‘breaks’ of ideology”³¹⁹ that human history opens up complex meaning. Rather than interpret the marginal pictures as mere commentary on the words held inside by the marginalia, Camille urges scholars to read the visual pictures not only to be mirrors of the Word, but expressions of the Word, in their own right. In some cases, pictures even represent events that only might be imagined, like for example, George Luttrell’s death. Is it his naked body and coffin pictured in the margins of the psalter? Was the book prepared for his spiritual direction?³²⁰ The psalter is as much a commentary on the Word as on the historical life of Luttrell and the fourteenth century society in which he lived. “There is always a residue, a tension between inside and outside, between the work’s internal dynamics and the social nexus it is messily bound up with, which makes the most powerful examples of human creation endlessly fascinating.”³²¹ The images assist George Luttrell, for whom the book was produced, in his process to internalize the psalms. Julian, likewise, internalizes her initial vision. She interprets and reexamines the scenes she can recall from her vision. The pictures that form in her mind, especially of events to come, such as the Last Judgment, are scenes that are imagined or might be. They find their way into words and from words. As I will discuss, the social and historical context of her community are also processed into her own interpretation of her vision.

³¹⁹Camille, *Mirror*, 45.

³²⁰ Ibid, 175.

³²¹ Ibid, 174

The mixture of verbal and visual discourses is the catalyst for puns, satire, social critique, eclectic mockery, and political commentary. In Norwich, a city filled with an interplay of visual and verbal discourse, images push at the edges of ecclesiastic authority and prompt imagined events in the future, such as the Last Judgment. The interplay occurs through text, performance, and art. This assertion presumes a breakdown of modern disciplinary silos of text and art, of performance and writing, in which words and art are studied in isolation from one another. Instead, visual and verbal challenge one another, occasionally in opposition, but often in an ambiguous blending of references. Often text, art, and performance peel back the outer shell of normative codes of Christian church teaching to examine complex tensions within a community of believers.

The ancient text that contains the sacred and mundane is the Book of Psalms. Human desire can lead to increased union with Jesus, especially as the volumes of mystics have testified, but it can also cast the Christian into sinfulness. The scholar, mystic and hermit, Richard Rolle, advisor to the nuns at Hampole, wrote about the divine experience in fleshly, human detail. Ambiguity about sacred and profane images of desire actually caused a burning sensation for Rolle, which he sought to duplicate later in his life during mediation. While writing a translation of the psalms from Latin into vernacular English, it would have been impossible for him to avoid the sensual, graphic physicality of the psalms, especially since he intended to maintain a faithful translation. Graphic images would have been known to him in visual form from other psalters he may have seen. In fact, it is quite likely that he knew the Luttrell Psalter, since two members of Geoffrey Luttrell's family, Margery and Lucy, were nuns at Hampole.³²² Especially in his "Meditations on the Passion

³²² Ibid, 145.

of Christ,” he describes the pain that Jesus could feel and smell, in a way that conflates the sacred and the mundane.³²³ Sensuous and even profane images of sensuality may have entirely fit with some of the text of his Psalter.

Julian’s text assumes tensions between sacred and mundane. She writes about the difficulty of humans failing to be holy and yet, falling into sin despite the urge to remain faithful to God. Her texts suggest sin is a prerequisite for redemption. In Jesus, the sacred and profane are knitted together, only without sin. For humans, sacred and profane are also linked. However, even though humans are knitted to Jesus and his perfection, they are still bound to fail in sinfulness. In the exemplum of the servant, she writes: “The vertu and the goodnesse that we have is of Jesu Crist,” but she cannot deny that “the febilnesse and blyndnesse that we have is of Adam, which two were shewed in the present” (Julian, Rev.5/229-331). The tension between the virtue of human souls and the unavoidable feebleness of the human condition are nearly irreconcilable. A visual image of the bifurcated pages indicating virtues and vices come to mind in this passage, especially the image in the De Lisle Psalter depicting Adam and Eve groping for the fruit of the garden.³²⁴ In the De Lisle Psalter, the vices are so clearly categorized, visually represented as fruits on the tree. Some vices descend from the greater ones. Although Julian understands the orderly clusters of vices, and a listing of them, she sees them as

³²³ “How þi his lufly face all with spytyng fyeled, How þai buffeted þe fairest face if al mankynde. How þai his swete hend with coordis band so fast, þat of all þe flod oute brast. How þai bette hym with knotty skourges” Rolle, “Meditations on the Passion,” ed. Horstman, 112.

³²⁴ London, British Library, MS Arundel 83 Fol.128.
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMINBig.ASP?size=big&IllID=7111>
 Fol 128.

ambiguously mingled with divine “goodnesse” and the human “febilnesse,” which are both shown together in the present.

She explains the fissure in church teaching through a particularly visual format, namely her narrative exemplum. The exemplum does not provide a resolution to this tension, but rather, it plunges into the ambiguous truth. Scenes in this part of her vision are particularly vibrant with artistic qualities, such as color, setting and portraiture. Here, she also uses a visual technique of symmetry to describe the higher part of human actions and the lower part. Her emphasis is on the loving forgiveness of God, who loves every soul that will be saved. In the end, however, she admits that humans still fail in their efforts to be holy. It is in this failing that Julian understands that all people need to work continuously to overcome sin. Sin is part of human experience, but God’s love transcends, and can even transform, the unavoidable damage and harm that comes from sinfulness.

For as it was shewde to me that I shuld synne, right so was the comfort shewyde: suernesse of keypyng for alle myn evyn christen. What may make me more to loue myn evy christen than to see in god that he louth alle that shalle be savyd, as it were alle one soule? For in every soule that shalle be savyd is a godly wyll that nevyr assentyth to synne, nor nevyr shalle. Ryght as there is a bestely wyll in the lower party that may wyll be no good, ryght so there is a godly wyll in the hygher party, whych wyll is so good that it may nevyr wyll evylle, but evyr good. And therefore we be that he lovyth, and endlesly we do that he lykyth. And thys shewyde oure good lorde in þe hoolhed of loue that we stande in, in hys syght; yeea; that he lovyth vs now as welle, whyle that we be here, as he shalle do when we be there before hys blessyd face; but for feylyng of loue in oure party, therefore is alle oure traveyle (Julian, Rev. Ch. 37/11-24).

Her reference to the lower “bestely wyll” and the higher part of the “godly wyll” draws upon the art surrounding her. We can recall the beastly hybrids at the *bas-en-page* of the Luttrell Psalter (Figure 5). One of its folio pages flaunts a hybrid with one horn coming from his mouth and another from its bottom. The figure, with its blended human and

animal characteristics, is the very embodiment of ambiguous messages. Its commentary upon sinfulness is equally complex. It is hard not to recognize this as sin emerging from both orifices. One recalls the famous scene of the friars in the “Summoner’s Tale” where the friars are tumbling out of the devil’s anus. Clearly, Julian’s depiction of sin in her vision draws from a rich tradition. The difference is that her use is more original and unusual than others. She is not limiting herself to the resolutely irreversible consequences of being caught in the devil’s anus. She writes that it was shown to her that she should sin, yet her message is consistently more focused upon God’s love than on his anger at the sinner. It is a new opportunity for redemption. She exposes the ambiguity of sinfulness. She is pioneering this concept. One of her most urgent and pressing problems is her paradoxical understanding that although sin cannot be fully assented to, it will be committed, and inevitably, it will actually be forgiven. Only through sin, and contrition for it, can redemption come. Sin holds the seeds of transformation.

The pictures on the pages of manuscripts depict complex concepts of sin and confession. The sinner meekly kneels before Jesus in a state of humility, but it is impossible to ignore the fluid figure on the bottom of the page. While the small, oval space depicting confession is contained within the tightly conscribed borders of the letter “C,” the rest of the page is blossoming with leaves and vines, seeming to be overflowing with ambiguous opportunities for sin and salvation. There is a tension between a person’s desire to be good and an almost irresistible attraction to the abundant activities of life that may lead to sin.



Figure 5. The Lord, Seated Hearing Confession in the Luttrell Psalter. London, British Library Board, MS ADD 42130 Fol 185v. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.



Figure 6. Man Kneeling Before the Lord. London, British Library Board, MS ADD 42130/F177v. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

Ambiguity in Confession

Julian resolves some of the tension by implicitly referring to Jesus as a confessor. Two images of the confession from the Luttrell Psalter depict Jesus as the attentive and loving confessor.³²⁵ Jesus' face is described in Julian's text, but it is similar to that depicted in the Luttrell Psalter. Jesus is not wrathful, but seems patient and tolerant, and perhaps rather bored. In one image, his face hovers above the scene looking out from a cloud, from a position of authority (Figure 6). In another he is seated, leaning his body forward, striking a posture of empathy, listening to a man's confession. Julian depicts a patient and loving listener.

And the louely lokyng that he lokyd on his servannt contynually, and namely in his fallyng, me thought it myght meltoure hartys for loue and brest them on twoo for joy. This feyer lokyng shewed of a semely medelur which was marvelous to beholde. That one was rewth and pytte, that other joy and blysse. The joy and blysse passyth as ferre þe rewth and the pytte as hevyn is aboue erth. The pytty was erthly and the blysse hevynly (Julian, Rev. Ch. 51/ 127-134).

Julian draws upon the reservoir of visual rhetorics found in paintings and sculpture. She paints with words the way the scribe paints with his brush in the marginal pictures. Jesus "look" is "feyer lokyng," it is "lovely lokyng," it "might meltoure hartys," as in a picture of painting. It is concerned with colors of his face and his eyes. She is painting a picture with her words and through her words.

³²⁵The Lord Seated Hearing Confession. London, British Library, MS ADD 42130 Fol 185v. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_fs001ar Fol 177v. See Kneeling Man Confessing to Jesus. London, British Library MS ADD 42130 http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_fs001ar Fol 177v. This scene depicts Jesus looking lovingly at a man and hearing his confession. Jesus leans his body toward the man, and the man is kneeling below Jesus praying, as if he has fallen. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

As I have already explained in this chapter, Julian would have been familiar with the conversation between the visual and textual rhetorics of the Last Judgment. First, she would have known the visual schema of heaven and hell and its textual representations. Second, she would have recognized the tension, anxiety and ambiguity about confession, the measurement of sin, and payment of sin Jesus secured through his passion. Finally, she would have recognized that the Last Judgment was a political and social equalizer, rendering objective and equal judgment of all, kings and queens, wealthy and poor, rendering them all naked before God. It is this last element of the Last Judgment that perhaps influenced her text so significantly, with its ability to deliver an impartial and merciful order to all.

The Last Judgment and a New Order

Jesus' impartial justice delivered at the Last Judgment would break expectations. It would determine the true nature of a sinner's soul, regardless of medieval political or economic status or privilege. The dichotomy between heaven and hell, as well as eternal peace and damnation have been described earlier in this chapter, and there are ample examples of visuals that address the Last Judgment. For the artist, the problem of describing a new world order, based upon God's mercy and not upon human justice, is addressed through hierarchical representations of people. In paintings and in plays alike we are presented with individual after individual in a potentially limitless series of satiric or homiletic vignettes. Virtually all Last Judgment paintings show us churchmen among the saved and among the damned, their mitres and vestments pointedly visible. No less in evidence is the armor of noble warriors. All the various estates are present. Among the

damned, money bags identify users or misers. Crowns or coronets signal rulers or members of the aristocracy. The broad spectrum of society is an essential part of the panoramic inclusiveness of the painting.³²⁶ Hierarchy is important here, represented visually in vertical and horizontal movement of scenes. Furthermore, hierarchy and the placement of individuals in certain corners of the painting or panel signals the new order brought by the Last Judgment. Queens and bishops could be located at the bottom of the scene in hell, just as well as they could be sitting near Jesus's feet. This reorganizing of a hierarchy depicts the size and scope of Jesus' authority in the Last Judgment scenes.

The impartial judgment of all people, ranks, and classes was part of the scriptural text so crucial to Julian's vision. The story of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) illustrates the difference between the laborers who put in the most effort, working all day, as contrasted with those who started in the last hours of the day. Even though the afternoon laborers did not work as long as the day-long crew, they all received the same payment and mercy of the landowner. In many depictions of the Last Judgment images, the sinners are all subjected to the same unbiased judgment, even if they were privileged in life. Hence, the common theme in Last Judgment images are the naked sinners waiting for final placement. With this assumption of equal judgment, a new order is established, so that the rich may be condemned, and the poor may gain the riches of heaven.

Visual depictions of the Last Judgment insist on impartial judgment for each individual, regardless of class and rank. The weighing of sin during confession and the neutral distribution of mercy by God establishes a new ordering of people on the day of

³²⁶ Sheingorn and Bevington, 133.

final judgment. The Wenhaston Doom, a wood panel painting that had been set over the chancel arch of St Peter's in Wenhaston, Suffolk, portrays the Last Judgment narrative.³²⁷

The Wenhaston Doom depicts an impartial, but humanized Jesus with his wounds exposed and his arms raised in blessing at the top of the panel. Below him on the bottom right, sinners are wrapped in chains by devils who draw them into the hell mouth. In the next frame to the left, a sinner sits on one side of a scale, while his sins, represented as small demon-like shapes, wait for the judgment. Since the sinner's goodness outweighs the bad, he will presumably gain entrance into heaven. Near the hell mouth on the right bottom, naked kings, queens and a cardinal all stand with crowns or hats on before St. Peter, waiting to gain entrance into heaven. At the very bottom left are two individuals, without any signs of class, rank or status, gaining entrance into heaven. One holds a helping hand that has reached down from the top of the stairs. The other sinner, naked buttocks and back showing, is greeted by a smiling angel. All the humans, regardless of their status on earth, naked as they may be, must pass through a narrow door, to reach heaven, or to be taken into the jaws of hell. In this case, rich and poor, nobility and peasant are subjected to a process of confession, admission of sin and determination of worthiness to enter heaven. Even sinners who enter heaven do so with their bare buttocks in clear view, regardless of their rank or status on earth.

In Julian's exemplum, the servant represents vulnerability as he stands before God. Although the servant is not completely naked, he is poised before the lord, partially clad in clothing stained with sweat. He is laboring in the metaphoric garden of life, and

³²⁷ A. Caiger-Smith, Panel XVI.

https://www.google.com/search?q=wenhasten+doom&oq=wenhasten+doom&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i6013j012.4827j0j7&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8.

his lord asks him to perform a task. The lord sits solemnly, and the servant stands in reverence before him. His outward appearance seems appropriate for his work in the garden, but it also connotes a spirit of poverty, and Julian points to the “doubyll vnderstanding, one without, another within” (Julian, Rev. 51:164-165). The naked exposure in her text mirrors the pictures of nakedness in Last Judgment scenes. One of her innovations describes the story using scenes as if in a painting, full of details including clothing, color, sweat marks and torn tunics:

“Outward he was clad symply, as a laborer whych was dysposyd to traveyle, and he stod full nere the lorde,... hys clothyng was a whyt kyrtyll, syngell, olde and alle defautyd, dyed with swete of his body, streyte syttyng to hym and shorte, as it were an handfull beneth the knee, bare, semyng as it shuld sone be worne vppe, redy to be raggyd and rent (Julian, Rev. 51/ 165-175).

The servant’s bare legs and his sweat-stained, ragged tunic symbolize his human inadequacies and weakness. He resembles those of peasants seen in the flagellation scene of the Despenser Retable or the Holkham Bible. Both of those scenes depict the floggers as rough and perhaps dangerous peasants, with muscular, dirt-covered legs and roughly made clothing. Yet, Julian depicts the servant as vulnerable and meek. He is just as vulnerable as are the kings, queens, and clerics in the Wensington Doom Painting.

Clothing stands as an indicator of authority, both in texts and iconography. In the historic context of the fourteenth century, the relationship between the two would be highly regulated. In Julian’s exemplum the “unseemly clothing” of the servant seems inappropriate for the occasion of addressing the lord. The soiled servant, however, does not anger the lord in the least, which suggests that a new order is emerging.

“I marvelyd gretly, thynkyng: This is now an vnseemly clothyng for þe servant that is so heyly lovyd to stond in before so wurschypfull a lord. And inward in

hym was shewed a ground of loue, whych loue he had. To the lorde, that was evyn lyke to þe loue that þe lord had to hym” (Julian, Rev. Ch. 51: 171-175).

The servant’s outside appearance and his inward disposition determines where he will be placed in the new social order. For Julian, love, and not sin, carries the heaviest weight in determining where a person will end up after final judgment. Casting the meek, though sinful servant at the lord’s side is not unusual in scripture, but Julian’s detailed representations of them in the vernacular is.

Few medieval works exemplify the interplay of visual rhetorics and scripture as well as the Holkham Bible. Like the Wenhaston Doom, it depicts the social order of a community, but because it is lengthy with 42 folio pages, it does so with more detail than a single mural can. Produced from 1325-40, the Holkham Bible predates the Wenhaston. Its clear representations of London landmarks, including St. Paul’s Cathedral, send clear signals of its communally shared references. The artist who produced it was likely to have worked in and around Paternoster Row, an area surrounded by bead makers and textile merchants. The staging for many of the scenes were specific areas in London, including a representation of the Tower of London. The artist was part of a trend in book production that was interested in portraying the rural and urban life of England alongside the stories recorded in scripture, which also influenced the artist of the Luttrell Psalter. It was used as a book of models for other ecclesiastic art, particularly textiles such as tapestries, vestments and rood screens (Figure 7). If Julian would not have seen this book, it is likely she was familiar with the images contained in it, since those images were likely to be used as sources for other material art or other pictures in manuscripts.³²⁸

³²⁸ Brown, 17-18.



Figure 8. The Harrowing of Hell in the Holkham Bible. London, British Library Board, Add 47682 MS. Fol. 34r. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r. Fol 34r. In the first half of book, before Christ ascends to heaven, the end times are predicted.

In its treatment of the Last Judgment, it challenges the social order of the community it captures in pictures. The Last Judgment spans five folio pages (f. 40v – f. 42v), even more per pages than the crucifixion, which is depicted in three folio pages (f. 31v – f. 32v). The Harrowing of Hell is depicted in the first half of the book. In the picture bible, Jesus is depicted as the gentle greeter of sinners (Figure 8). The last five pages of the picture bible depict the determination of equal treatment all people will receive at the end of time. It portrays all people rising from the dead, and even though they are from different estates and ranks of life, with clergy, queens, kings, bishops, and ordinary folk, they all crawl from a common bed of corpses. Their lives will be assessed based on the same criterion according to Christ. Just as in the Wenhaston Doom, we see the narrative account of sinners being judged worthy to enter heaven or judged fated to fall into hell.³²⁹ Sinners and saints, kings and queens, servants and lords all need to endure a review of their lives on earth, so they can obtain a place in eternity. That place, however, will be the result of a new order and hierarchy based upon the choices made on earth.

The scenes are both graphic and serene in the Holkham Bible Last Judgment.³³⁰

The folio page depicting the Last Judgment contains four quadrants. At the bottom right,

³²⁹The Harrowing of Hell. London, British Library, Add 47682 MS. Fol. 34r
http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r. Fol 34r. In first half of book before Christ ascends to heaven, the end times are predicted. Jesus holds the victory flag and greets sinners. Also see New Heaven and the New Earth as depicted in the Holkham Bible. London, British Library, Add 47682 MS. Fol. 42r. Reproduced with copyright permission from © The British Library Board.

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r. fol 42r .

³³⁰ London, British Library Add 47682 MS. Fol. 42v.

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_47682_fs001r fol. 42v Hell appears on right side with devils and a pot, with a doorway to the left side showing naked sinners greeting the angel at the narrow door to heaven.

sinner's boil in a pot, one with a sneer on his face and another being forced to have his entrails removed. A jug of wine floats past a devil in a sea at the bottom of the page while another devil wheels a barrel full of sinners to the boiling pots. Above the flaming heat, two devils carry sinners on their shoulders. At the top right, some sinners are chained by a devil, soon to be dragged into hell. Among the sinners being led to hell are all types of people, including a bishop, a king, and a handful of ordinary people. In contrast, the left half of the page depicts a hopeful scene where Jesus stands calmly, wounds exposed, with right hands extended. Next to him are two angels, the one at his left holding the crown of thorns and the lance, while the one to his right holds the cross and three nails that fastened his hands and feet to the wood. In the left bottom corner, an angel compassionately holds the hand of one sinner, while two others huddle behind the first, hoping to gain entrance through the narrow door behind the winged angel.

Julian uses visuals of the Last Judgment, but her God is joyous and blissful. She displays the hierarchy in reverse. She provides pictorial information and she displays definitiveness: "Yf the lorde shuld assigne in hym ony maner of blame; and verely there was none seen, for oonly hys good wyll and his grett desyer was cause of his fallyng" (Julian, Rev. 51/34-36). Her God is never wrathful, and her language shows God united with his servant. The servant, who may normally be blamed, will not be in this scenario. Julian describes the scene with pictorial images to support her theological understanding of the lord in judgment. She deliberately avoids language and scenes of horror, damnation or harshness in her depiction of Jesus. "The lorde syttyth solempnely in rest and in pees. The servant stondyth before his lorde, reverently redy to do his lords wyll. The lorde lokyth upon his servant full lovely and swely and mekely" (Julian, Rev. 51/10-

12). The scene she paints through language is inviting, safe, and trustworthy. In a reversal of hierarchical roles, the servant stands ready before the lord, but the lord is not forceful. He looks at his servant in a way that is “meek” and “full lovely.” This reversal of hierarchical roles, portrayed in language so readily adaptable to pictures for the mind, makes Julian’s writing innovative and memorable.

Politics and Prayer in Norwich

Memorable visual messages are cut in stones of the Norwich Cathedral. Pictorial elements of placement, hierarchy, and detail are framed in the Norwich Cathedral Prior’s Arch. The angels and saints in heaven are depicted with a calm Jesus, positioned in the center of the arch, in a place of hierarchical authority. Jesus extends his right arm in blessing, and he uses his left to invite the viewer to see his side wound, which are details that reflect his humanity. The angels stand at his left and right side, carrying the cross and the flag of victory. Symmetric placement of each angel and saint on the arch is visually relevant. An angel, St. Peter, and John the Baptist are on the left, while another angel, Moses and St. Edmund are on his right. Images of unrest, however, lurk in this archway, suggesting the balance is not easily found. Human sin and conflict are under the surface and have not been resolved. The angels hold the instruments of torture; the one on the left holds the cross and crown of thorns, while the one on the right holds the spear. Even the head of the archer who killed St. Edmund is stuffed under his feet. John the Baptist stands with his executioner under his heels. On the opposite side of the arch is Moses, who continuously begged the Israelites to abandon pagan idol worship. Moses is next to St. Edmund, who fought against pagan violence in England.

The Legend of St. Edmund casts political power and religion into the same arena. The Last Judgment magnifies the tension between political might and religious imperative. Particularly in the life of St. Edmund, religious power is framed against religious spirituality. Edmund, crowned king at age 15 in 857, died as a martyr on November 20, 869. During his reign, the Danes hoisted violent attacks on East Anglia, resulting in the persecution of Christians. These attacks culminated in the Battle of Thetford, where Edmund demonstrated his military strength. The account of St. Edmund's fight for the autonomy of East Anglians during the battle of Thetford made him a secular leader; his subsequent decision to renounce violence and resist pagan practice led to his martyrdom and made him a spiritual leader. His decision was recorded in stories and perpetuated in the posthumous miracles attributed to him. As a Christian who fought pagan violence delivered by the Vikings, he was a Christian saint, and as king of East Anglia, he was a military warrior. According to several accounts, he recognized the paradox in his use of violence as a means of defending Christianity. The contrasting values of religiously based commitment and secularly condoned violence were not easily reconciled. Political and military might did not easily coincide with religious truth.

Accounts of his life were repurposed in subsequent centuries. Hagiographic material and secular records were brought into focus when religious leaders or secular kings evoked his authority. These reinterpretations could occur because his secular life as ruler of East Anglia and spiritual role model were well-recorded. Furthermore, his death

at the hands of the Danes led to his legendary position as a spiritual model.³³¹ Detailed accounts of his life and posthumous miracles were recorded by Herman the Archdeacon, a monk at Bury St. Edmund's, and others in years that spanned 869-1094.³³² Herman also served as an aid to the Bishop of Norwich, John Losigna, during the time Norwich Cathedral was under construction in 1119.³³³

The most elaborate and lengthy account of Edmund's life appears in John Lydgate's retelling of the story in a poem in 1433. When King Henry VI announced he was visiting the area of Bury St. Edmund in 1433, Lydgate was commissioned to write the poem to the young king, *The Legend of St. Edmund and St. Fremund*. The epic size and scope of the poem situates St. Edmund's place in the popular imagination nearly four centuries beyond Edmund's lifetime and nearly twenty years beyond Julian's. Given the particular and intended audience of the young king, the poem modulates between multiple political and social messages. Lydgate takes the opportunity to explore Edmund's decisions to renounce violence and to accept spiritual imperatives, even in the face of martyrdom. He chooses to illustrate two value systems which are often incompatible to a young ruler. The dominant theme of Lydgate's poem is the complexity of ruling a country under violent attack by pagan Vikings. Complex socio-political challenges underscore the narrative and are directed to a young king who must negotiate his roles as

³³¹ Jennifer Sisk, "Lydgate's Problematic Commission: A Legend of St. Edmund for Henry VI" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*. Vol. 109. No. 3 (July 2010), 349-375, n. 11. University of Illinois Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jenglgermphil>.

³³² *Ibid*, 354.

³³³ Tom Licence, "History and Hagiography in the Late Eleventh Century: The Life and Work of Herman the Archdeacon, Monk of Bury St. Edmunds," *English Historical Review*, CXXIV, No. 508 (June 2009) 516-544.

judge, ruler, and Christian leader. The volume was filled with richly ornamental illustrations fit for a young king.

St. Edmund's place in the Last Judgment in Norwich Cathedral carries weighty local significance. It writes a translation of scriptural lessons into regional circumstances. It interprets the apocryphal narrative into a regional story of sin, death, and redemption. In parallel narratives, St. Peter risked his life in a struggle to spread Christianity and lead the Roman Church. Similarly, St. Edmund risked his life, taking on the leadership of the Church in England. While Moses continuously reminded the Israelites to abandon pagan idols, St. Edmund did the same in England. John the Baptist proclaimed the need to repent and prepare for eternal life; St. Edmund renounced the violence he had used to fight the Vikings and became a martyr for his Christian faith. The themes of the Last Judgment are mapped upon English stories with St. Edmund. These themes include: a need to refrain from sin; an imperative to end pagan violence; an embracing of mercy; an affirmation of forgiveness and care for the other; and the development of a community which includes the marginalized. The challenges of a king maintaining secular authority in a Christian context, particularly when war and violent attacks subvert order, are problematic. The tension between secular realities and Christian imperatives provide a cultural backdrop in Norwich and East Anglia. They point to complex examinations of sinfulness and saintliness in which clearly drawn lines of virtues and vices, so often heard in Church sermons and teachings, are blurred. Julian and those Christians around her understood a more complex understanding of sin, redemption, and mercy than was represented in the often oversimplified rigidly classified spectrum of sins taught by the Church.

So too, Julian perceived God's love through different lenses. The eternal love of God does not emerge from a rigid adherence to polarized categories of virtuous and non-virtuous behavior. Love evolves in an emerging transformation of a person's soul. This process happens through a development of truth and wisdom. "Truth seeth god, and wisdom beholdyth god, and of theyse two comyth the thurde, and that is a meruelous delyght in god, whych is loue. Where truth and wysedom is, verily there is loue." (Julian, Rev. 44/ 8-10). Julian understands an intertwined connection between the elements of love, power, authority, forgiveness and sin. The God of Julian's vision is less interested in weighing sinfulness and assigning blame and is far more interested in being reunited with his "creature," "servant," or "child" in a loving embrace. He is not interested in exerting power over the earth or over his people. He is interested in enfolding them in his love. Wisdom and truth will help his followers understand his love. Only this type of love can withstand the damage of sin, or transform it into a positive and whole union with God. So, to understand love, a Christian must work to understand truth and wisdom.

Julian's insistence that truth and wisdom lead to love echoes *The Mirror of St. Edmund* of Abingdon. The Archbishop of Canterbury from 1233-1240, he was given the name of the great saint because he was born on his feast day. Although he lived nearly one-hundred years before Julian, his text is likely to have been known by her, since it was written to nuns as a prayer book containing lessons in contemplation. In fact, *The Mirror of St. Edmund* is one of the sources from which Richard Rolle obtained his organizational

structure and concepts. It is quite probable that Rolle was even the translator of the text from its original Latin to Middle English.³³⁴

Julian alters the lines from the *Mirror of St. Edmund*, to make a sizable shift in meaning. She changes the wording from emphasizing “might” and instead, uses “truth” in its place. The shift deemphasizes power or might as the foundation of divine authority. St. Edmund writes that God is three persons, each with distinct qualities of might, knowledge, and wisdom, from which comes love.

of þe miȝt comeþ connyng, and of hem boþ comeþ loue... hit is s0 in God almihti þat is muche abouen him...þat is to seyen: þat in God is miht, and of þat comeþ his connyng and wisdam, and of hem boþ comeþ love.³³⁵

Unlike Julian, Edmund assigns power as a starting point for God the Father’s authority. “Mizt,” or “pouwer” is the basis of his strength, and of course, it gives him full authority and jurisdiction on the day of Last Judgment. God also has other attributes, such as “connyng,”³³⁶ which the MED translates as skill or knowledge. The combined attributes of might, knowledge and “wisdom” lead to love.³³⁷

³³⁴ Edmund of Abingdon. “Mirror of St. Edmund,” in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and His Followers*, ed. Carl Horstman, 219.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

³³⁶ “Connyng” – “connyngnesse” in the MED is defined as Intelligence, knowledge, skill. (August 14, 2014) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21002>.

³³⁷ In the MED it is defined as Sg. & pl.: (a) supernatural power of God, a god, a devil; miraculous power; also, mighty one, the Almighty; ~ and main [see also main n. 3.]; lord of mightes; (b) the power of love, Cupid, or Venus; (c) power, dominion, control, jurisdiction; ~ and main, main and ~ [see also main n. 1. (b)]; ~ is right; haven ~ over, to have control over (sb.), gain the victory over (sb.); (d) authority, warrant, permission; (e) a mighty work, wondrous deed; a miracle; (f) resources, wealth, wherewithal; (g) someone with power.is the representation of God as forceful and powerful which undoubtedly comes from scriptural tradition. Middle English Dictionary (MED) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21002>.

Julian's innovation is to place "truth" as the starting point for God instead of "might." Since "truth" is the starting point for God's authority in Julian, "might" is removed from the triangulated characteristics of godliness. Might, power, forcefulness, and victory are removed from the passage. Wisdom and love are still in the equation, but not power. The de-emphasis of "might" resonates with her earlier passages that insist God is not wrathful, but instead is joyous and blissful at the end of time. The elimination of might and power also resonates with her portrayal of Jesus as mother, providing nourishment and birth/rebirth. In fact, if she uses "power," it seems to be derived more from a place of growth, fertility, and nurturing than from military or political strength. For Julian, Jesus does not celebrate a secular or military style victory over sin, but rather he embraces sinners. Not only was Julian aware of the tension between the secular conceptualization of victory and religious victory, but also the tension between the authority of secular kings and the authority of the church, which often clashed in Norwich. The tension is evident in the text and visual discourse surrounding her, but is also entwined in the stories of saints, like St. Edmund.

The Prior's Arch, with St. Edmund placed next to Moses, depicts two men who steered their people away from pagan influences. St. Edmund's presence suggests that "might" has been supplanted by truth. Although Edmund is killed by the Danes, he has been revered because of his understanding of a greater truth, represented by his rejection of violence to win over the Danes, and his sacrifice to model Christian values to his people. Even in the references Julian makes to other mystic writers and saints, she changes the emphasis of their language to forward her own concept of an unconditionally loving God at the Last Judgment.

It is significant that in the middle of political and economic problems simmering between the church and the king about jurisdiction, tribute and land use, saints like Edmund and women like Julian still believed that the Last Judgment would lead to a time of “rest and pees.” To modern readers, we often forget that devotional texts were written among disputes over power and economic viability. A climate of distrust and dispute between secular powers and church authority affected the interpretation of the Last Judgment.

In the uncertainty, God and his love still shines through in an overpowering message to a woman like Julian. Numerous visual images in and around Norwich support the ambiguity and the uncertainty of life, and Julian, with her narrative and pictorial qualities of language, captures both. Julian would have been familiar with the conversation between the visual and textual rhetorics of the Last Judgment. First, she would have known the visual schema of heaven and hell viewed as polar opposites. She also would have been aware of these oppositional representations in texts. Second, she would have recognized the tension, anxiety, and ambiguity about confession, the measurement of sin, and the redemption Jesus secured through his passion. Third, she would have recognized that the Last Judgment was a political and social equalizer, rendering objective and equal judgment to all, kings and queens, wealthy and poor. Finally, she would have understood the tensions between sin and forgiveness, between a “mothering” God and a wrathful Father, and between eternal heaven and endless damnation.

She explored these tensions in innovative language including visual rhetorics. She painted scenes in language which offered a kind confessor and creator, including details

with a painter's eye. She insisted upon understanding how sinners would not be blamed for their sin, and she used artistic renderings of hybrids and blended creatures to move beyond rigid binaries of good and evil. She juxtaposed text and visuals to produce layers of meaning, shifting emphasis from "might" and "power" to "truth" as the foundation of divine action. These elements of the Last Judgment perhaps influenced her text so significantly that they led her to find new ways in the vernacular to voice her vision.

The Last Judgment presented her with the same problems other writers and artists wrestled with during the Middle Ages. It represented an unknown and cataclysmic event that could only be only imagined by an entire community of believers. In her vision, she was given insights to an unconditionally loving and embracing God, who would suffer and die for his followers, and would not blame them for their sins. Her writings dove into the tensions and anxieties regarding sin, forgiveness, punishment, and redemption. Moreso, her writings explored the concept that through sin, and perhaps because of sin, redemption could be obtained, and perhaps it could only happen through sin. For her, sin was transformative. Christians around her understood a more complex understanding of sin, redemption and mercy than was represented in the often oversimplified, rigidly classified spectrum of sins taught by the church. The visual representations of the Last Judgment, filled with political and social codes, regional lore, and scriptural interpretation helped her articulate an innovative vision of sin, redemption, and love that has not been expressed in such a clear and singular voice before or since her time.

Conclusion

How did Julian of Norwich learn to use language so fully? A reader needs a finely tuned ear and a visual lens to fully understand the scope and depth of her language. My study invites scholars to read Julian of Norwich in the context of all the language surrounding her, abundant in spoken words, in written words, and in pictures. Any medieval person with eyes and ears lived in a sea of language. It was in sermons, cycle plays and liturgical rituals. It was painted on murals of cathedrals, carvings of wood doors, textiles for vestments, altar cloths, and roodscreens. It was in prayer books, psalters, and picture bibles. It was represented in crucifixes, statues of saints, and stained glass. All of these forms influenced language during the fourteenth century. Particularly in Norwich, Julian lived in a city that was a cultural hub and a mercantile city on an active trade route. She gleaned some of the benefits of a traditional education available to men, but also pulled deeply from the loam of rhetorics heard in sermons, performed in dramas and seen in the art surrounding her.

Her language still pulls the reader into a physically and emotionally charged narrative of her vision. She has a talent for details (Jesus' falling flesh hanging from his face). Her descriptions are written in a way to alter time and space ("felyng," "fayng," and "fallyng" suspending time in one falling action). She uses allusion and metaphor to compare the image of Jesus' side wound (a sweet delectable place) to a womb ("all blessyd childryn" come out of him). Although her language is connected to the rhetorics she must have heard and seen, she is keenly aware of her language and how to express

herself. She generates new language and new ideas based on the degree to which she uses scriptural, visual and oral sources of language together.

Julian creates concepts of exceptional vibrancy. She meditates upon a Jesus who physically shared a body with Mary before birth. This connection so strongly empowers Mary, that it discussed the womb as a transformative space. For Julian, the connection between Jesus and Mary continued to grow throughout their lives in a reciprocal and interconnected bond. Mary is not a passive vessel, but is an active agent of transformative change in human history. Jesus makes an active choice to become “our Mother Jesus” and takes on the role of motherhood. To Julian, Mary is more than an object to be filled by Jesus, but rather, both are essential parts of a divine process. Julian describes a shared embodiment of Jesus and Mary. It is unlike any relationship available to men. She is not using different rhetoric, but is using it to a degree and purpose different from most writers – often to convey concepts that were unusual and memorable.

Julian shapes language to define her concept of unconditional forgiveness. In a culture which reinforced a punitive view of God, she describes a joyful, blissful, welcoming lord. She emphasizes a sinner who is always welcome. In Julian’s vision, sin is necessarily part of the transformative process. Sin, forgiveness, transformation through sin, and inclusion of the sinner are all concepts central to her vision. Her own exemplum, mirroring the rhetoric of sermons, tells and interprets her own transformative story of the servant and lord. The servant of her exemplum fails to complete the task the lord has asked of him, but the lord still welcomes him home and rewards him for his pain and suffering. Unlike many sermons of the fourteenth century, Julian’s “lord” gives the servant a gift for his effort and his work. Jesus provides comfort and patience from all

sickness and pain, and from all disease and worry. The servant's failure is what transforms him into a recipient of unending love. Julian is uncompromising in her clarity that God is not "wrathful," but only loves his children without end and without conditions.

My dissertation encourages ongoing research of medieval manuscripts and art. With a broad interpretation of rhetoric (oral, visual, performative, and memorial) scholars can open doors to explore the connections between art, text and performance. In an understanding of the oral, visual, and performative influences on medieval texts, more can be learned from numerous medieval writers, including Margery Kempe, John Lydgate, Bridget of Sweden and the many anonymous writers of devotional works. An open discourse between scholars who can bring knowledge of drama, art, and text of the medieval era will glean new approaches to established texts. Anonymous voices in sermons cry out for updated annotated editions, and cycle plays beg for increased research in light of the art and texts they influenced. Art history, too, can help build an understanding of the communally held information in medieval societies. It can help define the way art and language influenced each other in the fourteenth century. As increased numbers of manuscripts become digitized, scholars can learn how text and art work together. Furthermore, as images of cathedral doors, altars, roof bosses, and carvings are preserved in digital records, even more connections can be made between art, text, and performance. With increased research, the communally held knowledge of medieval societies can be explored through such interdisciplinary approaches.

So too, Julian of Norwich deserves a voice with modern, non-scholastic audiences. Many non-academics recognize Julian of Norwich and admire her as a mystic

writer, but not many know of her as a challenging woman. She challenges her readers to understand Jesus, women and marginalized individuals. She also challenges her readers to understand tolerance, inclusion and forgiveness. Modern readers can learn her motto “all will be well,” but should understand the implications behind it. The lay person of the twenty-first century can learn just as much from Julian as her medieval readers. Her metaphors, word-play, and alliterative and theories of inclusion are still relevant for lay audiences, as well as scholars. Her startling vision gives voice to timeless and challenging messages.

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