

# Studies in the Language of *A Revelation of Love*: with special reference to vacillation in nouns, pronouns and verbs\*

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This paper examines the lexical and grammatical features of the language of *A Revelation of Love* by a medieval female mystic, Julian of Norwich. Linguistic characteristics of her prose in the longer version written in Middle English, irrespective of their importance, have been overlooked so far. The present analysis builds on descriptive sketching with the aim mainly to elucidate the vacillation and style in her work with some diagrams. The parts of speech to be surveyed are nouns, personal pronouns, relative pronouns, verbs and others. Middle English is a period that permits a number of spelling and syntactic variants. The inclination is reflected in her prose as a miniature of the language of this period, as is seen in such as plurals accompanied by a singular and plural verb, dual use of some verbs in personal and impersonal constructions, and the like. At the same time some of the fluctuations are peculiar to the author such as the use of the second person pronouns. Through the study of her idiosyncratic prose, we see a vivid process of transition from Old to Modern English.

## Introduction

Julian of Norwich (c.1343-c.1416) was a professional religious hermit who entered a convent in her teens. She was a popular and persuasive nun. That her preaching was influential is shown by the fact that Margery Kemp was exerted a great influence from her. The work to be investigated is classified by Chambers (1957: cxvii) under “the ordinary medieval prose of pious instruction”, and he mentions: “Yet much of it is exceedingly beautiful; for instance *the Revelation of Divine*

*Love of Dame Julian of Norwich.*”

It was in the year 1373, when Julian was critically ill in bed, that she had a revelation of God. She wrote down the mystic experience in two versions, *A Revelation of Love (A Revelation)*, a longer one and a shorter one. The shorter version is generally accepted as the first transcript, written soon after the revelations were given. The longer one is confessedly written twenty years later. The text we are going to investigate is the longer version based on the Slone Manuscript No.2499. Compared with the shorter text,

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Glasscoe (1993:219) states that: “ ..., it is clear that the longer represents the fuller version of Julian’s understanding of her own experience. ” The reason why this manuscript has been chosen as the most suitable for this study is that its language is much closer to the fourteenth-century English than any other manuscript.<sup>1</sup> Stone (1970) also has selected the text based on this manuscript for his language oriented study, since it retains the basis for judging nearness to the original.

In Medieval era, most of the literary works were written by the male clergy or men of authority. So Julian is the first English woman of letters of devotional prose, who breaks a long tradition of feminine silence in England. Considering the background, this work is invaluable in letting us know medieval women’s language. She calls herself ‘unlettered’ (Chapter ii), but that is untrue. Her literary style is spontaneous and unaffected with a blend of East Anglian and Northern dialects. The period, prior to the introduction of the art of printing into England by William Caxton, permits variations of instability of the spelling system. The variation of lexicon is reflected also in *A Revelation*. It will be worthwhile to show some rivalries of the variant forms.

Intriguingly, the longer version is not involved in *the Oxford English Dictionary* nor in *Middle English Dictionary*.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Julian’s text is not quoted in Mustanoja’s *A Middle English Syntax*. My aim in this paper is to investigate into some of the grammatical features of this important but less thoroughly investigated prose.

## Nouns

Middle English (ME) in the beginning of the fifteenth century had become greatly different from Old English (OE): the verbal system had become simplified, the dual of the personal pronouns had disappeared, the case system had practically broken down, the variety of plural noun forms reduced, the number of endings of strong and weak adjectives had decreased. However, ME also involves a rich diversity in vocabulary and syntax. In this paper, I will start from such idiolectal features of this prose. Words with spelling variants which are incidental to ME such as *Christ, Criste and God, Godd, etc.*

### 1 . Genitives with and without -'s

In the North and the East Midland dialects, the genitive ending - 's is the rule. According to Mustanoja (1960: 71), an uninflected genitive occurs only in the more or less stereotyped combinations, such as *helle pitt, kirrke dure, sawle sallfe*, and the like. Interestingly enough, however, Julian uses the inflected genitive together with the uninflected one. Moreover, in OE an - 's less genitive is a feature of feminine nouns with weak declension, but all the words listed below are masculine.

#### ( i ) *Christ and Christ's*

##### *Christ*

And thus was I deliverd of hem be the vertue of *Christ* passion, for therwith is the fend overcome,... (lxix .69)<sup>3</sup>

### *Christ's*

and *Christs* clothyng is now of a fair, seemely medlur which is so mervelous... (li.80)

*Christs* manhood (li.78); the vertue of *Christ* passion (lxix.112).

*of + Christ* genitives are also found in fifty-three instances such as 'passion of *Criste*' (i. 1) and 'manhood of *Criste*' (xxii.32), etc.

#### (ii) *man* and *man's*

##### *man*

therewith was comprehended and specified the Trinite with the incarnation and unite betwix God and *man* soule,... (i. 1) ; and of the excellency of *man* makeyng, (i. 2) ; *man* soule is a creature in God (xluiii.62); *man* soule made of God (liii.85).

##### *man's*

he made mans soule to ben his owen cyte and his dwellyng place, (li.76)

our lord hath to *mannes* soule willing us to be occupyed in knowing and loveing of him (vi. 8); mans body (liii.85).

*of + man* genitives are found in eight instances.

#### (iii) *God* and *God's*

*God* The sentences below illustrate that Julian uses genitive *God* and *Gods* (*Godds*) indistinctively.

*God* Son myte not fro Adam, for by Adam I understond all man. Adam fell fro lif to deth into the slade of this wretchid world and after that into hell. *Gods* Son fell with Adam into the slade of the mayden wombe, which was the fairest dauter

of Adam, and therfor to excuse Adam from blame in hevyn and in erth; and mytly he fetchid him out of hell. Be the wisdom and goodnes that was in the servant is vnderstode *Godds* Son. (li.78)

Other instances: *God* wille (iii. 4); (vii.12); (x.16); (x.17); (xv. 23); (i. 1). *God* face (xliii.62). *God* hole (lvii.92). *God* al wisdamm (lviii.95). *God* al goodness (lviii.95). *God* love (lxxiii.117).

##### *God's*

Then was I stered to be sett upright, underlenand with helpe, for to have more fredam of my herte to be at *Gods* will,... (iii. 4)

Other instances: *Gods* gift (ii. 2); *Godis* goodness (xli.57); *Gods* goodness (xlix.70); *Gods* handmayd (iiii. 6); *Gods* meneyng (ix.14); *Goddis* menyng (xxx.41); *Gods* mercy (xxxiv.53); *Gods* sake (viii.13); *Gods* servants (xxviii.39); *Goddss* syte (xxxiv.53); *Goddss* wil (viii.13) (xiii.21); etc. *Goddys* wille (xx1.30) (xxiii.33); *Gods* werkyng (xi.18) (lxxxvi.134); *Goddss* makyng (xi.18); *Goddss* hand (xiii.20); *Goddis* menyng (xxx.41); *Gods* mercy (xxxix.53); *Goddys* word (xxxii.44); *Gods* privites (xxxiii.45); *Gods* worship (xxxiii.45); *Gods* rythfulhede (liii.85); *Gods* wonyng place (liii.86); *Gods* substance (xiii.87); *Gods* biddyng (lx.98); *Gods* faderhede (lx.98); *Gods* lovers (lxxiii.118); *Gods* face (lxxv.121).

*of + God* genitives as 'our godeness of God' (i. 1) 'the grace of God' (ii. 2), 'the mercy of

God' (ii. 3) etc. are also found.

(iv) *lord* and *lord's*

*lord*

Therefore our *lord* will we knowen it in the feith (liii.85)

the *lord* menening (xiii.20); our *lord* menyng (liiii .86); our *lord* will (xxxiii.47); our good *lord* words (lxviii.111).

*lord's*

For this is our *lords* wille,...(xlii.58); our *lords* gracious gift (iii. 5); our *lords* me-neing (vii.12); our *lords* menyng (xxi.31) (xxvi.37) (xxviii.40) (xxxii.45) (xxvi.49) (xli.59), etc.; *lordis* menyng(xxxiii.46) (xli.56); our *lords* word (xli.58); *lords* will (xlvi.65) (li.72); our *lords* brest (lxxiii.119).

(v) *Adam* and *Adam's*

*Adam*

*Adam* synne was grettest (xxix.40).

*Adam's*

and shewid that *Adams* synne was the most harme that ever was don, or ever shal, (xxxix.40)

*Adams* waring (li.79); *Adams* travel (li.79); *Adams* kirtle (li.79); *Adams* old kirtle (li.80); *Adams* falling (lii.82); *Adams* wo (lii. 82).

## 2 . Suffix of nouns both with *-hood (-hede)* and *-nes (-ness)*

Archaic noun affix 'hood (-hede)' which had almost disappeared by the Modern English (ModE) period remains and coexists with 'nes (-ness)'. One of the notable features of

ME as a transitional period between OE and ModE is manifest itself in the following variants. The figures are a frequency of the words.

*godhead* 26 / *goodness(e)*, *goodness* 28 ;  
*irkhede* 1 / *irkeness* 1 ; *blindhede* 8 / *blindness(s)* 3 ;  
*kindhood* 3 / *kindness* 8 ; *grethood* 1 / *gret-ness* 9 ; *manhood (manhode)* 10 / *maness, mans, manys* 23.

## 3 . Plurals both with the singular and plural verbs

There are some instances where a plural noun is followed by a singular verb.

*thing (s)*

and this is the cause why that no soule is restid till it is nowted of *all things that is made*. (v. 7)

for we sekyn here rest in *these things that is so littil*, wherin is no rest, ... (v. 7)

It is also worth mentioning that singular *thing* and plural *things* appear in the same collocation with *al*.

and *all thing that is made*, in regard to almighty God, it is nothing;... (v. 6)

I saw that his continuat werkyng in *al manner thing is don* so godely... (xliii.61)

Julian puts 'all' irregularly before a plural and a singular noun:

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he wil make *al creature* to loven...(xxv.37);  
if a man love a creature singularly above *al creatures*, ...(xxv.37); And thus our good lord answerid to *al the question* and *doubts...* (xxxi.42)

In 'and- juxtaposition', the predicate of plural words often begins with the verb *is*.

in these ii is comprehendid *good and ille...*(xxxv.48) ; I saw that *the swete skyn and the tender flesh*, with the here and the blode, *was* al rasyd and losyd abov from the bone...(xvii.25); *This gefit and this mede is so blisful* to lesus that his Fader myht have goven hym .... (xxii.32); *al our endles frendship, our stede, our lif and our being is* in God;... (xlix.69)

#### 4 . Nouns with and without -s

In addition to *thing* mentioned in the section 3, there are some words which have 's plurals' and '-s less plurals'.

*manner* and *manners*

Words of plural meaning such as *all*, *ii*, *iii*, *iiii*, *v* and *dyvers* precede the singular noun *manner* in forty-one out of a total of forty-eight instances (85.4 %) like : *ii manner* of folke (xviii.27); *al manner* of thing (xxxi.42); *many dyvers manner* (xlvi.67) and thirty-eight other instances.

In seven instances, Julian puts *iii*, *v* and *dyvers* (*divers*) also before a plural form: for feith and hope leden us to charite, which is in *iii manners* (lxxxiii.133); *v*

*manners* (xxiii.33); *dyvers manners* (lxi.100) and four other instances.

*might* (*might*) and *mights* (*myghts*)

Julian uses plural *mights* once out of a total of four instances:

The nombre of the words passyth my witte and al my vnderstondyng and al my *mights*, ... (xxvi.37)

Other three instances take singular forms: with all the *might* (vi.); be the same *might* (xi.); With *might* and *right* (xiii.).

#### 5 . Singulars preceded by 'these'

The singular combination preceded by *these* is found three times, but plurals with *a(n)*, *this* and *that* are not used.

with the blissid Lyte of his pretious love, seyand *these word* full mytyly and full mekely:(lxx.113)

al *these our lord* (viii.12); And for *these iii* was all the shewing made, (lxxii.116).

#### Personal pronouns

#### 6 . Nominative case 'Thou and Ye (You)' / Objective case 'Thee and Ye (You)'

The use of *ye* (*you*) as a polite form of address to one person is found from the late thirteenth century, and is modelled on French practice. The distinction is broadly that *thou* is used between equals and to inferiors, whereas *ye* (*you*) is used in representations of polite speech in address to a superior. This is, however, hardly an adequate account

of the usage of Julian. When she makes a plea for mercy, she addresses the holy god as 'thou'. To cite examples:

"Lord, *thou* wotith what I would if it be *thy* will that I have it; and if it be not *thy* will, good lord, be not displeased, for I will nought but as *thou* wilt." (ii. 3)

"God, of *thy* goodnesse, give me *thysel*; for thou art enow to me and I may nothing aske that is less that may be full worshippe to *thee*. And if I aske anything that is lesse, ever me wantith, but only in *thee* I have all." (v. 7)

The lord Christ and Julian (I) call each other by 'thou'.

Than (seide) our good lord Iesus Christe, askyng: "Art *thou* wele payd that I suf- frid for thee?" I sayd: "Ya good lord, gramercy. Ya good lord, blissid mot *thou* be!" (xxii.31)

On the other hand, she calls her fellow Christians by 'you'.

I sey in the person of al myn even cristen,... ; and therefore I pray *you* al for Gods sake and counsel *you* for *your* owne profit that *ye* levyn the beholding of a wretch... (viii.13)

In this work, she uses 102 second person pronouns. Nominative *thou* occurs ninety-six times (94.1%), *ye* five times (4.9%) and *you* appears only once (1%). When Julian ad-

dresses to her fellow Christians, she always uses *ye* or *you*.

Concerning 17 occurrences of the objective case, *thee* appears eight times and *you* nine times.

### 7 . Dative-accusative case '*Them and hem*'

The objective pronoun of the third person plural is the originally Scandinavian *them* and the native *hem* in ME. Mustanoja (1960: 134) states: "The spreading of the dative-accusative form *them* to the South is even slower. Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve have only *hem*. Caxton uses *hem* more frequently than *them*. The *Nutbrown Maid* and Skelton have only the th-form."

Julian uses *them* in twenty-one instances (25.6 %) and *hem* sixty-one times (74.4 %). The use of *them* had not taken root yet since the combination of 'to they' (viii.12) is found here. After the preposition 'to', *them* appears three times (xiii.21; xviii.27; viii.12) and *hem* five times (viii.13; xiii.22; xv.24; xxx.41; xxxviii.52).

### Relative Pronouns

We are not concerned with the nominative *who* and the genitive *whose* at present, because the two relative pronouns scarcely occur in her prose. Instances of them are one and two. An illustration of omission of nominative *who* is sufficient to show here - *I conceived truly and mightily that it was himselfe shewed it me without ony mene.* (iv. 5). In ME it is also possible to put nominative *who*

between *himself* and *shewed*. I limit the discussion to the words of higher frequency, *that* and *which* at present. The following diagram shows the frequency of the relative pronouns.

	restrictive	non-restrictive	personal antecedent	non-personal antecedent	total
that	540	10	65	485	550
whom	30	5	35	0	35
which	95	198	11	282	293
the which	9	5	0	14	14

The tendency that *that* is the best possible kind in the ME relatives is mirrored in this prose. It is worth making the point that *that* and *which* function respectively in restrictive and non-restrictive use, though the two are rivals in the same field of relative function. We can see some clues for describing the aspects of her style from some instances below.

## 8 . That

double restriction

(i) nominative and nominative use

I may nothing aske *that* is less *that* may be full worshippe to thee. (vi. 9);

...and deliveryd al *that* were there *which* longyd to the curte of hevyn. (xii.20);

there is no creature *that* is made *that* may wetyn how mekyl... (vi. 9)

(ii) nominative and objective use

for there is no licor *that* is made *that* he lekyth so wele to give us; (xii. 19)

## 9 . Which

There are some points to mention. To begin with, ninety-nine instances (33.7%) are found in occurring in combination with preposed preposition such as *be, in, of, for, with, to, out of, into*. The scarcity of genitive *whose* may have been caused by her inclination that *in which* is dominant over *whose*.

Another usage which ModE had lost but was frequent in this prose is the demonstrative use of *which* as follows: it may be liken to no payne *which* payne is not synne. (xl.55); be the goodness of God the same vertues, be the werkyng of mercy, arn geven to us in grace, throw the Holy Gost renued; *which* vertues and gyfts are tresurd to us in lesus Christ;... (lvii.92)

Furthermore, in ME it is not rare that *which* is used with personal antecedents, singular and plural ; eleven instances accompany personal antecedents like *wif, servant, children, man, son, hym, labourer* and *person*.

## Verbs

### 10 . The verb Be and Beon

This has a wide variation in form in different regions. For example, *Ancrene Wisse* written in West Midland dialect has *beo* for singular and *beon* for plural subjunctive. As the dialect of *A Revelation* is Northern and East Anglian, singular *be* and plural *ben* are found. Significantly enough, since Julian uses *is* and *are (arn)* more often than *be* and *beon*, it is reasonable to assume that the verb conjugation is in the course of demise at the end of the thirteenth century. So there is also

the divergence between indicative and subjunctive in one sentence as follows:

that *I be* so festined to him that there *is* right nowte that *is* made betwix my God and me (v. 7).

till *I am* substantially onyd to him, I may never have full rest ne very blisse; that is to sey, that *I be* so festined to him... (ibid.)

A! lord lesus, king of bliss, how *shall I ben* esyd? (l.71)

We also see that plural verb ‘arn’ takes singular subjects:

*It arn* privytes to us not only that he wil *it ben* privytes to us, but *it arn* privytes to us for our blyndnes and our onknowyng:... (xxxiiii.47)

The following table shows the frequency of *Be* and *Beon* in the main and subordinate clauses. The instances which occur with invariable forms are excluded: *be(n)* following auxiliaries such as ‘*I would be*’, a to-infinitive ‘*to be occupied*’ and the past participle *ben* ‘our peynys have *ben* with him’. The occurrence of *is* are so numerous that the instances

	main clause	subordinate clause
be	33	114
ben	17	20
is	40	38
are	17	12
arn	76	76

are counted in the first five chapters only.

## 11 . Present participle and gerund *-and* / *-ing (-yng)*

Julian uses both *-and* and *-ing (-yng)* as a present participle and a gerund. The following diagram shows the frequency of the forms and usage in the first twenty chapters.

	participle	gerund
-and	25	1
-ing (-yng)	39	256

The instance below shows the fluctuation where the forms as participles *-and* and *-ing(e)* occur in parallel.

for *blisse is lestinge* without ende, and *peyne is passand* and shal be browte to nougte to hem... (xv.23)

After the verb of sensation ‘see’, she does not make the distinction between ‘object + present participle’ and ‘object + bare infinitive’.

*I saw* the lord *sitten* solemnly, and the servant *stondand* reverently aforne his lord... (li.76)

Both forms appear in participial constructions, though *-ing (-yng)* predominates over *-and* in the total number in participle.

*I beholdyng* in the same crosse, *he* chongyd his blissfull chere. (xxi.31)

*we wilfully abydyng* in the same cross with his helpe and his grace into the last poynte, sodenly *he* shall change his chere to us, and we shal be with hym in hevyn. (ibid.)

and yet I cowde have no patience for

great awer and perplexitie, *thynkand*:

"If I take it thus,... (l.71)

Though 'be + ~ing' progressive forms had already existed in the ME period, no instance of them are found. An instance, '...the dede that is now *in doying*' (xlii. 59) might appear as '...the deed is now being done' in ModE.

## 12 . Infinitives and present forms : variants noticeable

As we always see in ME, her words involve some different spelling variants. We should not overlook that these variants are prominent in the verbs. It draws a lot of attention that ME '-en infinitive' for plural subjunctives is in decay in this prose, so it has become only a variant of verbs.

### (i) *se, see(th) and seen(e), sen(e)*

*se*

Wil thou *se* how I love hir,... (xxv.36); and we ought *se* of him graciously...(x.15); other fifty-six instances.

*see(th)*

we shall never *see* cleerly the blisfull cheere of our lord. (lxiii.115); out of which worshipfull *see* he shall never risen nor removen without end. (lxxxii.130); other eight instances.

*seen(e), sen(e)*

Wilt thou *seen* in hir how thou art lovid? (xxv.36); for than he shall *seen* that all the wo and tribulation...(xiii.21); for if he *sen* that it be more profitt to us... (lxi.100); other eighty-one instances.

### (ii) *know* and *knowen*

*know*

wherby I may leryn to *know* myselfe and...(iiv.36); we cannot know that hey, mervelous wisdam, the myte and the goodness of the blisful Trinite; (xxxii.44); methowte me behovyd neds to *know* me a synner,..(xlv.63); other twenty-eight instances

*knowen*

We *cannot knowen* ourself in this life but be feith and grace, but we *must know* ourself sinners...(xlvi.64); wherby I myte trewly *knowen* how it longyht to me...(l.71); we owen to *knowen* and levyn that the Fader is not man.(li.76); other seventy-three instances.

Julian uses *knowen* also as a past participles in thirty-three instances as follows:

*It is knowen* that I have done miracles her any and fele...(xxxvi.50)

Also *know* in two examples: wherby his goodnes shal be know withoute end...(xxxv.48) and in xxxvi.50.

### (iii) *fail(e), failith* and *failen*

*fail(e), failith*

and somtyme to *faile* and to be left to hemselfe: vi. 8; xii.20; xv.23; l.71.

*failen*

After this my sight began to *failen* and... (iii. 4); xi.18; xlvii.67; xlvi.68; lxxii.116.

### (iv) *make, maken* and *mekin*

*make*

This shewid our our gode lord for to *make* us glad and mery. (xxiii.35); i. 2; vi. 8; viii.13; viii.14; other thirty-five

instances.

*maken*

he wil hymself maken hem more opyn to us... (xxxiii.47); xxxiii.45; xxxiii.47; xxxvi.49; xxxvi.50; other eight instances.

*mekin*

we arn fallen in by synne to *mekin* us and maken us to dreden God... (xxxvi.50)

13 . Past participles variable

The ME past participle has the prefixes; *i-* or *y-* are derived from OE *ge-*. Julian, however, does not follow the manner but has some variables in the ending of the verb.

(i) *shewid* and *shewne*

*shewid*

This bodily example was shewid so hey that manys herete might be ravished...(vii.11); as lesus had shewid it on to you all. (viii.13); viii.12; ix.13; ix.14; and other eighty-six instances.

*shewne*

sothly this mervelous ioy shall be *shewne* us...(vii.11)

Julian uses *shewn* also as infinitives as follows: he wold *shewn*...(xvii.26); his special grace wil *shewn* him here...(xliii.62)

In present-day English, past participle of *show* is 'shown'. This instance shows the verb retains dual conjugation at that time, regular and irregular. Regular conjugation *shewid* is dominant over *shewne* which has a linkage with a modern form.

(ii) *be(n)* and *been(e)*

The instances are gathered in the perfect tense.

*be(n)*

he shuld not *have be* full plesid with the making...(lxvii.110); if it myte any better *have be* done. (xxii.33); xxxiii.46; for wickednes *hath ben* suffrid to rysen contrarye to the goodnes, (lix.95) xxxviii.52; other thirteen instances.

*been(e)*

Methought I would *have beene* that time with Mary Magdalen ...(ii. 3); overpassing that *hath been* seen and felt before,... (lxxv.121)

There are not a few instances of past participles with or without '-e ending' in *A Revelation*. To give an example that comes most quickly to my mind among them is *hid* and *hidde*.

(iii) *hid* and *hidde*

*hid*

And in these same words I saw a mervelous hey privitye *hid* in God,...(xxvii.39); That other is *hid* and sperid from us...(xxx.41); vii.12; x.16; xxxii.45; xlvi.65.

*hidd(e)*

in which mystye example iii propertes of the revelation be yet mekyl *hidde*,... (li.74); for the privities of the revelation ben *hidd* therin,...(li.79); lii.82; liii.86; lxxv.121.lxxxv.133; lxxxv.134.

#### 14 . Impersonal and personal verbs

Julian uses some verbs both in an impersonal and a personal construction at once. In this section, we see the vacillation between the two. So the really impersonal verbs such as *behove* appearing twenty-seven times, *be lothe* and *repent* occurring twice each lie outside the scope of my investigations.

(i) *like, leke*

*me lekid* to levin for ... (iii. 4); don althyng that *hym lekyt*.. (xliii.61); other twelve instances.

Two instances of personal construction; and thus *owen we to willen like* to hem: than shal we nothyng willen ne desiren but the wille of *our lord like* as thei do;... (xxx.41)

(ii) *need*

It *needyth us* to have knoweing of the littlehede ... (v. 7); evermore it *us nedyth* levyn the beholding... (xxxiii.46); other sixteen instances.

Three instances of personal construction; if *he nedith* comferte.. (ix.14); how *we neede* the lyte of grace... (lxxviii.125); *we must nedes* hove wo, but curtes God is our leder, (lxxvii.123).

(iii) *think, thynk*

A line of demarcation must be drawn for this verb between the present and the past forms. In the present tense, the frequency of the occurrence of a personal verb is fourteen instances (52 %), whereas that of an impersonal verb is thirteen (48 %). The ratio of the two constructions is almost the same. On the

other hand, in the past tense, '*thowte*' merely occurs one out of a total of ten instances in impersonal construction. This rate is supposed to correlate with the occurrence of another impersonal verb '*methought*', '*methowte*', which occur thirty-two times only in the past tense.

*us thinkeith* that it be but litil, (x.15); *him thinkith* it fillith him thow there were no more... (xliii.22); other eleven instances.

Personal construction: *he thynkyth* hymself he is not worthy... (xxxix.53); *thou thynke* thou myghte nowte ... (xli.57); other twelve instances.

(iv) *want*

...ever *me wantith*... (v. 8) Two instances of personal construction; and I *wantid* hym... (x.15); we shuld pray for mercy and *want it*... (xli.56)

#### 15 . Infinitive to and for to

*For to*, used to express purpose since the beginning of the ME period, becomes weakened into a mere sign of the infinitive, equivalent to *to*, and begins to lose ground in the course of ME. According to Mustanoja (1960: 514), the proportion between *to* and *for to* is roughly 5:1 in the *Book of London English 1384-1425*, and he states: "The decreasing tendency continues in the 15th century, though individual authors and scribes show even considerable variance in this respect." The proportion of *to*-infinitives to *for to*-infinitives in this prose is 574:23. Below is an exam-

ple of *to* and *for to* in one sentence.

Then was I stered *to* be sett upright, underlenand with helpe, *for to* have more fredam of my herte *to* be at Gods will, and thinkeing on God while my life would lest. (iii. 4)

## 16 . Historical present

The historical present is a present tense referring to a time in the past. Julian positively uses the tense in the subordinate clauses to show eternal truths of divinity. The following are examples whose main verbs are in the present tense and the verbs in the subordinate clauses are in the historical present.

I *was* sekir he *doith* no synne. And here I *saw* sothly that synn *is* no dede,...(xi.18)

I *saw* ful sikirly that he *chongyth* never his purpos on no manner thing, (ibid.)

In this *shewid* our lord that the passion of him *is* the overcoming of the fend. God *shewid* that the fend *hath* now the same malice that he had aform the incarnation;...(xiii.20)

And in this I *saw* that he *wil* not we dredyn to know the thyngs that he shewith (xxxvi.49)

## 17 . Negation

As periphrastic *do* remains uncommon down to the end of the 15th century, it is common to negate the following verb with *not* alone in this prose like *I wiste not how*. An exception to this, however, occurs for the arbi-

trariness of the position of *not*. The instances below draw out attention for ‘reversed *not*’, which is found with the object form of a pronoun and an imperative. This practice shows that the way of negation in OE placing *ne* immediately in front of the verb, continues in this prose. It is not rare in ME. What we need to notice here is the alternation of the position of negating word *not*. Julian uses both forms indiscriminately.

..., good lord, *be not* displeased, for I will nought but as thou wilt. (ii. 3)

...for it is profitable thow thou *fele it not*,... (xiii.57)

Another feature to notice is multiple negation. The notions that it is substandard and ‘two negatives make a positive’ have no historical basis. In ME piling up of negatives is common as in this prose. Julian occasionally uses triple negation to reinforce the negative.

Other sight *ner* sheweing of God desired I *never none* till the soule was departed from the body. (ii. 3)

### Other variants to note

There are numerous variants that cannot be discussed here for lack of space. Below are some instances of irregularities emerging in auxiliaries, prepositions and conjunctions in her prose.

## 18 . Auxiliaries

*ought* and *ought to* indicating duty: 'we *ought se* of him... (x.15)' and 'We *ought to enioye* that God wonyth... (liiii.86)'; *have* and *a* to occur before the past participle in the perfect tense: 'ne peyne bodily that might be suf- frid should *have desesid* me.' (xv.23) and 'he shuld *a ben* if he had not fallen' (li.73); *will* as a main verb and auxiliary: 'And he *will* that we know it; for he *will have* al our love festy- nyd to him. (lx.98).

## 19 . Prepositions

*fulfilled of* and *fulfilled with*; *in earth* and *on the earth*; *without* to mean 'not accompa- nied' and 'outward'; double preposition.

## 20 . Conjunctions

*and* signifying 'if' to introduce a condi- tional clause and connecting words: '*and* we ought se of him graciously, than arn we sterid by the same grace to sekyn with gret desire to ... (x.15)' and 'This shewing was quick *and* lively, *and* hidouse *and* dredfull (vii.11)'; *or* meaning 'before' and linkage with alternatives: 'or anything was made, as it should stond withoute end; (xi.18) and 'ei- ther be sekyn *or* in beholdyng, (x.17)'.

## Conclusion

So far we have mainly seen certain fluctua- tions of nouns, pronouns and verbs in relig- ious prose, *A Revelation*. Quite a number of ME words and syntax have variant forms even within the same dialect as well as be- tween different ones. It is noteworthy that

such vacillation exits remarkably with one writer. Through the investigation of her prose, we can see a vivid process of transition from OE to ModE. In this work, the germs of ModE are found such as the development of *-s* and *of* genitive and *wh-relative* pronouns. A careful scrutiny of the instances in this pa- per will lead us to a better understanding of ME by unveiling the process of the develop- ment of the English language. It is regrettable that there is not enough space to discuss other crucial grammatical features such as adjectives and adverbs as well as her rhetoric for multipliers effect in repetition for emo- tional exposure and underestimation. These issues to be done will be left for the future.

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\* The version also has been titled *Revelations of Divine Love*. The editor Glasscoe, however, adopts *A Revelation of Love* for its title because that is what Julian calls her shewings and because it is felt that it more justly relates to her account of her experience.

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- 1 Of the longer version three manuscripts are known to exist. In the order of antiquity they rank as follows: Paris, Bioliotheque Nationale, MS Anglais 40, British Museum, Sloane Manuscripts No.2499 and No.3705.
- 2 In *Middle English Dictionary*, examples are quoted from the shorter version.
- 3 The figures indicate the chapter numbers and the page in the text.