

Passive Constructions of Medieval Mystics: Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe

中世神秘思想家の受動構文；Julian of Norwich と Margery Kempe

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The present study is an attempt to contribute to further knowledge of passive constructions in Middle English by examining three devotional prose by two medieval women: *A Revelations of Love* by Dame Julian of Norwich (Short and Long version) and *The Book of Margery Kempe*. The two mystics are the most prominent women of Middle English devotional prose. Considering influence from Julian to Kempe, it is significant to consider both works together. Since the passive is used according to some discourse and cultural factors, it is beneficial to consider from pragmatic point of view. Despite the significance, persuasive research has not been achieved on the topic yet. The article will investigate to what elements of style are related to the passive constructions. On one hand Julian's prose are analytic; on the other, Kempe is rather emotional and little analytic. Their style reflects the usage of the passive. Julian in favour of literary ways of writing adopts many passives in set expressions, while Kempe's colloquial style causes comparative fewer appearance of the construction.

I Introduction

Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love* is the earliest writing in English by a woman. The work grew out of a visionary episode which dates to 1373, when Julian was thirty, and was completed over a period that may have reached into the fifteenth century. It exists in two versions: the Short Text and Long Text. The

Shorter version (henceforth ST) survives in one fifteenth-century manuscript in a northern dialect (London, BL Additional 37790), while the earliest copies of the Longer version (henceforth LT) are a pair of manuscripts written by English nuns in France between 1600 and 1650: one in Norfolk English, the other is an East Midlands dialect (London, BL Sloane 2499 and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

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fonds anglais 41).

Margery Kempe is known for the text of the 1430s called *The Book of Margery Kempe* (henceforth *Book*). Although the original manuscript is lost, the copy made about 1450 by one Salthows was discovered in 1934. Considering the flourishing of mystical literature in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, it is noteworthy that Margery Kempe's *Book* is the only such text composed in England during the following century. She was born in c.1373 in Norfolk and married at twenty, had a vision of Christ in her madness following her first childbirth, and after early failures as a businesswoman, saw visions and felt herself called to a spiritual life. About thirty years younger than Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe had access to both devotional and contemplative literature though she was illiterate laywoman. By the time she visited Julian in Norwich around 1413, she was familiar with books by Hilton and Bridget of Sweden, as well as Richard Rolle. Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe are the most prominent women identified as authors of Middle English devotional prose, and since Julian provides an excellent sounding board by which Margery's prose can be analyzed more meaningfully, it is significant to consider both works together. Julian and Kempe are both in Norfolk at the latter fourteenth century, living in the place not more than forty miles apart. They met personally at least once for a period of many days.

The passive is a marked construction, used according to one of or more of a number of

factors. In due course a passive should ideally be quoted together with its discourse and socio-cultural context. Despite its significance, however, persuasive research has not been undertaken on the usage of the medieval writers.

My purpose is to survey the similarities and differences among the three writings by the two authors and look at passive constructions in Middle English, which has not been persuasively argued. In section 2, I will give a brief background of the two women's writing. Section 3 outlines historical development of a passive construction. Then, in section 4, the usage of the two writers will be examined from forms and discourse perspectives. Firstly, the instances break down in terms of form; distribution of personal and impersonal, short and long types, and the passive from ditransitive actives. Secondly, then we will read into the usage from a pragmatic point of view; human and animacy features of the subject and agent as well as information conveyed by the subject and agent in passive clauses. The focus will be on passive constructions in medieval English prose, always bearing in mind that the passive at the latter half of the fourteenth century are transitory period from Old to Modern English. In section 5, we will see what kinds of likeness and differences among the texts and conclude by summing up the main results of the study.

II The Background to the Writings of Julian and Kempe

It is fitting that the writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe should be

compared and contrasted, for they have much in common. The devotional prose of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries contained writings addressed particularly to women. Julian and Margery were mystics who both experienced personal visions of God, in each case the mystical occurrences beginning after an illness. In spite of similarities, there are striking differences, caused primarily by each personality. Stone (1970: 14) maintains “the more studious, contemplative nature and response of Julian are evident throughout her work, her more moderate and quiet though vivid presentation contributing much to this impression,” and refers to Margery as “her quickness and alertness, her presentation of non-religious matters, and her emotional responses are probably more appealing to most readers than is the studious, single-minded religious tone of Julian.” To put it briefly, Julian’s book is unrelievedly concentrated while the one of Margery is many-faceted.

Book might be written in the late 1430s and presents an account of the visionary encounters and conversations with Christ experienced by a woman who lived in Lynn in Norfolk. The text of Kempe that exists in a single manuscript owned by Colonel W. Butler-Bowdon, has been edited by Sanford B. Meech and Hope Emily Allen for the Early English Text Society. Julian may not have much of a following in her own lifetime. The lack of early manuscripts suggests much. That she has some kind of local fame as a wise spiritual counsellor is clear from the documented visit of Margery Kempe, but this seems to be the unique evidence for such

fame. Kempe mentions her relationship with Julian as follows in the prose: “þan shce was bodyn be owyr Lord for to gon to an ankres in þe same cyte whych hyte Dame Ielyan. & so sche dede & schewyd hir þe grace þat God put in hir sowle of compunccon, contricion, swetnesse & deuocyon, compassion wyth holy meditacyon & hy contemplacyon,...” (ch.18, p.42 l.7-12)

(Then she was commanded by our Lord to go to an anchoress in the same city who was called Dame Julian. And so she did and showed her the grace that God had put in her soul of compunction, contrition, sweetness and devotion, compassion with holy meditation and high contemplation,...)

Kempe was of well-to-do middle-class parentage, which could not read or write, on the other hand, Julian was intelligent recluse with local prestige. In considering passive constructions, their style must be reflected in their own literature.

III Historical and Pragmatic Overlook on Passive Constructions

In passive constructions a direct object becomes a subject of the derived intransitive construction; *be* verb is inserted immediately before the head of verb phrase, and the following head verb is in past participle form. An underlying transitive subject may almost always be included in the passive, in some cases marked by the preposition *by*. This indicates the role which was primarily responsible for the activity that has resulted in the state

described by the passive verb. In fact, in most styles of English a by phrase is only included in a small ratio of passive clauses. Dixon (2003: 353) states, “in formal written English, more than 80 percent of passives are agentless, and the figure is undoubtedly higher for colloquial styles.”

Common OE passive auxiliaries are *wesan*, *beon* and *weorðan*. According to Mustanoja (1960: 438-439), *wesan* and *beon* are the usual auxiliaries for expressing a state and is also frequently used for the actional passive, though *weorðan* becomes more and more popular in this function, especially in poetry. In ME, *wurthe* is rare after the 11th century and ceases to be an auxiliary of the passive about the end of the 14th century. Fisher (1992: 385) mentions indirect object passives appear first from about 1200 with nominal indirect objects quoting *Jacob 229*, ‘*Nas neuere queen in Dis londido so muchessome...*’ (never was a queen in this country done so much shame), followed by unambiguous examples with a pronoun as subject, ‘*And ther they were yolded all the hundret schyppys...*’ Mustanoja (1960: 441) adds for the type *he was laughed at*, which put an object of a preposition in the subject, begins to appear about 1300, but remains rare until the end of the 14th century. Trnka (1930: 62) mentions that this type is occasionally found in the fourteenth century, but widely used after the first half of the 16th century. The three prose we investigate are written in the transitional period; from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 14th century. So, it is worth noting how this shift is reflected. We will

see insufficiency in the statement of Mustanoja and Trnka in section IV.

Let us go on to see discourse functions. It is worth remarking that Seoane (2006:360) mentions the pragmatic / discourse structure side of the passive has not yet been sufficiently explored, though recently a number of studies have shown the influence of communicative pragmatic parameters on word order change in English. From a pragmatic point of view, since topic is equated with information that is given and thus available for quick retrieval, subjects are the prime candidates to become topics. So placing topical material in initial position is an addressee-oriented strategy, as it provides the addressee with an easily accessible and familiar referent that can serve both as the perspective from which to interpret the new information in the sentence and/or as a link with previous discourse.¹

Subject and agent phrases can be classified according to the information status conveyed, using a some-way division in given / new information (Biber et al (1999) Seoane (2006)).

According to Biber et al , there are two primal discourse functions as follows;

- cohesion and contextual fit through ordering of information or omission of information (especially short passive)
- weight management (especially long passive)

Biber mentions some corpus findings. Let me pick up some of them. Firstly, short passives are predominant in all syntactic positions.

Secondly, short dynamic be-passives are sharply differentiated by register, with conversation and academic prose at the opposite poles. Comparing with these features of present-day English, the characteristics of Middle English prose will be described further in section IV.

It is worth mentioning that Dixon (2005: 354-357) refers to several pragmatic factors as grounds for the passive as a marked construction below;

1. To avoid mentioning the subject
2. To focus on the transitive object, rather than on the subject
3. To place a topic in subject relation
4. To satisfy syntactic constraints
5. To focus on the result of the activity

As a topicalization device, the passive involves two related phenomena. Firstly, *subject foregrounding*, whereby the subject / topic of an active transitive clause is removed from the forefront of the clause, the prototypical topic position. Secondly, *object foregrounding* or *topicalization*, which involves promotion of a non-agent to subject and topic position. The passive in Old English had a fairly narrow range in that only the direct object in the accusative case could be passivised, that is, become the subject in the nominative case. The factors that may have influenced the spread of passive constructions are the gradual loss of the Old English active construction with indefinite man and the change in word order.²

IV Usage of the Three Prose

In this section we will inquire into the

forms and pragmatic / discourse structure of the passive in the three writings. We will deal with ST as a whole, LT from chapter 1 to 40 (approximately 22,200 words) and *Book* from chapter 1 to 30 (approximately 28,900 words).

A personal passive is a kind, *the book was written*, while impersonal passive is *it is said that...* According to Mustanoja (1960: 438), the impersonal passive is not uncommon in early ME in the expression of indefinite agency and is quite common in late ME. These texts, however, does not necessarily support his idea. It is noteworthy that the rate of occurrence of impersonal passives largely depends on the background of each prose. The impersonal passive is suitable for rational and philosophical expression of thought for postposing its notional subject after a main verb. Putting this another way, whether emotional or rational influences in selecting passive forms.

Distribution of impersonal passives by each text is: ST 0 ; LT 10 ; *Book* 4.

- (1) ...for sothly *it was not shewid* me that
God lovid me better than the lest soule that
is in grace, (LT ix.13)³
- (2) Than thys creatur thowt *it was ful mery*
to be reprevyd for Goddys lofe; (*Book* xiiii:
29)

As ST is said to have been set down shortly after the showings, the account must be clear. For that reason, rather analytical and indirect impersonal passives are supposed to be avoided. In LT, on the other hand,

appeared nearly twenty years after her initial experiencing of revelations⁴, so we need to take into account her growth in understanding of her revelations.

Let us continue with another viewpoint about involving a restructuring of the clause. A passive construction takes two forms: the long passive where the agent is expressed in a *by*-phrase, and the short passive where the agent is left unexpressed. As for the distribution of short and long passives, the three texts show similar tendency of present-day English, i.e. short passives are predominant in all syntactic positions.

Table 1 Distribution of short and long passives by each text⁵

	Short	Long			
ST	83 (87.3%)	12 (12.7%)	by	4 of 4	with 4
LT	202 (74.3%)	70 (25.7%)	by	59 of 5	with 6
Book	150 (88.2%)	20 (11.8%)	by	10 of 2	with 6 through 2
Total	Short = 435 (81%)	Long = 102 (19%)			

As types of agents are characteristic of each prose, we will see them in individual works later. We will observe passives both in forms and in discourse below. Concerning forms, passives from ditransitive actives, passives with auxiliaries and spelling vacillation will be the main topic. And from the view of discourse, we will see human and animacy features of the subject and agent in long passives and information structure conveyed by the subject and agent in passive clauses as well as usage of short passives.

IV-1 A Revelation of Love, Julian's Short Text (ST)

Forms

For the indirect object and the prepositional objects to become the subject of a passive voice, these two objects must have become syntactically similar to direct objects. Loss of inflections led to coalescence of dative and accusative in the pronominal system and to the coalescence of all cases (except genitive) in the nominal system.

Table 2 Passives from ditransitive actives in ST

	Long passives	Short passives	Total
IO as subject (10.5%)	4	6	10
DO as subject (89.5%)	79	6	85

Approximately one-tenth of the passive have IO as subjects.

(3) And I *was awnswerde* generally thus, "It is alle that ys made". (ix: 52)

(4) And cause why *we ere travayled* with tham is for vnknawenge of luffa. (xxiv: 77)

Passives with auxiliaries in ST are as below:

shall (should) 9 may (might) 6
will (would) 3

(5)... I durste to hafe sum mare open declarynge wharewith I *myght be hesyd* in this. (xiv: 61)

(6) Thowe *schalle nought be ouercomen*, was sayde fulle scharpely and fulle myghtely... (xxii: 74)

(7)...in this fyve wordes god *wille be closed* in

ryste and in pees,...(xv: 63)

Discourse

In many cases of passives, Julian aims to focus on the transitive object in ST, namely, the result of the activity. Especially in the case of revelation inspired by the crucified Christ, this is expressed with a passive construction.

(8) And *this was schewyd* me in the semes of scowrgynge, and this ranne so plenteously to my syght that me thought (viii: 50) (And *this (bleeding) was shown* to me in the wounds of the scourging, and this runs so plenteously to my sight that I thought...)

And another frequent usage to mention is to avoid mentioning the subject. From the context it is evident that the agent is 'bodelye lyght' (bodily sight) representing God.

(9) And *I was aunswerde* in my resone that 3yf god walde schewe me mare he schulde, botte me nedyd na lyght botte hym. (viii: 49) (And *I was answered* in my reason ⁶ that if God wanted to show me more he would, but that I needed no light but him.)

Let us look closely at short passives next. Human referents [+H] are more likely candidates to become topics than those whose referents is non-human [-H]. Among non-human referents, animate [+A] are more likely to be chosen as topics than inanimate ones [-H]. Therefore, subjects of [+H+A] features tend to occupy topic position.⁷

Table 3 Human and animacy features of the subject and agent in ST

Subject/Agent		Percentage
[+H+A] / [-H-A]	4	33.3
[-H-A] / [+H+A]	3	25.0
[+H+A] / [+H+A]	2	16.7
[-H-A] / [-H-A]	3	25.0
Total	12	100.0

Table 3 shows despite paucity of number of instances, it is notable that passives occur having nothing to do with [+H +A] subject. Another way of saying this is the passive subject is not always lower on the animacy hierarchy than the agent phrase in ST. To cite one example:

(10) And whate wrecchednesse is I wille saye, as *I am lernede be the schewynge of god.* (xxiii: 76) (And I should say what wretchedness is, as *I have been taught by the revelation of God.*)

Table 4 ST Information conveyed by the subject and agent in long passive clauses

Order of information	Number	Percentage
Given / new	8	66.6
New / given	0	0
New / new	2	16.7
Given / given	2	16.7
Total	12	100.0

In ST, as shown in table 4, the majority of long passives contain given patients and new agents, while the reverse order does not appear at all. These data makes clear that contexts in which the agent is new and the patient is given information favour the use of long passives in

ST.

(11) Alle the blissede techynge of oure lorde god *was schewed* to me *be thre parties* as I hafe sayde before, that es to saye *be the bodely sight, and be worde* formed in myn vunderstandynge, & *by gastely sight*. (xxiii: 76) (All the blessed teaching of our lord *was shown* to me *in three ways* as I have said before, that is to say, *by bodily sight, by words* formed in my understanding and *by ghostly sight*.)

Although by-phrase contains ‘before’ in (11), three parts will be repeated almost as the same as new information.

IV-2 A Revelation of Love, Julian’s Long Text (LT)

Forms

For the character of religious prose, among nine instances of IO subjects, three of them are ‘I was answered’ and two are ‘I was taught’. Dative subjects common in Chaucer are rare in LT.

Table 5 Passives from ditransitive actives in LT

	Long passives	Short passives	Total
IO as subject (6.2 %)	6	4	10
DO as subject (93.8 %)	64	188	152

(12) and (13) are instances of IO as subject.
 (12) Thus *I was tawte* by the grace of God that I should stedfasty hold me in the faith...(xxxii: 45)
 (13) And *I was answered* in my reason: “Helle

is another payne, for there is despeyr. (xvii: 26)

(14) is an instance of IO with a preposition. This is considered as transitional usage from “me was shewid” to “I was shewid.”
 (14) And to *me was shewid* no herder helle than synne, for a kynde soule hath non helle but synne. (xl: 55)

Passives with auxiliaries in LT are as below:

shall (should) 45 may (might) 16
 will (would) 5

As same as ST, Julian uses *shall (should)* most and *may (might)* second and with *will (would)* is the least. Not a few spelling vacillations are found in LT. We see the characteristics also exist in passives as in (15). A be-verb co-occur as *be is*.

(15) , for al manky(n)d that is of good wille and *shal be is comprehendid* in this parte; (xxx: 41)

Discourse

Transitive predicate rather than the subject is focused by passives. Julian uses this for cataphoric effect.

(16) And also for more vnderstandyng *this blissid word was seyde*: “Lo how I lovid the. Behold and se that I lovid the so mekyl...(xxiii: 35) (And also for more understanding, *this blessed word was said*, “Look how I loved thee. Behold and see that I loves thee so much.)

As for inversion, many subjects are postposed

to satisfy syntactic constraints. Chapter xvii begins with (17) following the ending sentence of xvi, “And methowte the deyeng of Cristis flesh was the most peyne, and the last, of his passion.” (xvi: 25)

(17) And in this deyng *was browte to my mynde the words of Criste*: “I threst”; (xvii: 25)

The topic in this context is “deyeng of Cristis” (death of Christ). So in (17) *this deyng* takes initial position and a subject “the words of Criste” is postposed.

We should notice another point here. Julian occasionally uses formulated passive expression as follows.

(18) ...but only that he dede in our manhood, begynnyng at the sweete incarnation and lesting to the blissid upriste on Esterne morow, so long durid the cost and the charge aboute our redemption in dede, of which dede he enioyeth endlesly, *as it is aforseyd*. Iesus wil we takyn hede to the blis that is in the blissful Trinite of our salvation and that we desiren to have as mech gostly lykyng, with his grace, *as it is aforseyd*: (xxiii: 34) (...except what he did in our human form, beginning at the precious incarnation and lasting until the blessed resurrection on Easter morning, so long during the loss and burden about our redemption, of which he enjoys eternally, *as it is said* before. Jesus wishes us take heed to the delight that is in the blissful Trinity of our salvation and that we desire to have as much spiritual pleasure with his

grace, *as it is said*.)

She uses expression in passives to confirm her saying: *as is aforseyd* xxiii: 33, xl: 55, xli: 56, lxxxi: 130; *as it may be said* xxiii: 35; *as it is seid afor* xxxiii: 46

And other passive formulated expression such as “as it may be seen” has been found. There are other formulated passive expression involving “paid,” “showed,” “turned” and “lernyd”.

In distribution of short and long passives by text type, Seone (2006: 372) mentions that the law text exhibits a high frequency of passives as well as unusual passive-active proportion. In this study, compared with short passives in other texts like sermons (90%), letters (91%), drama (92.3%) and fiction (100%), they are fewer in law (76.4%). It must be noted that LT shows higher ratio of long passives, 74.3%. Then we need to investigate the features of agency and information structures to find out the background of her style.

Table 6 Human and animacy features of the subject and agent in LT

Subject/Agent	Percentage (%)	
[+H+A] / [-H-A]	28	40
[-H-A] / [+H+A]	4	5.7
[+H+A] / [+H+A]	3	4.3
[-H-A] / [-H-A]	35	50
Total	70	100.0

It must be noted that LT has much higher ratio of [-H-A] agent than that of ST. The major reason why [-H-A] agent account for ninety percent of all passives is that many of the

agents have attribute of divinity.

(19) I desired to wetyn a certeyn creature that I lovid if it shuld continu in good lyvyng, which I hopid *be the grace of God* was begonne. (xxxv: 47)

To take some other agent examples of divinity are: *be the mercy of God* (lxiii: 103, lxvi: 109, lxxix: 127) *be our lords meneing* (vii: 12) *be the passion of Criste* (xiii: 20) *be the blissfull passion* (xiii: 21) and etc.

Next instance is by-agents which are inverted before subjects. Agents are emphasized through this passive, as it were emotional use.

(20) *Be contrition* we arn made clene, *be compassion* we arn made redy and *be trew longyng to God* we arn made worthy. (xxxix: 54)

From a pragmatic perspective, the sentence below is intriguing.

(21) thowe our lord shewid me I should synne, *by me alone is vnderstode* al. (xxxvii: 51) (though our Lord showed me that I would sin, *by me alone all is understood*.)

Here the patient-subject “al” is new and the agent by-phrase “me”, is given; the distribution of information is unmarked because the order of constituents has been reversed, the agent appearing before the subject. This example has the order given agent + new patient, an order which is also attained by means of an active clause. Such an arrangement of passive constituents is extremely rare in Present-day English.⁸

As for the discourse structure (22) is the same:

(22) And thus, *by this grounde, she was fulfillid of grace and of al manner of vertues* and overpassyth all creatures.(vii: 10) (And thus *by this ground, she was filled with grace and all kinds of virtue* and surpasses all creatures.)

The peculiarity of this word order is reflected in modern translation by Spearing. She put skilfully, ‘And so this formed the foundation, from this she was filled with grace and every kind of virtue,’

Table 7 LT Information conveyed by the subject and agent in long passive clauses

Order of information	Number	Percentage (%)
Given / new	44	62.8
New / given	7	10.0
New / new	10	14.3
Given / given	9	12.9
Total	70	100.0

Seone (2006:381) states, based on more than 70 percent of the long passives in the diachronic corpus, many passives have a subject which is more definite than the agent by including definite elements such as pronouns, proper names and definite NPs. To some extent this is true in LT, but we must notice peculiarity of LT that much of the given information in agents is aroused by divinity as described in (19).

IV-3 *The Book of Margery Kempe (Book)* Forms

Table 8 Passives from ditransitive actives in *Book*

	Long passives	Short passives	Total
IO as subject (7.7 %)	7	6	13
DO as subject (92.3 %)	12	144	156

The peculiarity in *Book* is finite *be* still remains like OE in concessive and subordinate clauses. To cite one example:

(23) Therfor prayth to God that it may abyden
 tyl ye come fro Jerusalem *that ye be bettyr
 prevyd and knowyn.* (xv: 35)

Passives with auxiliaries in *Book* are as below:

shall (should) 43 may (might) 4
 must 1 will (would) 2

Like ST and LT, *shall (should)* is most common in *Book*. When these three prose were written, *shall* was the general auxiliary of the future, whereas *will* still generally implied volition, though during ME period, the sense of volition of *will* had become faint, and sometimes the two verbs occurred simply as alternative auxiliaries without any apparent distinction in meaning.

Discourse

The point I wish to emphasize is that most of the passive in *Book* occur in subordinate clauses and the rest in compound clauses as in (24).

(24) “Madam, owyr Lord Jhesu Crist bad me
 telle yow that yowr husbond is in purgatory
 and *that ye schal ben savyd* but it schal be

long er ye come to hevyn.” (xviii: 46)

Kempe frequently uses passives to satisfy syntactic constrains such as in (25).

(25) Sche wold a fordon hirself many a tym
 at her steryngys and a *ben damnyd* wyth
 hem in helle. (i: 8)

Usage in *Book* may account for the result that Kempe gives passives background function, namely she does not *positively* focus on the transitive object or focus on the result of the activity. Let us now attempt to extend the observation into the idea of long passives.

Table 9 Human and animacy features of the subject and agent in *Book*

Subject/Agent	Percentage (%)	
[+H+A] / [-H-A]	7	36.8
[-H-A] / [+H+A]	4	21.1
[+H+A] / [+H+A]	2	10.5
[-H-A] / [-H-A]	6	31.6
Total	19	100.0

The thing that one notices within thirty chapters is that the agencies [+H] are limited to *pepul* (people) and *enmy* (enemy).

(26) For sche was euyr lettyd *be hyr enmy*,
 be Deuel, (i: 7)

Table 10 *Book* Information conveyed by the subject and agent in passive

Order of information	Number	Percentage
Given / new	16	84.2
New / given	0	0
New / new	3	15.8
Given / given	0	0
Total	19	100.0

As shown in table 10, most long passives (84.2 percent) contain given patients and new agents, while the reverse order, new / given, is not found in my data. Take (27) for example as given / new information conveyed.

(27) *þu schalt be fulfyllid of al maner lofe*
that þu coveytyst. (xxii: 52)

Contexts in which the agent is new and the patient is given information favour the use of long passive in *Book*. This rendering accords with Seoane (2006: 378), who states that the type of information that the NPs involved convey is confirmed as a factor triggering the use of the passive.

V. Conclusion: Similarities and differences of Julian and Kemp

This research has aimed to show the passive should be surveyed from the point of discourse and cultural background. Julian and Kempe had the same goal of instructing others. As for the form of passives, the three prose share nominative form as IO subjects of the passive. There is no instance of a dative subject common in OE and EME in the three prose. Concerning the contrast, Stone (1970: 29) has the remark that “the work of Julian is strikingly intellectual. She is an analytical mystic, carefully examining her visions, her conclusions, and her questions about the conclusions.” On the other hand, “The work of Margery Kempe is basically non-intellectual. There is little or no analysis, little or no examination of philosophical causes, effects, or questions.” These attitudes mirror their style of the passive. Julian adopts many

passives in set expression such as *be the mercy of God* in her literary style, causing higher percentage of long passive in LT. Unskilful use of the passive in *Book* reflects colloquialism of Kempe. It is worth noting that LT has higher percentage of the passive compared with ST and *Book*. This difference of style is originated from the fact that LT was revised twenty years after ST which was written soon after 1373, when she was granted ‘shewings’.

Notes

- 1 We need to refer to Sornicola (1994: 4639) words concerning this statement: [I]t seems a fairly general property of human communication under nonemphatic conditions, to organize the information flow in the utterance according to a strategy of centering attention on specific information units first, and then giving prominence to others. This might well be a universal tendency across natural languages, which accounts for semantic or structural configurations such as topic-comment, subject-predicate, NP-VP, etc.
- 2 Fisher (1992: 384) mentions two general paths along which one could look for an explanation of a passive construction development. She hypothesises that there was a change in the nature of the rule that generates passive constructions in the light of Lightfoot. Another view is taken from Bennett, who maintains there was a change in the application of the rule due to changes having taken place elsewhere in the system of the language.
- 3 The Roman and the Arabic figures each indicate chapters and pages in the text.
- 4 Julian put down in li: 72, “For xx yeres after the tyme of the shewing,”
- 5 Passives as adjectives such as ‘*I was astonnyd*’ are excluded.
- 6 By *in my reason* Julian intends the rational /

intellectual part of her mind. (OED sb. III, 10)

7 Seone (2006) name this feature division 'the personal hierarchy' in the Dominance Hierarchies.

8 Svartvik (1966) did not find a single example comparable to this phrase order in his 323,000 word corpus of Present-day English.

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Text

Julian of Norwich

The Short Text

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