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“All This Was Shewede by Thre Partes”: Julian, Jesus, and Mary in Julian of Norwich’s *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*
(Under the Direction of DR. WILLIAM PROVOST)

The focus of this study is Julian of Norwich’s *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich* and how she uses her visions of the Virgin Mary in order to become united with Christ. By examining the First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Revelations in depth, this thesis shows how Julian first creates a connection between herself, Mary, and Jesus, and then how Julian melds Jesus and Mary into the figure of Christ as Mother. Because of the links she creates between herself and Mary, Julian thus becomes united with Christ.

INDEX WORDS: Julian of Norwich, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Christ as Mother,
Mystics, Christianity

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JULIAN OF NORWICH’S *A BOOK OF SHOWINGS TO THE ANCHORESS JULIAN*
OF NORWICH

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 JULIAN OF NORWICH'S <i>REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE</i>	10
WORKS CITED.....	45

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the problems in approaching Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* is the lack of knowledge about the author. We know, because Julian tells us, that she fell ill in 1373 and that on May thirteenth of that year, when she was thirty-and-a-half-years old, she experienced a series of sixteen revelations.¹ Julian then meditated on her visions for twenty years, during which time she produced two very distinct versions of her revelations: the Short Text, written shortly after her illness, and the Long Text, written at least twenty years after the Short Text.² No dates for Julian's birth or death are known, although Maureen Slattery Durley points out that three wills between 1394 and 1416 left varying amounts of money for the " anchoress of St Julian's church in Norwich," and the scribal introduction to the Short Text states that Julian was still living as an anchoress in 1413 (Short Text 201).³ It is not even known if "Julian" was the anchoress' real name or if it was the name she assumed after being enclosed some time after 1374 in an anchorage next to the church of St. Julian in Norwich.

Modern critics are divided on how well educated Julian was. Julian herself tells us that the revelations were made to a "simple creature, unlettered" (285). Edmund Colledge

¹ Julian of Norwich, *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*, Part II (Long Text), Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, eds., (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 285-289. All page numbers refer to this edition unless otherwise noted.

² McEntire, Sandra J., Introduction, *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays*, Sandra J. McEntire, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), xii.

³ Durley, Maureen Slattery, "Guilt and Innocence: The Coincidence of Opposites in Julian of Norwich's Parable of the Lord and the Servant," *University of Ottawa Quarterly*, 202. See also Julian of Norwich, *A Book of Showings to Julian of Norwich*, Part I (Short Text), Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, eds., (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies), 201.

and James Walsh, for instance, argue that Julian almost certainly knew Latin, was extremely familiar with the Vulgate, and consequently wrote her own texts, which were subsequently copied by scribes.⁴ To support their claims of her education, Colledge and Walsh point out the parallels between Julian's texts and the works of Bernard of Clairvaux (particularly Bernard's emphasis on Jesus as Mother), Augustine, and William of St. Thierry, and claim that she drew on her extensive knowledge of these works when she wrote the Long Text.⁵ Frances Beer speculates that, by referring to herself as being "unlettered," Julian meant she had little knowledge of Latin but knew how to write in her native tongue; Julian, Beer claims, was nonetheless "well-read if not formally educated."⁶ Beer also speculates that Julian could have been educated at a nearby Benedictine nunnery, and perhaps could have even been resident at the nunnery before her enclosure as an anchoress.⁷

Brant Pelphrey, in contrast, takes Julian at her word, pointing out that it is possible that Julian did not know how to read or write and that therefore the two versions of her *Showings*, or Revelations, extant today were dictated by the anchoress to an unknown scribe.⁸ In *The Life and Text of Julian of Norwich: The Poetics of Enclosure*, M. Diane F. Krantz supports Pelphrey's view of Julian's illiteracy by pointing out that Julian's culture was primarily an oral one and that Julian's Long Text bears the hallmarks of mnemonic devices such as *repetitio* and *incantatio* which, according to Krantz's speculation, Julian used to help herself memorize her *Revelations* during her long years

⁴ Colledge and Walsh, Short Text, 43.

⁵ Colledge and Walsh, 43.

⁶ Beer, Frances, *Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press), 130.

⁷ Ibid, 130.

⁸ Pelphrey, Brant, *Julian of Norwich: Christ Our Mother* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 22.

of reflection on them.⁹ Krantz also points out that the prevalence of numbers and Julian's use of visual imagery throughout her *Showings* indicates that Julian used these "tricks" in order to remember and then record what she had seen.¹⁰

While I agree that Julian does repeat words and imagery, and while I also agree that strong visual images are present throughout both the Long and Short Texts, I do not agree that Julian uses these devices simply because she was un-or ill-educated, and was therefore struggling to put into words her experiences from memory. Rather, I would argue that Julian uses such devices in subtle and sophisticated ways in order to create layers of meaning within her text, and will discuss in detail how and why she repeats words and images in Chapter 2. Furthermore, it is very evident that Julian did have a strong education in religious writings, at least. James Walsh points out, in his introduction to his modern English translation of *Revelations of Divine Love*, that Julian references Walter Hilton and other Christian writers throughout her text:

Julian shares with Hilton and the author of the *Cloud* a common spiritual heritage... They all dilate on the main themes of the traditional spirituality—the second conversion, humility, and charity... They also share a common spiritual terminology. The very words which are picked out as the characteristic language of Julian's

⁹ Krantz, M. Diane F., *The Life and Text of Julian of Norwich: The Poetics of Enclosure*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 36.

devotional approach, “homely”, “courtesy”, “compassion”,
belong as well to the theologians.¹¹

It is also evident that, although Julian could have picked up much of her knowledge of Scriptures, as Grace Jantzen points out, through listening to Church sermons and Scriptural readings, her grasp of theological issues goes far beyond what one might expect someone who is unable to read to have known.¹²

The question remains, then, how to approach Julian and her text, particularly the images of Christ as Mother which are found throughout the Long Text. Alexandra Barratt, for instance, frames her examination of Julian’s text within the context of gender and cultural roles. Barratt points out the similarities between Julian’s text and a medieval medical treatise, and argues that Julian uses the metaphors of pain and biological motherhood to unite mankind to Christ.¹³ Barratt also writes, paradoxically, that, with all the images of motherhood in Julian’s text, there are no images of childbirth.¹⁴ Instead, Barratt argues, Julian focuses on the design of the woman’s body for carrying children and on its nourishing qualities.¹⁵

Elizabeth Robertson also focuses on Julian’s Christ as Mother imagery by using medieval medical beliefs in her examination of the mystic, and she also emphasizes the importance of the female body in Julian’s writing. However, Robertson argues that Julian’s female body is redeemed through Christ’s feminized body, and that it is only by

¹¹ Walsh, James, Introduction, *Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich* (Cornwall: Anthony Clarke, 1961), 14-15. For a more detailed discussion on the similarities and differences between Julian and Walter Hilton, see Denise N. Baker, “The Image of God: Contrasting Configurations in Julian of Norwich’s *Showings* and Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection*” in *Julian of Norwich: a Book of Essays*, Sandra J. McEntire, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998) 35-60.

¹² Jantzen, Grace M., *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 16-17.

¹³ Barratt, Alexandra, ““In the Lowest Part of Our Need”: Julian and Medieval Gynecological Writing.” *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays*. Sandra J. McEntire, ed. (New York: Garland, 1998), 239-256.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 252.

making Christ's body "weak" that Julian can be redeemed and thus united with God.¹⁶ Robertson also claims that Julian's work focuses on images of blood, such as the bleeding head of Christ that Julian sees in the First Revelation.¹⁷ Moreover, Robertson likens such images to menstrual blood, and claims that Julian uses such images to "purge" her body and make it acceptable for the coming union with Christ.¹⁸ Robertson speculates that Julian's emphasis on Christ's feminine physicality and the pervasiveness of blood imagery throughout her *Showings* is revelatory of Julian's anxiety regarding her religious authority and also shows the mystic's sense of inferiority because she is a woman.¹⁹ Robertson also portrays Julian as "a subtle strategist who sought to undo assumptions about women" through her feminizing of Christ.²⁰

David Aers agrees with Robertson that Julian was a subtle strategist; however, he argues that Julian's text does not follow the pattern of blood imagery prevalent in the texts of Julian's contemporaries.²¹ Instead he argues that, while Julian's text does have the appearance of using conventional, affective Christian imagery, what the mystic actually does is disengage herself from potentially emotional passages in order to examine the images she presents dispassionately.²² The reason Julian does this, Aers claims, is not to engage her audience emotionally, but rather to create an avenue by which she can explore metaphysical questions so that her audience can start "receiving

¹⁵ Ibid, 253 .

¹⁶ Robertson, Elizabeth, "Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality in the *Ancrene Wisse* and Julian of Norwich's *Showings*." *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1993), 153 and 156.

¹⁷ Robertson, 154.

¹⁸ Ibid, 155.

¹⁹ Ibid, 159-160.

²⁰ Ibid, 161.

²¹ Aers, David, "The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Divine Love*." David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 81.

lessons in spiritual reading.”²³ Aers also notes that Julian’s image of Christ as Mother has few feminine physical characteristics; instead of emphasizing the body, he writes, Julian’s main goal in positing Christ as a maternal figure is to explore, on an intellectual basis, how knowledge of God and self-knowledge are united in the Divine Indwelling of man in God and God in Man.²⁴

I agree with Aers that Julian’s approach to the traditional images she employs is dispassionate and that she is interested in the intellectual challenge of discovering the meaning behind her Revelations. I also agree with Robertson, Aers, and others, that Julian must negotiate between her visions and what she has been taught by the church. However, I do not believe Julian, as Lynn Staley argues, deliberately subverts conventional Christian thought in order to participate in a larger debate about the role of the Church in daily life.²⁵ As Julian herself points out, she believes in the Church and remains willingly bound by its teaching (323). Moreover, Julian does not, as Robertson writes, feminize Christ in order to redeem the “sensuality,” or physical eroticism, of women.²⁶ Rather, Julian’s emphasis is on redemption for all Christians, as she points out in the Fourteenth Revelation: “Ther I sey: We, it menyth man that shall be savyd” (576).

Of all the authors discussed here, only M. Diane F. Krantz acknowledges that Julian uses the Virgin Mary in her figuring of Christ as Mother.²⁷ However, Krantz also focuses on the physical aspects of Mary as a woman and a mother rather than on her spiritual significance and the traditional role she plays as intercessor between God and

²² Ibid, 82.

²³ Ibid, 84.

²⁴ Aers, 98-99.

²⁵ Staley, Lynn, “Julian of Norwich and the Crisis of Authority,” in Aers and Staley, 110.

²⁶ Robertson, 157.

²⁷ Krantz, 42.

man. In writing about the Parable of the Lord and Servant, Krantz points out that Julian associates the rocky ground upon which the Servant falls with the Virgin's womb, and states that the "correspondence...shows how Julian's mental associations in both the parable and the Jesus as Mother trope are firmly centered in images of the mother's body".²⁸ In Chapter 2 of this thesis I will show how Julian merges Jesus into a vision of the Virgin Mother. And, while I agree with Robertson that Julian desires union with God, I will also argue that Julian uses the Virgin Mary in order to achieve that unity by making Mother Mary one with Christ.

There remains the question of how Julian's revelations are structured. Julian herself writes that the revelations were shown to her in three parts: "by bodyly syght, and by worde formyde in my vnderstondyng, and by goostely syght" (323). Nicholas Watson, however, argues that, even though she tells the reader that this is how her visions were presented to her, Julian does not follow this structure.²⁹ Indeed, Watson sees Julian as working against the structure she has created; Julian, he writes, uses words such as "saw," "showed," and "understood," among others, with such flexibility in their meaning that any attempt to use her exegetical structure is fruitless.³⁰ He further points out that, in many of the Revelations, it is impossible to distinguish between any given actual vision and the mystic's reaction to it, particularly in the Fourteenth Revelation, where Julian examines and re-examines the Parable of the Lord and Servant.³¹ Instead, Watson suggests that there is another Trinitarian structure present in Julian's writing, one which creates correspondences between the mystic's experiences and the Holy Trinity. Watson

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Watson, Nicholas, "The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich's *Revelation*," in McEntire 61-90, 66.

³⁰ Ibid, 67.

argues that Julian creates a structure of an initial teaching, followed by an inner learning, and then an examination of the revelation as a whole, and that this is the true Trinitarian structure of Julian's work.³² Watson diagrams this other tripartite structure in this way:

The begynnyng of techyng/Julian's memory/Father/might-truth;

Inward lernyng/Julian's reason/Son/wisdom;

*The hole revelation/Julian's will/Holy Spirit/love.*³³

Watson's suggested hermeneutic does create the connection between God and mystic that Julian craves. It also, according to the critic, gives her the spiritual authority to present her Revelations as a *bona fide* religious experience because Julian's thoughts and reactions reflect the presence of the Holy Trinity throughout her twenty years' of meditation on her initial visions.³⁴

I believe that Watson is correct in claiming that Julian would see the Holy Trinity as a natural participant in her twenty years' meditation; however, I do not believe that Julian's reactions are entirely indistinguishable from what she sees.³⁵ I will argue in Chapter 2 that, as Julian grows in her understanding of God, her participation in, and reactions to, what she is seeing also grows as a reflection of her spiritual maturity. Nor should we, like Watson, discount Julian's stated structure of "bodily sight," "words formed in understanding," and "ghostly sight." Although, as I shall illustrate further in the main body of this thesis, Julian alters this structure in some Revelations, the basic tripartite outline remains the same throughout her *Showings*. As the main point of my

³¹ Watson, 64.

³² Ibid., 78-80.

³³ Ibid, 80.

³⁴ Ibid, 81.

thesis, I will argue that there is a movement throughout Julian's text towards union with God, and that Julian uses this simplistic-seeming tripartite structure to achieve her goal of becoming one with Jesus and God through the Virgin Mary.

³⁵ Watson, 81.

CHAPTER 2

JULIAN OF NORWICH'S *REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE*

One of the questions posed throughout Julian of Norwich's *A Book of Showings* is how to achieve unity with God. Women, according to Pauline thought, were inferior to men because they were descended from Eve; since they shared Eve's "sinful" nature, early Church fathers argued, women could not be fully reconciled to God.³⁶ The challenge for Julian, then, becomes how to overcome the limitations placed on her by the Church because of her gender in order to become "onyd" with God; moreover, her challenge is also to show how all humankind can overcome sin to be united with God.³⁷ Like many of her fellow female mystics, Julian feels an affinity with Mary, the mother of Jesus. In her *Showings*, Julian presents the reader with sixteen different visions, or revelations. Although at first her visions of the Virgin Mary appear to occupy a small portion of the recluse's writings, a deeper reading of Julian's work reveals Mary's centrality to Julian's theology of love.

Nor are these visions static sights. They are, rather, organic in nature, and they reflect Julian's growing awareness of how she, as a woman, can be united with God: through identification with the Virgin Mary. The process by which Julian creates her connection with Mary is a subtle one, and it is a process dependent upon the structural form in which Julian presents her visions. By examining the underlying structure of

³⁶ *Essay on Julian of Norwich*, York University Essay Bank.
[HTTP://york.ac.uk/student/su/essaybank/english/julian_of_norwich](http://york.ac.uk/student/su/essaybank/english/julian_of_norwich)

³⁷ Brant Pelphrey calls this desire to be united with God "at-one-ment," meaning a profound relationship with God which still allows the individual to retain his own unique characteristics (Pelphrey 42).

several of Julian's *Revelations* and, more specifically, how Julian uses this structure, I propose to show how Julian's use of the Virgin allows the mystic to achieve unity with God.

At first glance, Julian's visions appear to have little in common with each other structurally; they range in form from the seemingly purely verbal, straightforward Twelfth Revelation, to the visually explicit, multilevel *exemplum* of the Lord and Servant in the Fourteenth Revelation. Yet, as Julian points out, "all this [her Revelations] was shewde by thre partes, that is to sey by bodily syght, and by worde formyde in my vnderstondyng, and by goostely syght" (323). Although Julian deliberately blurs the distinction between the "bodily" and "ghostly" (i.e., spiritual) sights at times, this multilevel framework allows Julian to show her readers what she herself has experienced: Julian relates what she sees, either with her "bodily" or "ghostly" sight; she repeats the words she receives in her understanding; and then she presents her readers with a spiritual revelation, which unites the visual and verbal levels of her revelation.³⁸ For instance, in the Tenth Revelation, Julian is shown what lies inside the pierced, bleeding side of the crucified Christ: a fair and beautiful land "large jnow for alle mankynde" (394). At the same time, she is given these words by Christ: "Lo how I loue the" (395). Both the beatific vision of Jesus' side and the words he speaks to Julian are united in her "ghostly" vision of Christ's bleeding:

³⁸ Even the predominantly verbal Twelfth Revelation follows this pattern to an extent. Julian writes that the Lord "sh(ew)yd hym more gloryfyed as to my syght than I saw hym before;" this is the "visual" part of the revelation (402). Then, in one of the more famous passages, she tells the reader of the words formed in her mind: "I it am, I it am... I it am that shewde me before to the" (402-403). And, although not explicitly stated, the spiritual part of the three-level model can be inferred when Julian writes of the joy she experiences when she sees this vision, and of the learning she receives about the soul (402-403).

And ther *with* he brought to mynde hys dere worthy blode
 and his precious water whych he lett poure out for loue.
 And with the swete beholdyng he shewyd his blessyd hart
 clovyn on two, and *with* hys enjoyeing he shewyd to my
 vnderstandyng in part the blyssydfulle godhede as farforth
 as he wolde that tyme, strengthyng the pour soule for to
 vnderstande...the endlesse loue that was *without*
 begynnyng (395).

By both showing the vision of Christ's wounded side and repeating the words of love Christ forms in her mind, Julian's spiritual vision reiterates both the lesson of love she is taught and the rewards that lie in wait for those who follow Jesus.

Moreover, this underlying, three-part structure allows Julian to create subtle and intricate connections between each vision. By presenting her readers with a visual image at the beginning of each revelation, for instance, she deliberately draws a parallel between the vision under examination and those preceding it in order to illustrate a particular aspect of her theology of love. In the Fifteenth Revelation, for instance, Julian sees a body lying on the ground: "...*with* oute shape and forme...and sodeynly oute of this body sprong a fulle feyer creature, a lyttyle chyld, whych sharpely glydyd up to hevyn" (622-623). Immediately following, in the Sixteenth Revelation, Julian sees the Devil, and describes her experiences thus: [he had] a vysage fulle nere my face lyke a yonge man...body ne handes had he none shaply, but *with* hys pawes he helde me...and I was brought [by Jesus] to grete reste and peas" (636-638). By describing the Devil as being without form, she creates a link between this vision and the preceding vision of the

shapeless body, which allows her to emphasize the power of God over earthly flesh for those who love His Son.

This construct also allows Julian to revisit a single image from several visions earlier and subtly alter it to create a visual building block onto which various levels of understanding are added. For example, in the Second Revelation, Julian tells the reader about seeing Jesus hanging from the Cross and how his face is covered with blood: “And one tyme I saw how halfe the face, begynnyng at the ere, over yede with drye bloud, tyll it closyd in to the myd face, and after that the other halfe beclosyd on the same wyse; and the(re) whiles it vanyssched in this party evyn / as it cam” (324-325). In the Fourth Revelation, Julian again presents the image of a bleeding Christ at the Crucifixion; this time, however, the blood is not dry, nor is it limited to the face. Instead, the warm blood flows all over Christ’s body “so plentuously that ther was neyther seen skynne ne wounde, but as it were all blode. And when it cam wher it shuld haue fall downe, ther it vanysschyd” (342). The image linking these two showings together is Christ’s blood miraculously vanishing. By changing the dried blood to fresh blood, Julian emphasizes Christ’s dying and rising again from the dead; by showing both types of blood as disappearing, the mystic builds upon the idea that both death and life are united in Jesus.

The words “formed in her understanding” permit Julian to connect her various visions together, and she also uses these words as building blocks to form multiple levels of understanding. However, unlike the physical and spiritual visions, these words also enable Julian to construct a connection between herself and what she is relating. Perhaps the most well known of Julian’s “words” is the phrase, “all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” The first time this expression occurs is in the Twelfth Revelation,

in answer to Julian's struggle with how sin fits in with God's plan. When Julian wonders what would have happened if sin had not entered the world, she tells the reader her own thoughts: "for then thought me that alle shulde haue be wele" (404). In answer to her sorrow regarding original sin, Jesus forms these words in her understanding: "Synne is behouely, but alle shalle be wele, and alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele" (405). By using the same words to describe both her own thoughts and the words God forms in her mind, Julian establishes a subtle relationship between herself and her visions, which in turn enables her to participate in her own theology of love.

I have spent some time examining and giving some examples of the way Julian's tripartite structure works in *A Book of Showings* because I want to establish the underlying structure of Julian's Revelations. Recognition of, and sensitivity to, Julian's use of this structuring device allow us to see more clearly how and, more importantly, why Julian uses her visions of the Virgin to participate in the unity of the Holy Trinity. To that end, I will examine the First Revelation, the Eighth Revelation, and the Fourteenth Revelation, with a particular emphasis on the Fourteenth's *exemplum* of the Lord and the Servant, which sums up the whole of Julian's visions.

Julian's First Revelation appears to be a straightforward showing of Christ's suffering on the Cross. She begins her vision with a vivid description of Jesus' bleeding under the Crown of Thorns: "And in this sodenly I saw the reed bloud rynnyng downe from the garlande, hote and freyshely , / plentuously and liuely, right as it was in the tyme that the garlande of thornes was pressed on his blessed head" (294). However, her reaction to this vision is not what one would expect. Instead of being moved to tears or to mournful prayer by the sight, she comprehends the Trinity in Christ's suffering and

understands that three equally important parts make up its essential whole: Maker, Lover, and Keeper (294-295). She then sees, in her spiritual sight, a vision of the Virgin Mary as a young girl, before the Christ Child was conceived, and how God loves the world and keeps it enclosed in Himself, even though the world appears to be little and unimportant. In this first vision, then, Julian sets up three of the themes present throughout her work: Christ's suffering for and redemption of humanity; the unity of the Triune God and His individual characteristics; and the love God bears for Mary and, through her, for all humanity.

Julian's First Revelation follows the model outlined previously of appearing to repeat the physical sights while slightly changing their meaning. After the first description of Christ's bleeding head is given, for instance, she returns to expound upon that initial sight and, in so doing, alters its initial impression of being a simple vision of Christ upon the Cross. Julian writes that as she was seeing the "ghostly" sights of the Trinity and the Virgin, the image of the bleeding Christ was always before her:

And in alle þat tyme that he schewd thys that I haue now
 seyde in gostely syght, I saw the bodely syght lastyng of
 the (plentuous) bledyng of the hede. The grett droppes of
 blode fell downe fro vnder the garlonde lyke pelottes,
 semyng as it had comynn ouzte of the veynes. And in the
 comyng ouzte they were bro(wne) rede, for the blode was
 full thycke, and in the spredyng abrode they were bryght
 rede. And when it camme at the browes, ther they
 vanysschyd; and not wythstondyng/ the bledyng contynued

tylle many thynges were sene and vnderstondyd...the
 plentuousshede is lyke to the drops of water that falle of the
 evesyng of an howse after a great shower of reyne...and for
 the roundesse they were lyke to the scale of heryng in the
 spreddyng of the forhede (312-313).

By comparing Christ's blood to rain, Julian infers that His blood has rain's same life-giving qualities. By using the analogy of the fish's scales to describe the shape of the droplets of blood, Julian invokes the traditional Christian symbol of Christ as the fisherman.³⁹ And by writing that the physical vision of Christ continues even while she is seeing ghostly visions and hearing words spoken in her understanding, Julian subtly reinforces the idea that Christ is present in all creation.

While the "bodily" sight of this first showing emphasizes the connection between Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the life of humanity, the "ghostly" vision Julian receives creates the beginning of an intimate connection between the mystic and the Virgin Mary.⁴⁰ As she lies close to death, the mystic experiences a great reluctance to die because, as she writes, although she believes in God, and has had some experience of Christ, she "had leued heer so litle and so shorte in regarde of that endlesse blesse [of heaven]" (290). Julian thus characterizes herself as being young and inexperienced in her religious development; she is a "child" spiritually. Her first vision of Mary emphasizes Mary's youth and inexperience; the Virgin, Julian sees, is "a little waxen aboute a chylde, in the stature as she was when she concievede" (297). Mary's external physical youthfulness thus mirrors Julian's internal spiritual inexperience. Yet Julian sees that

³⁹ Zinck, 178.

⁴⁰ Peters, 144.

Mary's soul is also full of a "wisdom and truth" far beyond the Madonna's young age (297). By drawing a parallel between her spiritual childhood and the Maiden's childhood, Julian sets the stage for her own acquisition of knowledge and wisdom as a result of her visions.

Julian also draws parallels between herself and Mary in the words she uses to describe both herself and the Virgin. For instance, during her introduction to the *Showings*, Julian describes herself as "a symple creature, vnlettyred" (285). Similarly, Mary is first described as "a symple mayden and a meeke" (297). Just as Julian marvels at the grace God shows her by taking away her physical pain, so Mary marvels at the grace God shows her by making her the bearer of the Child: Mary stands "marvayling *with* great reuerence that he would be borne of her that was a symple creature of his making" (297). When Julian returns to expound upon this ghostly sight, she writes that Mary "sawe hyr selfe so lytylle and so lowe, so symple and so poer" (311). By referring to Mary's marveling in the same way in which she marvels, and by using the word "symple" to describe both herself and Mary, Julian creates a subtle connection between herself and the Virgin and, ultimately, Jesus.

The word "little" serves as another link between Julian and Mary; it also serves as a tie linking both Julian and the Virgin to the Holy Trinity. In perhaps the most well-known passage of the First Vision, Julian is shown "a little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott" (299). When she wonders what it is, Julian hears the first "words formed in her understanding": "It is all that is made" (300). In this "little thing," Julian sees that God has made it, God loves it, and God keeps it. She then enlarges this idea to personify each of the characteristics: God is the Maker, Jesus is the Lover, and the Holy Ghost is

the Keeper. And when she thinks that all of Creation will become nothing because of its littleness, God tells Julian in her understanding that it will all last because He loves it. By creating this progression from herself to Mary, and then from Mary to all that is made, loved, and kept by the Trinity, Julian forges the first link in the chain which will lead her to become one with God.⁴¹

The Second through Seventh Revelations also serve as links between God and Julian. While the emphasis in this thesis is on the First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Revelations, a brief examination of these intervening visions is important in any discussion of Julian's spiritual growth, primarily because they not only reflect the mystic's spiritual development, but also because they clarify the patterns established in the First Revelation, which will be more fully examined in the Eighth and Fourteenth Revelations.

In the Second Revelation, for instance, Julian "bodily" sees Christ's head and face as they appear during his Crucifixion. Christ's head is continually bleeding because of the buffeting he receives; however, the blood miraculously disappears before it can reach his face, leaving his visage clear so that Julian can see how it changes colors with his suffering, like the cloth of the Holy Vernicle (325). This bleeding and discoloration is addressed again in the Eighth Revelation, when Christ's bleeding head becomes a metaphor for human suffering; the discolored cloth, described as brown and torn, ragged

⁴¹ Julian goes on to claim that she is not as important as her visions, and she is careful to acknowledge the teachings of the Catholic Church by stating that there are many who follow the "comyn techyng of holy chyrch" who have a greater love of God than she does (322). She also states very clearly that she is a devoted practitioner of all of the Church's teachings, and writes that, throughout her visions, those teachings serve as a framework within which God speaks to her (323). I agree with Colledge, and Walsh, who argue that Julian's insertion of this section in the Long Text (it is not present in the Short Text) is both a careful hedge against the claim of heresy and a clear statement that, even after her Revelations, Julian remains a faithful supporter of Church doctrine and Scripture. See Colledge and Walsh, 36 .

and dirty, becomes Christ's skin, brown from the sun and hanging down from his face like a cloth (362). In the Fourteenth Revelation, this image of brown and torn cloth-like skin is transformed yet again into the ripped and tattered kirtle Christ dons when he assumes human form. Julian herself acknowledges and explains the connection between the torn skin and the ripped kirtle in the Fourteenth Revelation: "By that his kertyll was at the point to be ragged and rent is vnderstond the roddys and the scorgys, the thornes and the naylys" (541). By introducing the elements of torn skin and discolored cloth in the Third Revelation, Julian is able to build upon them and transform them into the suffering Christ undergoes to redeem humanity.

At first glance, the Third Revelation does not appear to have any elements upon which Julian can build in her later Revelations. Yet this Revelation does serve as a connection between the First Revelation and the Fourteenth Revelation. In the Third Revelation, Julian sees God in "a poynte"; that is, she sees that God is in all things, no matter how small or trivial those things may appear to be (336-337). She thus reiterates the earlier image in the First Revelation of seeing all of creation as being no bigger than a hazelnut (299-300). Julian then responds with what seems to be a non sequitur: "I merveyled in that syght with a softe drede, and thought: What is synne" (336). Julian goes on to explore how God works in his creation, leaving the question unanswered until the Fourteenth Revelation, when she again asks the question and is told that sin is the belief that humanity is separated from God (559). From this question arises the Parable of the Lord and Servant and the extended exploration that follows it. Thus what seems to be an unimportant, "little" interjection becomes central to Julian's exploration of how God and man are united.

The Fourth and Fifth Revelations appear to stand in opposition to the Eighth Revelation, yet they also contain themes that Julian addresses in her later Revelations, including the Eighth. These two Revelations deal with how mankind is redeemed: by Jesus' blood, in which everything on Earth is washed clean, and by Christ's Passion, which vanquishes Satan (342-350). In the Fourth Revelation, Julian describes Christ's blood as like water; it covers the earth, running freely and washing everything in its path (343). The Fifth Revelation shows Jesus scorning the Devil, to the point where Julian laughs because she understands that Satan has no power over any true Christian (348-349). The Eighth Revelation, in contrast, concerns itself with the deep drying of Christ's body and Julian's mourning and sorrow at Jesus' pain. Yet all three Revelations end with a spiritual vision of Christ in Heaven, rejoicing in mankind. Julian's point is that all things exist in Christ and will eventually be redeemed by him.

This point is reiterated in the Sixth and Seventh Revelations. In the Sixth Revelation, for instance, God shows Julian how he will reward his faithful followers; she sees him as lord of a great house in Heaven, treating his servants "homely and fulle curtesly" (351-352). This presages the great Parable of the Lord and Servant in the Fourteenth Revelation, in which the Lord (God) treats his Servant (Jesus) with love and joy. The Seventh Revelation gives Julian a taste of what Heaven will be; she is "fulfyllyde of the evyrlastyng sureness, myghtely fastnyd without any paynefulle drede" (354). Yet this sample of Heaven doesn't last; Julian's spiritual joy alternates with deep physical pain (355). Julian writes that God teaches her, through this changing from joy to agony and back again, that it is important for some people to experience both weal and woe in order to know that God is with them at all times (355). This experience forms a

link with the Thirteenth Revelation, in which Julian is shown that “synne is behouely, but alle shalle be wele, and alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thyng shalle be wele”(405). By showing that pain and sin are necessary in order to grow closer to God, and by showing the joy that will eventually be the reward of all Christians, Julian gives her readers hope that they too will be united with God.

The Eighth Revelation is the next major stepping-stone in Julian’s path towards unity with God. As Walsh and Colledge point out, it is more complex than any that come before it, with the exception of the First Revelation.⁴² On the surface, it has the same general structure as the First Revelation; Julian follows her immediate bodily sight with a ghostly sight, and then tells of the knowledge she receives in her understanding. A closer analysis, however, reveals some telling differences between this vision and the First Revelation. In the Eighth Vision, Julian’s spiritual growth becomes more evident as she experiences both the pain of the Crucifixion and the pain of those who witness it. This growth occurs on two levels: the growth she experiences in the linear presentation of her visions in the Long Text, and the growth she experiences in the interval between the writing of the Short and Long Texts. In this section, I will show the changes in Julian’s spiritual growth between the First and Eighth Revelations, and how her extended meditation on her vision leads her to greater union with God in the Long Text.

Although she closely follows the structure of the First Revelation, in the Eighth Revelation Julian begins to reveal to the reader the spiritual growth she experiences as a result of her sights, and how each sight builds upon the previous “showing.” As in the First Vision, Julian begins by presenting the reader with a clear “bodily” vision, this time of the “deep drying” of Christ:

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 flesch
 turned more depe dede...the swete body waxed browne and
 blacke... And thowe [Christ's] peyne was bitter and sharp,
 yet it was fulle longe lasting, as to my syght...the swet
 body was so dyscolouryd, so drye, so clongyn, so dedly and
 so pytuous as he had bene sennyght deed, continually
 dyeng. And me thought the dryeng of Cristes flesch was
 the most peyne and the last of his passion (357-359).

This image of Christ's dying moments appears in sharp contrast to the vision of the living Christ Julian presents to the reader in the First Revelation, and at first glance it would appear that the physical visions would have little in common, let alone serve as interlinking building-blocks to greater spiritual understanding. However, the physical levels of the two visions do share a subtle link. In the First Showing, Julian describes Christ's blood as flowing copiously and plentifully from His head, yet disappearing just as it reaches his eyes. In the Eighth Vision, she describes the blood as dried and clotted, forming a second "wreath" underneath the wreath of thorns, again just above Jesus' eyes (363). The first image is that of a "living" crown," and it symbolizes man's fleshly condition. The second "crown" is a "dead" one, and it represents the "death" to flesh that all humanity must undergo in order to achieve unity with God. Taken together, the two "crowns" illustrate Julian's progression from earthly surroundings into the realm of spirituality.

⁴² Colledge and Walsh, 93.

The mystic's growing awareness of her spirituality also allows her to see Christ's thirst, caused by his deep drying, on two levels. The first level, Julian writes, is a "bodily" thirst: "I vnderstode by the bodily thurste that the body had feylyng of moyster, for the blessyde flesch and bonys was lefte alle alone without blode and moyster" (360). The second level is a spiritual understanding of how Christ is thirsty for humankind, and how he is continually rebuffed: "For he that is highest and worthiest was foulest co(n)dempnyd and vtterly dyspysed; fore the hyst point that may be seen in his passion is to thynke and to know that he is god that sufferyd" at the hands of humanity (375). By placing this bi-level spiritual sight of Christ's thirst within the context of her "physical" showing of Christ's suffering, Julian deliberately joins the spiritual and physical sights together, and thus allows the reader to participate in her growing awareness of how God sees humanity.

Julian's spiritual growth as she experiences her visions in linear time is also evident in how she responds to Christ's suffering. In the First Revelation, Julian tells the reader that she experiences great joy at the sight of her Lord, but her response does not allow her to actually participate in the vision she is reacting to. In the Eighth Revelation, however, she experiences the pain she had asked for before her visions began, and this pain allows her to fully understand, and participate in, Christ's own suffering:

The shewyng of Cristes paynes fylled me fulle of peynes,
for I wyste welle he suffyryde but onys, but as he wolde
shewe it me and fylle me with mynde, as I had before
desyerde. And in alle thys tyme of Cristes presens, I felte
no peyne but for Cristes paynes; than thought me I knew

fulle lyttyle what payne it was that I askyd, and as a wrech
 I repentyd me, thyngkyng if I had wyste what it had be, loth
 me had been to haue preyed it. For me thought my paynes
 passyd ony bodily deth...but of ale peyne that leed to
 saluacion, thys is the most, to se the louer to suffer. How
 might ony peyne be more then / to see hym that is alle my
 lyfe, alle my blysse and alle my joy suffer (364-365).

In the words, “I felte no peyne but for Cristes paynes,” Julian both subsumes, and unites, her own human, physical pain in the larger pain that Christ suffered for all humanity, and thus moves closer to her goal of unity with God.⁴³

Having merged her own physical pain into Christ’s suffering, Julian then appears to suddenly veer away from being a full participant in Christ’s agony to being merely an observer, the role she plays during the First Revelation.⁴⁴ When she writes that “of alle peyne that lead to saluacion, thys is the most, to se the louer suffer,” however, she is not writing about simply witnessing Christ’s suffering. Rather, she is also connecting herself to the pain that all Christianity feels when Christ is nailed to the Cross for humanity’s sins. This connection between herself and humanity as a whole is further emphasized when she writes of her chagrin at having received what she had asked for by praying to experience Christ’s agony: “I knew fulle lyttyle what payne it was that I askyd, and as a wrech I repentyd me...if I had wyste what it had be, loth me had been to haue preyed it” (365). This very human reaction is not the denial of pain that it appears to be; rather, as

⁴³ Bauerschmidt, 88.

⁴⁴ Aers 42.

Bauerschmidt points out, it serves as an acknowledgement that Christ and humanity are united through pain and sorrow.⁴⁵

As in the First Revelation, the link that allows this union between humanity and Christ is Mary.⁴⁶ Here again, Julian's vision of Mary takes place in the mystic's "ghostly" sight. However, there is a distinct difference between this vision of Mary and Julian's earlier vision. In the First Revelation, Mary appears as a young girl who is told by the angel that she will bear the Christ. In this later vision, Mary appears as the full-grown Sorrowing Mother, whose pain at her Son's death far outstrips any pain that Julian can feel (367). Julian's visions of the Virgin thus appear to mirror her own spiritual growth. In the First Revelation, Julian is "young" in her spirituality, and thus responds with the same wonder to her Revelation that Mary uses to respond to the angel's announcement. In this Revelation, having witnessed several other visions, and having participated in the pain of Christ's Crucifixion, Julian begins to truly understand the meaning of Christ's death upon the Rood. Julian's knowledge of her own sorrow, that "ther was no peyne...lyke to that sorow that I had to see hym in payne" thus echoes what she writes of Mary's sorrow: "for so much as she louyd hym more then alle other, her peyne passyd alle other...for ever the hygher, the myghtyer, the swetter that the loue is, the more sorow / it is to the lover to se that body in payne that he lovyd" (365-366). By drawing a subtle parallel between her spiritual growth and her changing visions of Mary, Julian further emphasizes the links between herself and the Virgin, which in turn creates stronger links between the mystic and Christ.

⁴⁵ Bauerschmidt, 88.

⁴⁶ Peters, Brad, "A Genre Approach to Julian of Norwich's Epistemology," in McEntire, 115-152. 144

What is also interesting about this presentation of Mary as the Sorrowing Mother is that it emphasizes not only the linear growth Julian experiences during her visions, it also shows the results of her years of meditation between the writing of the Short and Long Texts. As several critics have pointed out, little is known of Julian's life beyond the fact that she was thirty and a half years old when she experienced her visions. However, in the version of the Eighth Revelation in the Short Text, Julian does make one mention of a relative: her mother. As Julian lies near death, she writes that her mother, convinced that the mystic was either dying or was already dead, passes her hand over her daughter's face and looks into her eyes (234 Short Text). This passage, occurring just before Julian's spiritual vision of the Virgin, is not in the Long Text, and its omission suggests that, as a result of her meditation on this vision of Mary as Mother, Julian deliberately subsumes the human role of mother as caretaker of a child into Mary's traditional role as intercessor and caretaker for humankind.

This idea is borne out in the language Julian chooses to describe her mother's position in the room where the mystic lies dying: "My modere that stode emangys othere...behelde me" (Short Text 234). This image of her mother standing among others and seeing her dying daughter brings to mind the image of Mary standing among Christ's disciples and beholding her Son dying on the Cross. This passage is omitted from the Long Text. It can be argued that the reason for this omission is because its inclusion in the Long Text would lessen the impact of the Parable of the Lord and Servant in the Fourteenth Revelation, where Julian transposes her physical visions of Jesus with her ghostly visions of Mary. As Brad Peters points out, Julian, throughout both versions of her *Showings*, gradually moves away from the limits of a defined physical body and into

an undefined spiritual sphere.⁴⁷ The elimination of Julian's human, physical mother from the Long Text frees Julian to move into a more intimate and mature spiritual relationship with both Jesus and Mary.⁴⁸

Julian, however, is not content to only create a link between the Queen of Heaven and herself. Rather, Julian sees a "grett onyng" between Christ and all creation in this spiritual sight, and the connecting factor is, once again, in the Long Text, that of pain: "for when he was in payne, we ware in payne, and alle creatures that myght suffer payne sufferyd with hym," (367). As James Walsh points out, however, through this pain there runs the undercurrent of love and, through that love, redemption: both the Redemption Christ offered humanity by dying on the Cross, and the redemptive love created by human beings who are conscious of their faults, yet struggle to overcome them in order to come closer to God.⁴⁹ By including this sight of unification between God and creation in her vision of Mary, Julian thus moves the Virgin from being a sorrowing figure to being a symbol of the love God bears humanity, as well as being a full enabler for, and participant in, that love

This emphasis on the connection between Mary and Creation also builds upon Julian's spiritual sight in the First Revelation. In the First Revelation, Julian follows her vision of the childlike Mary with a "little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott," which is "all that is made," and Julian is told that God made it, God loves it, and God keeps it (299-300). Julian also presents her readers with an Eden-like vision in which all is created in peace and harmony, and God knows all the true souls (300). In the Eighth Revelation, however, the connection comes to be between Jesus and humanity and, by

⁴⁷ Peters, 145.

⁴⁸ Krantz, 22

extension, between Mary and humanity. Just as Mary suffers at the Cross, so does humanity, even those who do not know Jesus (367). Further, Julian writes that “whan he feylyd, / then behovyd nedys to them for kyndnes to feyl with hym, in as moch as they myght, for sorow of hys paynes...saue the myghty pryve kepyng of god” (367). In this vision, then, when Jesus falls, all humanity falls and suffers with him. Julian, as she grows more in her spiritual knowledge, thus begins to understand the nature of grace and the nature of humanity’s fall and redemption. And Mary, occupying the role of being completely human, and yet still holy, symbolizes that redemption.

As in the First Vision, Julian follows her spiritual vision with “words formed in her understanding.” What is different about this revelation, however, is the kind of dialogue Julian creates between herself and the words God gives to her. In her previous Revelations, Julian is simply an observer, always wondering in her mind what each Revelation means. Now, however, she moves towards being a participant by choosing to answer God rather than merely to react to what she sees or is told. For instance, when she is told to look up to Heaven and see God, Julian responds with the following:

And than sawe I wele with the feyth that I felt that ther was
 nothyng betwene the crosse and hevyn that myght haue
 dussesyde me. Here me behovyd to loke vppe or elles to
 answere. I answeryd inwardly with alle the myght of my
 soule, and sayd: Nay, I may nott, for thou art my hevyn.
 Thys I seyde for I wolde nott; for I had levyr a bene in that
 payne tylle domys day than haue come to hevyn other wyse

⁴⁹ Walsh, 29

than by hym. For I wyst wele that he that bounde me so
sore, he shulde vnbynde me whan he wolde (371).

Although it appears at first glance that Julian is disobeying a mystical command from God, what she is really doing is proving what she has been taught by her previous visions, including the Eighth: to choose Jesus as her lord and savior (371).

This dialogue between Julian and God is a reflection of the dialogue Julian carries on within herself as she attempts to relate to everything that she is shown, and everything that she is participating in. Unlike the First Revelation, which presents “words formed in her understanding” to Julian only at the end of both the physical and spiritual sights, this kind of interior conversation is present throughout the Eighth Revelation. For instance, when Julian, experiencing Christ’s pain upon the cross, asks herself “is ony payne lyk this,” she is answered “in her reson” thus: “Helle is another payne, for ther is dyspyer” (365). This response prompts Julian to conclude that only through the pain of the Cross can there be true redemption. By creating this dialogue within herself, Julian is also creating a dialogue with the events that she is witnessing, and therefore forging a link between herself and God, with the goal of unity with the Godhead.

The result of the physical and spiritual visions, along with the words she hears in her mind, is that Julian grows in her awareness and understanding of the nature not only of God, but the nature of man as well. This is evident when she discusses the relationship between Christ’s outer physicality and his inward soul:

And in this I saw truly that the inward party is master and
souereyne to the outward, nought chargyng nor takyng

hede of the wylles of that, but alle the intent and the wylle
 is sette endlessly to be onyd to our lorde Jhesu. That the
 outward party sholde drawe the inward to assent was not
 shewde to me; but that the inwarde party drawyth the
 outward party by grace, and both shalle be onyd in blysse
 withoute ende by the vertue of Christ (373)

This growing awareness, as presaged in the phrase “the inward party is master and souereyne to the outward,” foreshadows the duality of the Parable of the Lord and Master in the Fourteenth Revelation, which will be examined in detail.

Before examining the Fourteenth Revelation, however, a brief synopsis of the Visions following the Eighth Revelation is necessary in order to understand how Julian arrives at the point of spiritual illumination that the Parable of the Lord and Servant provides. The Ninth Revelation, for instance, builds upon the idea, introduced in the Eighth Revelation, that it is only through Christ’s pain and suffering that redemption and reunion with God can be achieved, while the Tenth Revelation shows that all souls redeemed through Christ will bask forever in a “feyer and delectable place” (389-394).⁵⁰ Building upon the idea of Heaven as being a place of rest and redemption, Julian describes how, in the Eleventh Revelation, she sees Mary as both the human Maiden and as the Queen of Heaven: “Ryght as I had seen her before, lytylle and / simple, right so he shewyd her than, high and noble and glorious and plesyng to hym aboue all creatures”

⁵⁰ It is in the Tenth Revelation that Julian comes closest to those female visionaries described by Carolyn Walker Bynum in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast* as cited by Robertson. Although Julian’s description of the fair and beautiful land she sees through the hole pierced in Christ’s side shares some characteristics with the visions described by many of the other women, there is none of the almost ghoulish descriptions of the women sucking Christ’s blood that one finds in many of the female mystics’ visions. Instead, Julian merely mentions that the sight of Christ’s wound leads her to think of the blood and water poured out for

(400). These three Visions thus show how Julian progresses through the idea of redemption and what humanity gains through the pain Christ suffers.

The Twelfth and Thirteenth Revelations begin the examination of the question that Julian answers in the Fourteenth Revelation: how can a soul that has fallen achieve true redemption and reunion with God? The Twelfth Revelation, as I stated in my introduction to the First Revelation, is purely verbal; in this Revelation, Jesus tells Julian “I it am”; that is, he is everything and everything is him (402-403). In the Thirteenth Revelation, Julian is shown that what separates humanity from God is sin, but that there is also a part of humanity that has never fallen, and it is that part, the soul, which will enable her to be reunited with God (404-458). But they also set up the spectacular Parable that forms the central part of Julian’s Fourteenth Revelation.

The Fourteenth Revelation, as has been stated before, is the most complex of Julian’s visions. It is in this sight that the mystic both sums up, and transcends, all of her previous experiences. It is also in the vision that Julian comes to understand the true meaning of the First and Eighth Revelations, and to mold them into a single, overarching vision of love. And, as in both preceding sights, Julian’s goal is unification with God through the Virgin Mary. Yet there is a distinct difference between the Fourteenth Revelation and the two visions I have previously examined. Whereas the disparity between “physical” and “ghostly” sights in the earlier visions is far more obvious, in this vision Julian moves into a completely spiritual realm, one which reflects the knowledge she has gained through both the linear progression of her visions and her years of contemplation after her initial experiences.

her and then moves immediately to a description of the pastoral landscape she sees within Christ’s side and the overwhelming love with envelopes each person who resides there (394-395).

Julian begins this Revelation much as she begins both the First and the Eighth Revelations, with a statement of what she is shown by God: “Affter thys oure lorde shewed for prayer” (460). However, instead of moving into a physical description of what she sees, followed by a spiritual vision, and then an examination of the words given to her by God, the movement clearly delineated in her previous revelations, the mystic instead tells her audience first of the spiritual properties of prayer: that is, how one should always pray, even when it would seem that God is not listening, because it is right to do so, and it is evidence that we trust in God (460-461). Having established the spiritual emphasis of the Revelation, Julian then reveals the words God says in her mind, by which she is clearly told that she will receive her desire of unity with the Lord:

I am grounde of thy besekyng. Furst it is my wylle that
 thou haue it, and sythen I make the to wylle it, and sythen I
 make the to beseke it. And thou besekyst it, how schoulde
 it than be that thou shuldyst nott haue thy besekyng? (461)

By reversing the order established in her previous visions, that is, by giving the reader first her spiritual sight, and then the words formed in her understanding, Julian emphasizes the progression of her own spiritual growth by removing the physical aspect of the sight and replacing it with the spiritual, or inner, aspect. By this omission, she prepares the reader for the spectacular, apparently “physical” vision of the Father and the Son in which she sums up, and then transforms, her previous visions into a harmonious union with God.

The “parable” of the Lord and Servant, however, is not a physical sight. Julian writes that this Revelation occurs only in the spiritual realm, and that God gives her

understanding not only to see the surface of the Revelation, but also to see the various spiritual layers underlying the parable:

Whych syght was shewed double in the lorde, and the syght
was shewed double in the servant. That one perty was
shewed gostly in bodily lycknesse. That other perty was
shewed more gostly withoute bodily lycknes (513-514).

The mystic thus deliberately melds the spiritual and physical levels present in the structure of her other Revelations into a unified whole in this Revelation. The reason she does this becomes clear not only in how she initially presents the parable to the reader, but also in the spiritual construct of transformation that she then creates by continually returning to the parable, subtly altering its meaning with each reference, throughout the rest of the Fourteenth Revelation.

Julian's initial presentation of the parable of the Lord and Servant appears to be a very straightforward telling of an *exemplum* that is modeled after the parables Jesus tells his disciples. She sees a richly dressed lord who is contented and happy; before him stands the lowly servant, ready and willing to do the lord's will (514-515). The lord loves the servant, and the servant loves the lord (515). The lord sends the servant out to do his bidding, which the servant does with alacrity (515). Then the servant falls into a rocky crevice and suffers seven pains, according to Julian: sore physical bruising; the heaviness of his physical body; the feebleness connected with the first two pains; mental and physical blindness; an inability to rise; loneliness at being separated from his lord; and, lastly, the harsh and rocky ground upon which he lay (515-516). In this first telling

of the parable, Julian sums up both the fall of humanity from grace with God, and the subsequent suffering humankind endures at being separated from the Creator.

This first sight of the parable elicits a strong response from the mystic, one that is slightly different from the responses she shows in the two previous visions examined. In the First Revelation, for instance, Julian's reactions are passive, and are concerned only with what she sees rather than how the revelation affects her. In the Eighth Revelation, Julian's responses are stronger and more participatory than in the First Revelation; Christ's suffering on the Cross, for instance, prompts Julian to feel a similar pain and thus enables her to participate more fully in what she is being shown, although she still remains more of an observer than a participant. In the Fourteenth Revelation, however, Julian becomes a full participant in her visions, and her description of what she sees and experiences emphasizes her spiritual growth from the First Revelation to the Fourteenth Revelation. For example, after the initial showing of the parable, Julian writes that she begins to see that the Lord views the Servant with a sort of double sight: "oone owtwarde, fulle meekly and myldely, with grett rewth and pytte, and this of the furst; another inwarde, more gostly, and this was shewed with a ledyng of my vnderstandyng into the lord," and how He loves his Servant, even when the Servant appears to have fallen (517). Julian follows this astonishing foray into God's thinking with a reciprocal experience in which God descends into her soul:

And in this an inwarde goostely shewyng of the lordes
menyng descendyd in to my soule, in which I saw that it
behovyth nedys to be standing his grett goodness and his
owne wurshyppe, that his deerworthy servant, which he

lovyd so moch, schulde be hyely and blessydlfully rewardyd
 withoute end...his falling and alle his wo that he hath takyn
 there by shalle be turnyd in to the hye ovyrpassyng
 wurschyppe and andless blesse (518).

By showing that she is led into God by her visions, and by showing how God moves into her soul, Julian creates a dialogue between herself and her visions, and between herself and God.

This dialogue allows Julian to bring her readers into a participatory relationship with what she herself sees and experiences. The most obvious way in which she does this is by showing the reader the path her meditation on this revelation has taken in the twenty years between the writing of the Short Text and the writing of the Long Text. In the Short Text, the Fourteenth Revelation does not include the parable, but instead stops at the question God poses to Julian regarding her uncertainty of how a fallen human being can have complete and total union with God, even if that human being actively seeks out the Lord: “Howe schulde it thane be that thou schulde nocht hafe thy besekyng?” (260 Short Text). Julian answers this question, in the Short Text, by writing that it is only through prayer that the soul can be united with God (260-261, Short Text). Yet this answer does not address the central problem facing Julian in the Fourteenth Revelation: how can a fallen human become one with God? The answer to this question lies in how and why Julian re-examines the parable of the Lord and Servant.

After the initial presentation of the parable in the Long Text, Julian writes that she does not truly understand the meaning of the parable until she receives teaching from God through twenty years’ meditation on what she has been shown (520). Although

Julian understands from the beginning that the servant is Adam, she begins, through the inward teaching she receives during her meditations, to see many qualities in him that cannot be attributed to the fallen, or “single” Adam; that is, she sees a duality of nature, both physical and spiritual, in the servant which cannot be wholly human or wholly fallen (519).⁵¹ She then meditates again on the Lord and knows that He is God (521). She then moves into an understanding of the parable as being the fall of not just one man, but rather the fall of all humanity from grace with God (522).⁵² However, in this second telling of the parable, she makes a slight but significant change. In the first telling of the parable, she writes that she sees how the servant fell; that is, she sees the fall from an entirely human, and entirely physical, perspective. In this second telling, Julian moves into an understanding of how the Lord views His servant’s fall: “For in the syghte of god alle man is oone man, and oone man is alle man” (522).⁵³ By telling the reader of the duality of the Servant, and by changing the focus of the parable from how she, as a human, sees the Fall to how God sees humanity as united in one man, Julian at once moves closer to union with God herself and also prepares the reader for the answer to the question of how all of fallen humanity can be made one with God.

Julian’s third examination of the Parable continues to build her argument that mankind can become one with God. This retelling is at first far more physically descriptive than the first two: the Lord is now depicted as having a brown face and is sitting in flowing blue robes surrounded by arid earth, while the Servant is described as

⁵¹ McEntire, 19. Sandra McEntire extends this duality to God as well: “If the [female] human being is dual, so is God” (McEntire 19).

⁵² Ibid, Introduction, 14.

⁵³ Baker, 53

standing to the left of the Lord and is clothed in a white, stained kirtle (526-527).⁵⁴ The colors associated with each are important; for instance, Julian notes that the blue of the Lord's robes denotes steadfastness, while the brown of His face indicates seriousness (530). The Servant's white kirtle indicates purity; its discoloration indicates the impure flesh in which Jesus is clothed when he becomes man (531). Yet in this most "bodily" of the parable's re-examinations, Julian moves, paradoxically, more completely into the spiritual realm of her Revelation. As she sees the outward and separate appearance of the Lord and His Servant, she also sees the inner and united love each has for the other:

And inward in hym was shewed a ground of loue, which
 loue he had/ to the lorde, that was evyn lyke to the loue that
 the lord had to hym. The wisdom of the seruannt sawe
 inwardly that ther was one thing to do which shuld be
 wurschyppe to the lord... And by the inward syght that I
 had both in the lorde and the servant, it semyd that he was a
 newyd, that is to sey new begynnyng for to traveyle, which
 servant was nevyr sent out before (528-529).

Through this meditation on the Parable, Julian begins to understand that, although Jesus outwardly became a true man in order to redeem humanity, inwardly he never experienced separation from God, and thus is both fully human and fully divine.⁵⁵

This point is reinforced when Julian returns to the Parable a fourth time. In this retelling, the inward Christ is sent out with the outward Adam; they appear to be separate entities, but are not. Adam immediately falls from life into death and then into Hell, while

⁵⁴ Krantz suggests that the colors depicted in this telling of the Parable are indicative of the Lord's mastery of earth and sky (87).

Jesus falls from Heaven into the Maiden's womb (533-534).⁵⁶ Jesus also descends into Hell, but there the parallels between Adam and Jesus stop. Jesus' purpose, Julian makes clear, is not to participate in Adam's suffering in Hell, but to redeem Adam and, in the process, the rest of humanity. Julian then points out that the Virgin Mary is "the feyerest doughter of Adam," and thus human (534). Jesus is therefore a paradox; he is descended from Adam and therefore human, yet he is also the redeemer of humanity and therefore God.⁵⁷ Julian's answer to this puzzle is to point out that she sees only one Servant, who is both Adam and Jesus, and that the outward clothing Christ wears is Adam's feebleness, while inwardly his truth and wisdom is Jesus' love for God, the Lord (534). Adam and Jesus are thus melded into one man who stands for all of humanity.

The problem then for Julian is that if Adam is Jesus, and Jesus is the Son of God and, therefore, a part of the Lord, then how can God have fallen? The answer is that God could not have fallen and that, therefore, there is a part of humanity that also never fell and that part is thus still a part of God. To solve this problem, she returns once more to the Parable of the Lord and Servant. Jesus is once again depicted as wearing tatters and rags; once again he falls into the Maiden's womb; once again, he dies and descends to hell to harrow it and thus redeem humanity. However, this time Julian sees that Jesus yields not only his own soul, but also the souls of all of mankind, "which rightfully was knynt to hym in hey hevyn" to God (542). Therefore, man is redeemed because his soul is united to Jesus' soul in Heaven.

⁵⁵ Pelphrey, 29.

⁵⁶ Krantz, 80. See also Krantz's discussion of the rocky ditch as a metaphor for Mary's womb, 42.

⁵⁷ Julian uses the names God and Jesus interchangeably, making it clear that for her there is no distinction between the First and Second Persons in the Holy Trinity.

That the redemption of all humanity is important becomes clear when Julian returns yet again to a meditation on the clothing of the Servant and how he is placed before the Lord. The Servant, like the Lord, is also in Heaven, but this time his rags have been transformed into shining clothes that are richer than that of the Lord's: "For that clothing was blew, and Crystes clothing is now of feyer seemly medolour, which is so marvelous that I can it nott discryve, for it is of very wurschyppe" (543). And the Servant no longer stands before the Lord; instead, he is seated beside the Lord as His equal. Because Jesus went out, as the Servant, and saved humanity from sin and degradation, his raiment and place in Heaven are equal to God's; indeed, as the Second Person in the Trinity, Christ is a part of God Himself.

Yet there still remains the problem of discovering what part of humanity did not fall when Adam fell. To begin solving this problem, Julian first examines the parable again, this time focusing on the nature of the love between the Lord and Servant: "And theyse be two parties that were shewde in the doubyll chere in whyche the lorde behelde the falling of hys lovyd servant. That oone was shewde outward, full meekly and myldely, with gret rewth and pytte; and that other of inwarde endless loue and right" (552). Because the Lord outwardly mourns His Servant's outer fall, yet inwardly loves His Servant's inner state of grace, there must, by extension, be an inward part of mankind which is also in a constant state of grace. Julian sees and understands that, by Adam's fall, humanity is in a state of wretchedness and blindness (547). Yet she also sees it is that blindness and wretchedness which leads humanity to faith and God through true penitence. As she writes, it "longyth to man meekly to accuse hym selfe, and it longyth to the propyr goodnesse of oure lorde god curtesly to excuse man" (552). God, therefore,

keeps a part of humanity in his love because mankind has faith in God. Moreover, Julian writes that it is God himself who places that faith in man, in order to bring mankind out of the lower, “outward” world and into the higher, “inward” world of God’s love where everything is united in Him (553).

Julian then moves into an exploration of that love and what it means for man. God, she writes, never began to love man:

For I saw that god began nevyr to loue mankynde; for
ryghte the same that mankynde shall be in endlesse blesse,
fulfylling the joy of god as anemptis his werkys,/ ryghte so
the same mankynde hath be in the forsyghte of god knowen
and lovyd fro without begynnyng in his ryghtfull entent
(557).

Because God loved man before man was “made,” there must be an “unmade” part of man that remains in God’s love and that forms a bond between creation and Creator.⁵⁸ That “unmade” part of humanity is the soul. It is that “unmade” part which allowed mankind, when it was “made” physically, to love God (558). And because God created the soul before he created the physical aspects of man, that soul can never be separated from God, because the soul is made from elements of God Himself, and not from the clay with which He made man (559). Therefore, the soul is kept within God’s love and can never be separated from Him, even though the flesh may fail.

⁵⁸ Baker, Denise N, “The Image of God: Contrasting Configurations in Julian of Norwich’s *Showings* and Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection*,” in McEntire, 35-60. 53

This theme of love and enclosure is repeated when Julian begins to contemplate the roles Jesus and Mary play in uniting Creation and Creator.⁵⁹ To begin with, she outlines the roles of each Person in the Holy Trinity: God gives virtue to mankind; the Holy Spirit renews the gift of virtue through mercy; Jesus both encloses virtue and exemplifies it (579). Then the mystic writes that not only did God take on human physical form when He became man, He assumed man's soul as well in Mary's womb:

For in that same tyme that god knytt hym to oure body in
the meydens wombe, he toke oure sensuall soule, in which
taking, he vs all having beclosyd in hym, he onyd it to oure
substance. In which oonyng he was perfit man, for Cryst,
having / knytt in hym all man shall be savyd, in perfete man
(579-580).

Because God, as Christ, is enclosed in Mary's womb, mankind is also enclosed in Mary's womb. Therefore, Mary is the mother not only of Jesus, but also of all humanity (580). Simultaneously, Julian sees mankind enclosed in Jesus, the Second Person of the Triune God, thus drawing a parallel between Mother and Son. Julian then takes this similarity one step further by merging Mary and Jesus into a single, powerful image of Mother:

Thus oure lady is oure moder, in whome we be all beclosyd
and of hyr borne in Crist, for she that is moder of oure
savyoure is mother of all that ben savyd in our sauour; and
oure savyoure is oure very moder, in whome we be
endlessly borne and nevyr shall come out of hym (580).

⁵⁹ Krantz, 112.

Thus humanity, through the assimilation of Mary with Jesus, becomes one with God.

Julian then heightens the emphasis of this unification of both Jesus and Mary into a single Mother figure by using maternal metaphors and imagery throughout the rest of the Fourteenth Revelation to describe mankind's relationship with God's Son.⁶⁰ She also underlines the transformative power that Jesus as Mother has over mankind.⁶¹ For instance, she writes that human mothers give birth to children who know only anguish and misery, but when a human being is reborn through Jesus, that human being is born to joy and love (595). And, just as the unborn child is nourished by the mother's body, so too are all those who are within the Body of Christ: "Thus he susteyne vs with in hym in loue and traveyle, in to the full tyme that he wolde suffer the sharpyst thornes and paynes that evyr were or evyr shalle be" (595-596). And, finally, Julian writes that a human mother can nurse a child at her breast, but only Jesus can "lede vs in to his blessyd brest by his swet opyn syde, and shewe vs there...the joys of hevyn" (598). By drawing these comparisons between human motherhood and the Motherhood of Christ, Julian does not "feminize," and thus weaken, Christ, as both Bauerschmidt and Robertson assert; rather, Julian's metaphors, as Aers points out, serve to strengthen the union of the triune God and man by emphasizing the relationship between the nurturing Mother Jesus/Mary and the Child that is humanity.⁶² By drawing these parallels, and by emphasizing Jesus' nurturing power as Mother, Julian achieves her goal of becoming one with God through the Virgin Mary.

⁶⁰ Madigan, Shawn, "Julian of Norwich: In Our Mother Christ We Profit and Mature," *Mystics, Visionaries, and Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) 192-193. For a more complete examination of the Motherhood Cycle in Julian's *Showings*, see also Heimmel, 55-68.

⁶¹ Pelphrey, 39.

⁶² Bauerschmidt, 89, Robertson 153, Aers 82.

Her union with God is completed when Julian re-examines both the First and the Eighth Revelations with the knowledge she has gained as a result of her meditations on the Fourteenth Revelation. In the Eighth Revelation, for instance, she initially sees both an outer, physical Christ and an inner, spiritual Christ: the outer part suffers and dies for humanity, while the inner part remains within God and maintains sovereignty over the outer part (373). In the Fourteenth Revelation, however, this Revelation is transformed in Julian's understanding: the outer, physical part of both Christ and humanity becomes the "lower" part of the soul, while the inner, spiritual part of both Savior and saved becomes the "higher" part of the soul, united in Christ to form one entity within God (569). In the First Revelation, Julian sees all of creation enclosed in God, and then she sees the Virgin Mary at the time of the Conception (297-299). In her re-examination of this Revelation in the Fourteenth Revelation, Julian combines both sights into a single vision of humanity being enclosed in Mary and Jesus:

Thus oure lady is oure moder, in whom we be all beclosyd
and of hyr borne in Crist, for she that is moder of oure
savyoure is mother of alle that ben savyd in our sauour;
and oure savyour is oure very moder, in whome we be
endlessly borne and nevyr shall come out of hym (580).

Julian now understands that the First Revelation is a vision of Christ's enclosing of humanity, uniting God and man in the figure of Mary within God (569). By re-examining these two earlier Revelations within the context of the Fourteenth Revelation, Julian both creates a link between all three Revelations and finalizes her union with God through the Virgin Mary.

The central question facing Julian in her *Showings* is how humanity can be united with God. More specifically, how can she, as a woman, negotiate the strictures placed on her by the Church in order to become one with Christ? Like many of her fellow female Christian mystics, Julian feels a strong tie with the Virgin Mary, who is both fully human and yet is also the Mother of the Second Person in the Triune God, Jesus. Mary's presence throughout Julian's *Showings*, and especially in the First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Revelations examined in this paper, forges a strong bond with the mystic through Julian's experiences, starting with Julian's first sight of the Virgin as a young maid and ending with Julian's vision of Mary as both Queen of Heaven and Mother of God. The bond between Mother and mystic is enhanced by the underlying structure, present throughout Julian's Revelations, of a "bodily" sight, followed by "words formed in understanding," followed by a "ghostly" sight. This construct allows Julian the freedom to create links between the Revelations by repeating, and building upon, earlier visions; it also allows her to alter each Revelation's meaning slightly through that repetition in order to recreate for her audience her own experiences and thus forge a connection between Julian and the rest of humanity. Julian's merging of Mary and Jesus into one, overarching Mother figure is the culmination of Julian's use of both the Virgin and the structure underlying each vision. Through the links she creates between the Virgin, her Revelations, and her audience, Julian not only achieves her goal of union with God, she also allows us, her readers, to become one with God as well.

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