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**CONSTRUING THE SCENE IN JULIAN OF NORWICH'S
*A REVELATION OF LOVE***

Abstract: Julian of Norwich's *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman* and *A Revelation of Love* are texts which present two accounts (short and long, respectively) of her mystical experience. Julian was an anchoress whose work is known for its vivid imagery and bodily resonance it provokes in the reader. New research on Julian's work has focused scholarly attention on the significance of embodied cognition for the exploration of the mystic's writing. The present paper identifies a gap in this research in that cognitive-linguistic aspects of the anchoress's text are still largely ignored. The article discusses the connection between perception and cognition and its potential role in structuring Julian's longer text, *A Revelation of Love*. The Cognitive Linguistic analysis focuses on selected excerpts from the long version portraying scenes from Julian's visions, where visualisation is particularly significant for meaning construction. Providing a link between recent findings from cognitive science and current cognitively-oriented studies of Julian's texts, the paper draws on the concept of construal pertinent to the fact that the language user may conceive and present some conceptual content (an apprehended scene) in alternate ways. The Cognitive Linguistic investigation connects Julian's work to the visual and material culture of her day, revealing how the mystic transforms the familiar imagery into vivid, dynamically unfolding images. It is concluded that cognitively-informed research is likely to shed new light onto long-standing issues in scholarship on Julian, particularly those that concern the interplay of language, culture and cognition.

Keywords: Cognitive Grammar, construal, embodied cognition, Julian of Norwich

Introduction

This paper adopts a Cognitive Linguistic approach to Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, one of the most remarkable texts of the Middle English period. Julian was an anchoress and mystical writer whose work, composed in the tradition of late medieval affective spirituality (Baker 1994), comprises two texts, *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, the Short Version, and *A Revelation of Love*, the Long Version. The anchoress is given the credit for formulating an unorthodox

understanding of notions fundamental to Christian theology, stressing God's love for humanity and human dignity in contrast to the notion of God's wrath at human sinfulness, emphasised by the medieval Church (Collette and Garrett-Goodyear 2011). To promote those ideas, Julian used a methodology of presentation based predominantly on conventional iconography and domestic imagery with which her fellow Christians, for whom she wrote, were likely to be familiar. The study of the relation between visual and verbal images in the anchoress's texts constitutes one of the main strands of research on Julian's *Showings* (Hagen 2004). The scholarship typically centres on how the visual and material culture of the time shaped Julian's spirituality and her work (e.g., Baker 1994; Gunn 2008).

More recently, the question of visualisation pertinent to *The Showings* has been reframed in terms of what is known about perception and, more broadly, the human mind in cognitive science (cf. Dresvina and Blud 2020). As Saunders (2016: 419) clarifies, "Julian demonstrates an intense engagement with the embodied nature of experience and with the connections between senses, affect and cognition." It would seem that the idea of embodied cognition from cognitive science, which presupposes a bodily basis of human thought and emotion/affect (emotional response) (cf. Evans and Green 2006), ties in with current academic interest in the multi-sensory, or multimodal, nature of the mystic's lived experience and its manifestations in her work (cf. e.g., Dresvina 2019).

However, it would seem that the studies informed by cognitively-oriented approaches do not account for the cognitive-linguistic foundations of *The Showings*. The present paper sets out to fill in this research gap. In so doing, it adopts the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. Accordingly, it is assumed that language constitutes part of human embodied cognition and that "[m]eaning is what language is all about" (Wen and Taylor 2021: 2). Since Cognitive Linguistics holds that due to embodiment cognition is situated in the local environment (Frank 2008), the speaker's apprehension of the physical, social and cultural context is crucial for any conceptualisation to arise (Langacker 2008). Using Cognitive Linguistic theoretical models and methods may help uncover possible embodied motivation for the linguistic form of the passages rich in vivid imagery. In particular, the paper sets out to show that the mystic's embedding in the late medieval environment of visual and material culture underpins her linguistic choices in such a way as to transform recognisable images from the domestic sphere and medieval iconography (cf. Barratt 2008) into what Salih (2021) calls Julian's "embodied cinema."

Julian of Norwich's *Showings* through the lens of recent scholarship on perception and embodied cognition

As already implied, Saunders's (2016) account of Julian's work embodiment provides a link between perception and affect. The current research on the mystic's

Showings appears to validate this view. A great deal of scholarly attention is given to the possibility of the anchoress's embodied interaction with visual representations and the objects of material culture, particularly in relation to late medieval Norwich.

Firstly, it is worth pointing out that with limited literacy in the lay community of the Middle Ages, images could serve mnemonic and devotional purposes (Marchese 2014). As they filled up various spaces, as diverse as pages of illuminated manuscripts and cathedrals, pictures of different types formed part of the medieval iconosphere, "an environment permanently filled with images" (Bałus 2017: 94). The iconosphere with which both Julian and her fellow Christians were familiar was contextualised in the local memoryscape; a real or symbolic space within which collective memory is spatialised (Kapralski 2010: 27). As Blut (2021) has it, Julian could take advantage of the fact that such familiar objects provided a form of scaffolding for human cognitive activity, supporting individual and collective memory (cf. Carruthers 2008). In this sense, invoking them in her text was only natural insofar as it facilitated the retrieval of whole chunks of conceptual knowledge from memory for the reader.

Secondly, in medieval theories of the human mind, perception, vision in particular, played a pivotal role in coupling the mind with the body and its physical interaction with the world (Collette 2001). Deane (2013: 67) argues that "[s]ince medieval people constructed their spiritual or imagined worlds with familiar earthly building blocks, those objects matter." Indeed, as memory carriers, pictures and tangible items performed the function of vehicles for the transfer of knowledge, as illustrated by the conventional iconography of that period. The anchoress's awareness of such conventions can be gleaned from the Short Version (Windeatt 1994: 182), in which the mystic mentions "alle the peynes of Cryste as halye kyrke schewys and techys, and also the payntyngys of crucyfexes that er made be the grace of God aftere the techynge of haly kyrke to the lyknes of Crystes passyon" ('all the anguish of Christ as Holy Church shows and teaches, and also in the paintings of crucifixes that are made by God's grace in the likeness of Christ's Passion, in accordance with the Holy Church's teaching'). In *The Showings*, it is possible to discern Julian's familiarity with icons depicting, for instance, Christ's face, the Crown of Thorns on Christ's head, Jesus' bleeding body and the icon of the Man of Sorrows (cf. Baker 1994; Barratt 2008). With respect to Julian's knowledge of iconographic conventions, authors indicate an array of pictorial/material sources for the anchoress's work. For instance, Dresvina (2019) puts emphasis on illuminated manuscripts as items which could be used for close and repeated inspection. This pertains to objects such as the Books of Hours, in which pictures might be used as prompts for contemplation (Kendrick 2011: 159). Importantly, the regular use of such manuscripts for private devotion meant that not only prayers, but also pictures could be internalised (Scott-Strokes 2006: 17).

Thirdly, *The Showings* may be related to the medieval culture of affective spirituality (cf. e.g. Rhiel 2014). The framework rested on the assumption that “compassion, the affective suffering with Christ, can be achieved through either devotional meditation or visionary experience” (Baker 1994: 23). The affective tradition united perception and conception in a particularly striking way by engaging the individual both mentally and emotionally. The aim of that engagement was to project oneself into the imagined scenes of Christ’s suffering. The cognitive research pertinent to the embodied simulation view of empathy helps account for visceral reactions such images may provoke. Freedberg and Gallese (2007: 197) illustrate the notion of embodied simulation by invoking Goya’s *Desastres de la Guerra*, Caravaggio’s *Incredulity of St Thomas*, and Michelangelo’s sculpture *Slave called Atlas*. The three artefacts exemplify how such objects may generate bodily resonance, induced by the viewer’s empathy for pain, tactile sensations and action, respectively. What increases physical response is the artist’s reliance on the multi-sensory character of human embodied experience. As for Julian’s engagement with similar artefacts, examples of affective spirituality aids might include, for instance, crucifixes in churches or in cells for recluses. Salih (2021) sheds more light on this issue, arguing that “[d]evotional art aligns so well with revelation because it was, characteristically, kinetic; that is, movement of either the viewer or the object was built into the situations in which people looked at these artworks” (Salih 2021: 149). It would seem that movement is implicit in depictions of inflicting pain, visualisations of other goal-directed action and tactile sensations as well.

Perception and conceptualisation in Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar

Julian’s use of linguistic form might have been motivated by the desire to construe specific conceptual content in such a way as to vivify the familiar and conventional images in the reader’s mind to provoke bodily resonance. The analysis this paper presents concerns the question how exactly Julian fine-tunes the images she conjures up in the reader’s mind to attain that aim. Stockwell (2009: 26) illuminates this problem, saying that a “consequence of adopting a cognitive linguistic perspective is that grammar and experience are not separate categories.” The analysis adopts Langacker’s (2008) Cognitive Grammar as the model presupposes the meaningfulness of the language user’s grammatical choices, which help shape the often subtle ways in which some culturally-informed aspects of conceptualisation are conveyed. For Langacker (2008: 535–539), meaning is conceptualisation, which inheres in embodied simulation manifesting itself, for instance, in sensory and motor imagery. Grammatical cues serve as prompts for how some conceptual content is to be simulated.

In Langacker's (2008) Cognitive Grammar, linguistic expression's meaning comprises a specific construal of conceptual content and the conceptual content itself. The same situation or experience may be portrayed in different ways due to the human capacity for adopting various perspectives on the apprehended situation. Langacker relies on the visual metaphor to illuminate the relation between content (a scene/situation) and construal (the specific way of viewing that scene/situation). Also, the viewer is simultaneously the conceptualiser. The visual metaphor facilitates our understanding of the parameters of construal: specificity, focusing, prominence, and perspective.

Specificity (granularity or resolution) is defined as the extent to which a given scene is characterised in detail. The latter property may increase or decrease gradually and so it forms a continuum with schematicity. For example, *a plant* is more schematic than *an apple tree*. Focusing pertains to the activation of some portion of conceptual knowledge necessary for the construction of meaning of a particular expression, sentence, etc. The relevant domains are ranked for centrality: some conceptual content is foregrounded, while other domains are backgrounded. For instance, in *cut the apples across into slices*, the culinary domain forms part of the conceptual basis for meaning construction.

When characterising perspective, Langacker (2008: 73) offers a succinct definition, saying that if "conceptualization (metaphorically) is the viewing of a scene, perspective is the viewing arrangement." As the concept of perspective underscores the bond between language and perception, perspective has three interrelated facets to it: spatial, temporal and epistemic. Related to perspective is its important facet, based on the asymmetry between the subjectivity and objectivity of construal. To explain the idea of the asymmetry, Langacker offers another metaphor as he draws a parallel between subjective/objective construal and watching a theatre play. The viewer is the subject of conception and the viewed is the object of conception. Hence, the construal is maximally subjective when the subject of conception is offstage and as such is not perceived, while the construal is maximally objective when an entity that does not engage in viewing is the onstage focus of attention (Langacker 2008: 77). This means that objectivity/subjectivity of construal is a matter of degree rather than sharp distinctions. Whether or not the speaker is construed subjectively or objectively may be a matter of conventionalised modes of construal that are culture- or language-specific.

Construing scenes from affective spirituality: A Cognitive Linguistic analysis of *A Revelation of Love* by Julian of Norwich's

Since the foregoing discussion of Julian's Long Version presupposes a set of features defining the mystic's idiosyncratic way of construing selected scenes/

situations from the domain of affective spirituality, this paper argues that the core concept that may well capture those characteristics is that of Stockwell's (2009) textual attractor, an idea adopted from cognitive stylistics. Stockwell (2009: 25) says that good (prototypical) attractors in texts display, for instance, newness, agency, definiteness (e.g., *a man* vs. *the man*), empathetic recognisability (human speaker/hearer > animal > object > abstraction), certain sensory features (e.g., brightness, largeness). In short, attractors are construed as figures that involve the reader on the conceptual and affective level. This appears to dovetail with the type of visceral resonance which can be found in the tradition of affective spirituality relative to which Julian's work can be situated.

With respect to the linguistic data to be used for analytical purposes, it must be noted that, although the Short and the Long Version are related, each gives a different account of the visions she received in May 1373. Importantly, the longer version reflects Julian's deeper understanding of God's message, attained after years of contemplation. In Windeatt's (2008: 102) words, "[a]s more is understood, more is visualised and, overall, *A Revelation [of Love]* presents images caught with a photographic precision by a painterly eye, along with the outcome of meditation on the fuller visual details that it records." For this reason, the Cognitive Linguistic analysis, informed by Cognitive Grammar, focuses on the longer version of Julian's account, *A Revelation of Love* (henceforth, *A Revelation*). Two excerpts from *A Revelation* are used to demonstrate Julian's construal of the Passion scenes inspired by medieval visual and material culture.

The first passage substantiates the claim that some of the conceptual building blocks of *A Revelation* may be based on the established iconography and the late medieval iconosphere, particularly those aspects that are correlated with affective devotion. This is validated by Julian's account of the key event that triggered the series of revelations the mystic presents in her work:¹

My curate was sent for to be at my endeing, and by than he cam I had sett my eyen and might not speke. He sett the cross before my face and seid, "I have browte thee the image of thy maker and Saviour. Louke thereupon and comfort thee therewith." Methought I was wele for my eyen were sett up rightward into Hevyn where I trusted to come be the mercy of God, but nevertheless I assented to sett my eyen in the face of the Crucifix, if I might; and so I dede. [...] In this sodenly I saw the rede blode trekelyn downe fro under the garlande hote and freisly and ryth plenteously, as it were in the time of His passion that the garlande of thornys was pressid on His blissid hede. (ll. 89-116) ('My parish priest was sent for to be present at my death, and by the time he came my eyes were fixed and I could not speak. He set the cross before my face and said, 'I have brought you the image of your maker and Saviour. Look upon it and take comfort from it.' It seemed to me that I was comforted, for my eyes were looking up intently into heaven, where I believed that I was going by God's mercy. But nevertheless, I agreed to rest my gaze on the face of the

¹ This and the following excerpts are taken from Crampton (ed.) (1994), translated from the Middle English by the author of the present paper.

crucifix if I could, and so I did [...] Then I suddenly saw the red blood trickling down from under the crown of thorns, hot and fresh and plentiful, as though it were the moment of his Passion when the crown of thorns was pressed on to his blessed head.’)

In saying that she noticed the blood trickling down Christ’s face “as it were in the time of His passion,” the mystic clarifies that she was aware of the fact that she was shown a vision and so she did not see the original events of the Passion. Regardless of its nature, Julian’s mystical experience had to be conceptualised in order to be verbalised. Hence, what is conveyed in her account is her conceptualisation of the original events.

The portable crucifix, which probably had a figure of Christ painted on its surface (Gunn 2008: 36), was the tangible object that spurred the multi-sensory, dynamic conceptualisation of what the recluse had experienced. The artefact constitutes an example of a good textual attractor because, as can be gleaned from Stockwell (2009: 24), such attractors are often “referred objects that are presented as having a unified and coherent structure and identity: these are likely to be textualised as noun phrases.” In terms of Cognitive Grammar, the crucifix becomes the figure attracting the attention of the dying woman, the rest of the scene remains obscure and as such serves as the ground. What adds to the significance of the artefact as the figure is the emphasis on the physical proximity of the crucifix (“He sett the cross before my face”) and its relative newness insofar as she is made to turn her gaze towards it. The fact that she uses the definite article adds definiteness to the construed scene, in which *the* grounds the noun *crucifix* relative to the deathbed scene. Also, it can be argued that the referred item activates the reader’s background knowledge consisting of a coherent matrix of domains (Langacker 2008: 44) related to the Christian practice of last rites.

The sudden appearance of another figure, the blood trickling down Christ’s face, opens up another perspective, that of the vision having its distinct temporal, spatial and epistemic dimensions. Since Jesus’ face seen in close-up is now the perceptual ground, this choice of higher granularity of construal is likely to increase the scene’s empathetic recognisability. Specifically, the empathy hierarchy (Langacker 1985) is reversed (the object/crucifix > the human/Christ). However, at the time when the revelation begins, there emerges a new epistemic level from which the scene is viewed, that of God’s perspective, which once again reverses the hierarchy of empathy towards greater abstraction (the human/Christ > the Passion as the event meant to save sinful humanity, a shift which is metonymically motivated). The scene in which human activity prevails is thus superseded with a scene construed from a divine perspective, in which the vision continues uninterrupted, beyond the spatial and temporal constraints limiting human perception and cognition. Julian appears to realise that this transcendental viewpoint implicit in the vision may weaken embodied engagement on the part of the reader. Thus, she construes the scene of vision in such a way as to provoke bodily resonance in the reader.

In so doing, Julian appeals to the sense of sight (“the rede blode”), tactile and sensations and thermoception (“trekelyn downe fro under the garlande hote and freisly and ryth plenteously”), as well as goal-directed action implied in the pressing of the garland of thorns onto Christ’s head (“the garlande of thornys was pressid on His blissid hede”). Accordingly, the conventional iconographic, static image of the icon presenting Christ’s bloodied face is transformed to convey the idea of ceaseless movement. The reader is invited mentally to scan the downward motion of the drops of blood, which involves scanning the multiple locations that the drops successively occupy. In other words, she employs summary scanning, whereby the conceptualisation is constructed progressively (cf. Langacker 2008). Julian chooses to use the non-finite phrase “the rede blode trekelyn downe fro under the garlande” featuring a progressive participle (*trekelyn*), which indicates a particular vantage point for viewing the conceived scene. As it imposes a limited immediate scope on the temporal domain, it prevents the reader from attending to the beginning and the end of the profiled process. As a result, the viewer can get an “internal perspective” on the scene, which may account for the scene’s spatial and temporal immediacy, which has the potential to foster greater bodily resonance.

So far, nothing has been said about the dimension of perspective known as the subjectivity/objectivity of construal. Langacker (2008: 537) explains that, while “[e]laborate conceptual content lends itself to being construed objectively,” the same content can be construed subjectively when we imagine how things appear through the eyes of the viewer-conceptualiser. It would seem that Julian foregoes the role of a focal participant in the above Passion scene, where the first person pronoun *I* ceases to be used. In so doing, the mystic subdues her presence and shifts the reader’s attention away from her own experience as the object of conceptualisation by elaborating on the perceivable details in the visions. In effect, the objective construal of the viewer-conceptualiser leads to the empathetic recognisability of Julian as a human experiencer as the reader is invited to see the event through the mystic’s eyes and therefore discern in the account traces of Julian’s lived experience.

It is worth observing that in Chapter 16 Julian construes the scene from Passion in a similar way as she says “Thus I saw the swete fleshe dey, in semyng be party after party, dryande with marvelous peynys” (l. 606-608) (‘So I saw [Christ’s] dear flesh dying, seemingly bit by bit, drying up with horrible agony’). Julian focuses on Christ’s suffering, in particular the changes in the colour of the face and the withering of the body. The present participle *dryande* and the phrase *party after party* ‘bit by bit’ facilitate the construal of purposefully protracted torture of Christ. What this and the preceding excerpt share is a sense of perspective characterised by a suspension of human time-scale.²

² This can be further illustrated by the following excerpt: “And after this I saw, beholding the body plentifully bleding in seming of the scorgyng, as thus: The faire skynne was brokyn ful depe into the tender flesh with sharpe smyting al about the sweete body. [...] Beholde and se: The pretious

The iconographic image of Jesus 'blood-covered face returns in another excerpt, where Julian elaborates on the image of drops of blood tricking down from the wounds on Jesus 'head:

In all the tyme that He shewed this that I have seid now, in ghostly sight I saw the bodyly sight lesting of the plentious bledeing of the hede. The grete dropis of blode fel downe from under the garland like pellotts semand as it had cum out of the veynis, and in the cominge out it were browne rede, for the blode was full thick, and in the spredeing abrode it were bright rede, and whan it come to the browes, than it varyshid; notwithstondyng the bleding continud till many things were seene and understandyn. The fairehede and the livelyhede is like nothing but the same. The plenteoushede is like to the dropys of water that fallen of the evys after a greate showre of reyne that fall so thick that no man may numbre them with bodily witte; and for the roundhede, it were like to the scale of heryng in the spredeing on the forehead. These three come to my mynde in the tyme: pellotts, for roundhede in the comynge out of the blode; the scale of heryng, in the spredeing in the forehede, for round-hede; the dropys of evese, for the plentioushede innumerable. This shewing was quick and lively and hidouse and dredfull, swete and lovely. (ll. 241-255) ('And all the time that God was showing in spiritual vision what I have just described, the bodily sight of the copious bleeding from Christ's head did not vanish. The great drops of blood fell down from under the crown of thorns like beads, as though they had come out of the veins; and as they appeared they were dark red, for the blood was very thick; and as it spread it was bright red; and when it vanished when it came to the brows. Still, the bleeding continued till many things were seen and understood. The magnificence and intensity of the blood are like nothing but itself. It is as plentiful as the drops of water which fall from the eaves after pouring rain, the rain fall so dense that nobody can count the number of the rain drops. As for the roundness of the drops, they were like herring scales as they spread on the forehead. These three things came to my mind at the time: beads for roundness as the blood came out; herring scales as the blood spread on the forehead, for roundness; drops from the eaves, for their countless plenty. This vision was very vivid, terrifying and dreadful, sweet and lovely.')

The excerpt reveals how Julian interweaves familiar iconographic and domestic images. The scene is conspicuous for a marked increase in the specificity of construal as the image of Jesus 'blood-covered face is now superseded with the fine-grained images of drops of blood. Julian notices similarity between the drops and particular round objects from domestic life. It is worth observing that the familiar imagery concerns recurrent scenes from everyday situations. The use of the past tense indicates that the familiar objects were part of Julian's embodied

plenty of His dereworthy blode desendith downe into Helle and braste her bands and deliveryd al that were there which longyd to the curte of Hevyn. The pretious plenty of His dereworthy blode overflowith al erth and is redye to wash al creaturs of synne which be of gode will, have ben, and shal ben" (ll. 473-492). 'And after this I saw, as I watched, the body of Christ bleeding abundantly, in weals from the scourging. It looked like this: the fair skin was very deeply broken, down into the tender flesh, sharply slashed all over the dear body [...] Behold and see. The precious plenty of his dearly loved blood went down into hell and burst their bonds and freed all who were there who belonged to the court of heaven. The precious plenty of his dearly loved blood overflows the earth and is ready to wash away the sins of all people of good will who are, have been or will be.'

experience, as she makes herself part of the apprehended scene (“These three come to my mynde in the tyme: pellotts (...) the scale of heryng, (...) the dropys of evese”). For the medieval reader, the implied situations were so widespread that he or she would experience them as well. Thus, embodied interaction with the physical world offers a bridge between the mystic’s experience and that of the reader.

Importantly, the high level of specificity is achieved by conjuring up the physical properties of unremarkable items such as “pellotts; [...] the scale of heryng, [...]; the dropys of evese.” While all of them bring to mind visual images, objects described as *pellotts*‘ beads ’can be held in the palm of one’s hand and therefore they also conjure up tactile imagery.³ Herring scales may bring to mind olfactory sensation as well. The image of rain drops from the eaves may also stimulate auditory sensation. Importantly, each image presupposes a different spatial vantage point. Julian arranges the images at different levels of conceptual organisation: from the small and medium-size entities to phenomena which metonymically (*pars pro toto*) conjure up entities as big as human dwellings. Due to conceptual proximity grounded on the domain of shape, the mosaic of images portraying slivers of reality from daily life in the Middle Ages offers a window into the mystic’s private world, it also provides a link between the spiritual and the domestic domains.

To construe the conceptual content of the relevant scenes in *A Revelation*, Julian draws on the late medieval imagery and selects tangible objects from the familiar environment that are likely to serve as good textual attractors. In terms of Cognitive Grammar, she uses objective construal by putting them “onstage,” as the explicit focus of attention. She imbues them with characteristics that underscore the multi-sensory nature of human interaction with those objects. One of the features of this construal is the high-grained imagery, which enhances a sense of their physical proximity and embodied interaction with them. Another important feature of the construal is appeal to movement, for instance, through the use of verbs of motion, which are used in their non-finite forms. This allows the reader to project themselves into the scenes in that they are presented with a view of within the unfolding situation.

Interestingly, Julian construes herself in both objective and subjective manner. The former enhances her status as a human participant located onstage that ranks high in the hierarchy of empathetic recognisability. However, if the reader adopts a subjective construal of the scenes, their attention will centre on a particular view of the world that the mystic conveys in her work. It is possible to argue that what makes the anchoress’s text so remarkable is that it is open to both readings.

³ In fact, *MED* s.v. *pelot(e n.* reads: (a) A spherical or circular object [...] (b) a pellet or cannon ball of various sizes [...] (c) med. a pill [...] (d) cook. a meat ball [...] (e) her. a roundel, bezant, or torteau [...] (f) in surnames.

Conclusions

The issue of the relation between visual and verbal images is a long-standing problem. The analysis presented in this paper has been designed to inform the debate by offering a Cognitive Linguistic analysis of a late medieval mystical text. The study indicates that Julian's familiarity with the visual and material culture of the Middle English period underlies her account of the experience she received in May 1373. The frequent references to everyday objects from daily life, as well as religious artefacts might be motivated by the mystic's desire to invoke a shared basis of embodied interaction with the physical and sociocultural milieu of the time. Current research in Cognitive Linguistics, which has always remained integral to the broader field of cognitive science, may help inform diachronic research by linking the cognitive-linguistic aspects of texts such as Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation* with recent insights from research into the human mind. Still, it is hoped that the benefit of undertaking such studies is reciprocal and that cognitive scientists may feel inspired by the challenges of tracing the trajectory of the development of embodied cognition across both space and time.

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