TWO TYPES OF MYSTIC LANGUAGE

HIDEO YAMAGUCHI

The fourteenth-century England was particularly favoured with a race of highly devoted seckers after God. The earlier tradition of religious faith had lived on into this period and was to persist even into the following, as we see in the great popularity of devotional writings such as the Ancrenee Ritule, an important source of prose style in mediaeval England. But even while the fame of the Ancrenee Ritule was at its height, there appeared on the scene Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, 'the second great figure of Middle English prose', as Professor R. W. Chambers calls him.¹) He was a student of Oxford, but whether he was also 'socius' of La Sorbonne has been disputed. The assumption Miss H. E. Allen and Dom Noetinger have made that he was, though based on a former Sorbonne manuscript, has now been proved groundless by Professor E. J. F. Arnould, who has carefully examined the Arsenal manuscripts, in which mention is frequently made of Richardus de Hampole.²) Magistri Ricardi of the compilers' source-book, Liber Prioris, might refer to any Ricardus Anglici who had sojourned at La Sorbonne from time to time. Besides, Ricardus Anglici, seu Radulphi de Anglia in the compilers' notes on the resident students seems to have been wrongly associated with the English name Rollum. It is more likely that Richard Rolle lived under the influence of the native mystic tradition which flourished on a Northern soil unfed by the waters of the Continental mysticism.

Other figures to follow were Julian of Norwich, author of the *Revelations of Divine Love*, notable for the sweetness of temper in which her 'shewings' are described, Walter Hilton, author of *The Scale of Perfection*, a treatise on *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*, who is Wyclif's contemporary, and also the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, from which Hilton himself quotes.

To the same anonymous writer are often attributed five short treatises found together in two of the extant manuscripts of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (MS. Harleian 674 and MS. Kk. vi. 26, Cambridge University Library). One of these treatises, titled *Deonis Hid Divinite*, and another, called *A Pistle of Discrecioun of Stirings*, are found only in the two above-named manuscripts, while the other three are also preserved in some other manuscripts. The first of these is introduced by a short prologue, in which the writer tells us how he has Englished it from a Latin translation of the *Mystica Theologia* of Dionysius the Areopagite, in the pseudo-Dionysian tradition. Professor Phyllis Hodgeson, editor of these treatises for The Early English Text Society, has shown clearly that 'the first three chapters ... are a close translation of the Latin version of Johannes Sarracenus, and that the last two are based chiefly on the work of Vercellensis,' namely, Thomas Gallus, Abbot of St. Andrew's, Vercelli (†1246), 'one of the most prolific commentators on the works of Dionysius in the Middle Ages, and possibly also the most influential.' The introductory prologue reads:

"pis writyng pat next folowe is pe Ingliache of a book pat Seynte Denys wrote vnto Timothe, pe whiche is clepid in Latyn tonge Mistica Theologia. Of pe whiche book, for-pi pat it is mad minde (i. e. 'mentioned') in pe 70 chapter of a book wretin before (pe whiche is clepid Pe Cloude of Unknowing) how pat Denis sentence wol cleerli afferme al pat is wretyn in

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that same book: perfore, in translacioun of it, I haue not onliche
folowed pe nakid lettre of pe text, but for to declare pe hardnes
of it, I haue moche folowed pe sentence of pe Abbot of Seinte
Victore, a noble & a worpi expositour of pis same book.'

The writer explicitly says here that The Cloude of Vnknowing
and Hid Diuinite are related in thought, being both derived from the
Dionysian tradition. The phrase 'a book wretin before' even suggests
the identity of the author, though disputed by the critics.

To return to Richard Rolle. It was soon after he left Oxford
that he began to meditate on the vanity of the world and decided to
devote his life to religious contemplation. The episode of his flight
into the life of a hermit, how he made himself a crude hermit's garb
out of his sister's dresses and his father's hood and ran away, is
well-known. His contemplative life was productive of significant
meditative writings of high order, which immediately attracted his
contemporary readers' attention and that of the following generations.
The Latin works include, among others, Melos Amoris, Officium, De
Emendatione Peccatoris, and Incendium Amoris. Equally important
are his English works. After admitting the difficulty of reading the
intricately alliterative Melos Amoris, Miss Allen concludes that 'Rolle
should be judged by the wise, modest, and often felicitous English
works of later life.'

We are not going here into the history of influence that earlier
religious works such as Ancrene Riwle and The Wooing of Our
Lord, for example, may have played on the formation of Rolle's
English prose, but we aim at a short survey of some of the character-
estic features of his expressive style.

The main theme of some of his English writings, Meditations on
the Passion, A Song of the Love of Jesus, Gastly Gladnesse, Ego

4) English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, ed. by Hope Emily
Allen. Oxford, 1931, p. xxv. Also cf. R. M. Wilson, Three Middle English
Dormio, The Form of Living, and the rest is the divine love, and his language is deeply emotional, occasionally even physical, as his recurrent tone of ‘sweetness, song, and heat’ indicates.

A. Language of Richard Rolle

The common features of the relation between the elements of linguistic structure are said to be contiguity and similarity, or in terms borrowed from rhetoric, metonymic and metaphoric. “La métonymie exploite des rapports qui existent réellement dans le monde extérieur et dans notre monde de concepts. La métaphore,” continues Albert Henry, 5) “elle, se fonde sur des relations qui surgissent dans l’intuition même qui lance la métaphore en question. La métaphore fixe des équivalences d’imagination.” He further explains: “La métonymie procède de l’observation objective: elle découvre et traduit un lien qui est dans nos représentations des choses.” This twofold character of language is expressly stated by R. Jakobson when he says: “The development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity.” 6) In the common structural terminology, a message may be perceived as a combination of sentences, words, phonemes, etc., which are selected from all the possible constituents of a code. Combination rests upon the principle of contiguity, and selection upon that of similarity, which varies between synonymy and antonymy in gradual degrees.

The complexities of a writer’s language are largely reflections of its structural involvement in the contexture of combination and selection, and also due to the variable relations between different semantic patterns and the non-linguistic reality. A brief survey will

be made in the following pages, first, of the language of Richard Rolle along these lines.

I. Combination.

In *The Form of Living* (abbr. *FL*.), cap. 1, in Miss Allen's edition, we have the usual type of phonological distribution in the word-initial to be found in mediaeval prose: 365 instances of the CV-type word as against 121 instances of the VC-type word in 50 lines respectively. The VC-type words include a large number of particles and pronouns besides a few content-words. The number of the CCV-type words falls far below that of the CV-type words: 26 instances only in 50 lines. The order of dominance of these types of words is, therefore, 1. the CV-type, 2. the VC-type (including the VCC-type), and 3. the CCV-type. The initial consonant clusters in the last type are various. (Capitulum 1 contains 152 lines in all.)

a. Liquids preceded by plosives, fricatives, or glides.
   br- 4, cr- 7, dr- 3, gr- 4, pr- 7, tr- 2;
   fr- 2, thr- 3; str- 3;
   wr- 5.
   cl- 1, gl- 4; (bl-and pl- are supplied from other parts of *FL*.)
   fl- 3, sl- 2, also scl- from other parts.

b. Plosives preceded by fricatives. Voiceless.
   sk- 65, sp- 3, st- 8.

c. Nasals preceded by plosives or fricatives.
   kn- 3; (sm- is supplied from *Meditations on the Passion*, abbr. MP.)

d. Semivowel /w/ preceded by plosives or fricatives.
   dw- 1, sw- 7; (tw- is supplied from other parts of *FL*.)

e. Fricative preceded by plosive. Only orthographically.
   ps- (this is supplied from other parts of *FL*: psalmes.)

   /p/ in *psalm* was already silent in OE. *sealm*.

These consonant clusters occur comparatively less frequently, and even less so in alliteration. In *Ego Dormio* (*ED*.), we read, however,
Als stremes of pe strande; (1. 230),

and also

luf langyng pat in my breste es breerde (1. 333),

but

Jhesu, my dere and my drewry, delyte ert jou to syng (1. 341).

In rhyming, the initial consonant or consonant group seems irrelevant:

my state... stedde 335/ brest... my rest 338.

The general character of Rolle's English is intellectual and expository. In his Prologue to *The English Psalter*, he states explicitly that he is writing in plain language for the ordinary reader: "In pis werk I seke no strange Inglis, bot lightest and comunest and swilke pat es mast like vnto pe Latyn, so pat pai pat knawes noght Latyn, be pe Inglis may cum tille many Latyn wordes." But his mastery of English prose rises far above the common, and his art of style is both studied and effective.

Some words frequently occur together in direct sequence in Rolle. So we have 'lufsum lyf' in: His lufsum lyf was layde ful lowe (*Lyrics*, 43/42), cf. Luf es lyf pat lastes ay, par it in Criste es feste; (*L.*, 43/1), Lere to luf, if jou wyl lyfe (*L.*, 44/17); and seke pe joy lastand (*FL.*, 85/31), pai gif joy endles for a litell joy of pis lyfe (*FL.*, 86/13—4). These consecutive words often form the components of some basic concepts in Rolle's writings.

More frequently, they are found in concurrence in wider contexts. The simplest and most usual type of concurrence is cumulation of constituents in dyad, triad, or quaternion, in which the semantic relation of synonymy or antonymy may be expressed.

Dyad: pe whilk syght sall be mede and mete (*FL.*, 96/45), in lust and letchery of pis lyfe (*FL.*, 96/52), pe kyng of joy in pe fayrhede and in pe schynyng of his maieste (*FL.*, 96/44—45), Pei knewe it was owtrage and wrong pat jou soffrede, and folwyd pe, wepyng and syschyng sore (*MP.*, 22/91—93), Swete Jhesu, I yeld pe-


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panynge and gracis for al þe steppis and pacis þat þou yede toward þyn owne peyne and þyn owen deth (MP., 31/131–3),oure trespass
and myssedes (MP., 32/145–6), (scho) castys thaym owte and puttes thaym awaye (The Bee and the Stork, abbr. BS., 54/3–4), owther in prayer or in gode meditacioun (The Commandement, abbr. C., 75/78–9), in lufe and charite (FL., 114/190), etc.

Dyadic phrases are in many cases expressions of antonymous relation between two opposite poles of meaning upon which Rolle's world of belief is constructed: Til men and wymen þat takes þam til actife lyfe (FL., 117/19), Contemplative lyf hase twa partyes, a lower and a heer (FL., 118/35–6), for persecucioun of gastly enmys and bodily (The English Psalter, abbr. Ps. 7/4–5), þei flater for aw or for favor (Ps., 10/79), I sal thanke hym with ioy in thoght and dede (Ps., 13/80–81), I slepe, and my hert wakes (Ego Dormio, abbr. ED., 70/289), gyftes in body and in saule (ED., 70/304–7), etc.

Triadic ideas are one of the prevalent features in mediaeval theology; and some of them are introduced into Rolle's system of thought: thre wretchednes (FL., 85/2), In thre maners þe devell has power to be in a man (FL., 89/141), The thynges þat clenses us of þat filth er thre (FL., 99/101), Thre degrees of lufe I sal tell þe (FL., 104/1) etc. Miss Allen quotes the Victorine threefold doctrine of Scriptural interpretation, which Rolle has enlarged in a certain way (op. cit., p. 124): "Divine Scripture, with threefold meaning, considers its matter historically, allegorically, and tropologically."

This fact will account for some instances of triadic expression in Rolle, although others may be explained as examples of a mediaeval rhetorical device common in contemporary literature.

Triad: And neuer-þe-latter þai thynk þamself vylest of all, and haldes þam wretchedest, lest, and lawest (FL., 93/14–16), þou sall wyt þat clynnes behoves be keped in hert, and in mouth, and in werk (FL., 100/117–8), Inseparabel es þi lufe, when al þi hert and þi thoght and þi myght es swa haly, swa enterely, and swa perfytyly festend, sett, and stabeld in Jhesu Cryste, þat þi thoght comes never
of hym, never departyd fra hym, outaken slepyng (FL., 105/18—22),
Als so pis boke es distynged in thris fyfty psalmes in pe whilke iiij
states of Cristens mans religioun ere signyfyed; pe first in penaunce,
pe toper in rightwisenes, pe thrid in loyynge of endeles lyf (Ps., 6/
48—52), Til ane ympne falles thre thinges, loyynge of God, ioyinge
of hert or thoght, affectuous 3ernynge of Godes luf (Ps., 6/70—72),
Bynd me to pe, swete Jhesu, in byleve, hope, and charite (MP., 30/
106—7), In bileve fest me to pe, swet Jhesu, pat never il lore, ne
errour, ne heresy turne me fro my beleve (MP., 30/107—31/109),
Swet Jhesu, I panke for al pe shame, anguyshe, and felonyses pat
pou suffredest before Anne and Cayphas, Pilate and Herode (MP.,
31/136—8), Owre Lorde gyfes noght to men fayrehede, ritchesse, and
delytes for to sette paire hertes on and dispend pam in synne (ED.,
70/300—2), Pe comawndement of God es, pat we lufe oure Lorde in
al oure hert, in all oure saule, in al oure thought (C., 73/1—2), Bot al
pe delytes of pis world er faynt and fals and fayne in maste nede
(C., 75/62—3), Pe fyrst degre (i. e. of love) es called insuperabel, pe
secunde inseparabel, pe thyrd singuler (C., 74/33—4), understand pat
his lufe es proved in thre thynges: in thynkyng, in spekyng, in
wirkyng (C., 78/177—79), etc.

These coordinates in a triad will be seen to represent the three
different aspects of a particular idea or event, that the writer wishes
to impress upon his reader. Sometimes a triad occurs in coupling
with a dyad where Rolle intends to enter into a greater depth of
thought, as in:

Pat turnyng till Jhesu es noght els bot turnyng fra all pe
covaytyse and pe likyng and pe occupacions and bisynes of world-
ly thynges and of fleschly lust and vayne luf (FL., 94/2—5; where
we have the construction a+b+c (((1+1)+(1+1))) in an ever-
spreading branch), and graunt me to turne to pe in oft shrift in
euche temptacion and tribulacion of my fleische, world, or enmy
(MP., 28/31—3), Swet Jhesu, I beseche pe for py swet mercy, pat
pou be my help and comfort in al temptacion, anguysh, or tribulacion
It may be said that dyads and triads are special forms of cumulation generally affected by mediaeval writers as a means of emphasizing some favourite ideas of theirs. This stylistic device of cumulation characterizes many of Rolle's writings.

Wakandel pai er umwhile temptyd wyth foule thoghtys, vile lustes, wicked delites, with pryde, ire, envy, despair, presumpcion, and oþer many (FL., 90/43—5), obstinacion in ill, noy ('reluctance') to do gude, anger to serve God, sorow þat he dyd na mare ill, or þat he dyd noght þat luste or þat will of his flesche, þe whilk he myght have done, etc. (FL., 97/21—5), Þe synnes of þe hert er þir: ill thoght, ill delyte, assent till synne, desyre of ill, wikked will, ill suspacion, etc. (FL., 97/10—12), For þi mykel mekenesse, þi mercy, þi myȝt ('A', 24/171), for some pulled, some shoven þe, drowen þe, despised þe, skorned þe, tugged þe, and toren þe (MP., 30/76—8), and let me, Lord, love þe ever þe lenger þe bettyre, þe more kunnyngely, þe more besyly, þe more stidfast (MP., 31/126—8), For it (i.e. hys name Jhesu) chaces devils, and destroyes temptacions, and puttes away wykked dredes and vices, and clenses þe thoght (C., 81/285—7), etc.

Sometimes it is the interrogative particles that are piled on to bring out the sense of perplexity that haunts human beings:

Another es: uncertente of owre endyng. For we wate never when we sal dye, ne whare we sal dye, ne how we sal dye, ne whider we sal ga when we er dede (FL., 95/22—4).

Different contexts are frequently brought into relation of parallelism through the presence of a recurrent element common to them. Recurrence of a phoneme at the word-initial within a string of phrases has been commonly called alliteration. Recurrence of a word within a string of succeeding phrases is a similar phenomenon at the sentence level.

The use of alliteration in Rolle is often stylistically significant. It serves to link together words related in sense or synonynous, or those forming a semantic unit.
Alliteration: pat blys pat nevermore blynnes (FL., 89/4), in sylence and slepe (FL., 113/183), mede and mete (FL., 96/4), agynsaiyng and strife agayne sothfastnes, grotchyn agayns God for any angwys, or noy (FL., 98/37–9), lufe langyng (FL., 107/7), a febyll man and a flescly (FL., cap. x, 108/4–5), als laumpe lyghtenand oure lyf (Ps., 5/16), And þou es 'heghand my heved' (Ps., 8/32–3), in what tribulacion or temptacioun þat bifalles (Ps., 8/34–5), þat al my love hool be to þe in wille, worde, or werk (MP., 31/122–3; still said in a Catholic prayer today), bright and brynnand in luf (Ps., 12/70), 'þaire tonge'... es scharp swerd slaand saules (Ps., 14/48: et lingua eorum gladius acutus), I sal synge and psalmé I sal say (Ps., 15/71), so bolyned with bofetyng and with betynge, with spyttyng, with spowtynge (MP., 21/63–5), þi bonys styrten owte starke (MP., 24/178), and my soule softyd in þat swete bath (MP., 26/231–2), to sen þat selly sy3t (MP., 27/259–60), al sek in synnes (MP., 30/86), mak me grene in my beleve, growynge in grace, berynge fruyt of good workes (MP., 35/245–46), Of al my fayrnes flowre (ED., 71/325), I sytt and syng of luf langyng þat in my breste es bredde (ED., 71/333), þan am I fylde and fedde (ED., 71/336), Jhesu, my myrth and meloody (ED., 71/342), Jhesu, my hele and my hony (ED., 71/343), in lovyng and lufyng of God (FL., 106/64), etc. Repetition of words: Jhesu þat is my ioy, make me to rise in ioy of þe songe of þi lovyng, in mirthe of þi lufyng (Ps., 15/79–81), Gyf me of þi sykynges, þat sykest so sore, þat I may syke with þe þat began þat woo (MP., 23/141–2), for þe lufe þat þou lufes Jhesu (ED., 66/180), So fayre in þi fayrehede (ED., 70/315), etc.

Words are repeated more effectively in parallel structures:

If I overcome þaim (i.e. gastyly enmys and bodily) it es my coroun, if þai overcome me it es my dampnacioun (Ps., 7/7–8), if þe lyst lufe any thyng, lufe Jhesu Criste (C., 75/55), etc.

The fondness for alliteration we have noted here is traditional. The West-Midland 'Wooing Group' is an antecedent for this type of
alliterative, rhythmic prose. *The Wohunge of ure Lauerd* opens in the following way:

Iesu swete iesu.
mi druȝ. mi derling. mi drihtin.
mi healend( . ) mi huniter. mi haliwei.
Swetter is munegunge of þe þen mildeu o muȝe.
Hwa ne mei luue þi luueli leor?

Phrases like ‘þi blisful bleo,’ ‘Þ blisfule blodi bodi,’ ‘mi derewurde druȝ,’ ‘þi mikle meknesse,’ ‘þin heali heaued,’ ‘þa headene hundes,’ ‘scharpe spere,’ ‘Þ welefule white’; ‘meknesse & mildschipe,’ ‘wiȝ sweeping & wiȝ schurges,’ ‘i swa strong a swing (=affliction),’ ‘wunder ouer wundres,’ etc. abound in the above-mentioned meditation.

More examples follow of recurrence of key-words in immediate sequence, which occasionally helps to enhance the emotional strength of eloquence:

I wate na better wele / Þan in my thoght to fele / þe lif of his lufynge (*Ps.*, 16 / 8—10), and among oþere I thank þe, Lord, of þat lokynge þat þou lokyd to þi decyple þat þe hadde forsakyn, seynt Petyr (*MP.*, 20 / 31—3), Now may þow se þat wha sa will lufe wysely, hym behoves lufe lastand thyng lastandly, and passand thyng passandly (*FL.*, 113 / 167—9).

The scholars have also pointed out the probable Latin influence by which the English rhetorical tradition benefited. We shall turn here to Richard Rolle himself, who in his Latin writings, especially *Melos Amoris*, has shown himself capable of handling the art of alliteration to an extremity of complexity. Thus he writes,

Decidit desolacio et mesticia foris mittitur, dum mens moratur
in melodia et migrat in montem mellifluum manantem.

Alliteration in Rolle's Latin prose is more often systematic than unsystematic, as in his English writings. It links together related syntactic elements, which are usually semantically associated.

‘Canens et calidus ac iubilans ingenter’ is an example in point. ‘Canens et calidus’ are mystically associated terms in Rolle’s religious
experience, of which 'iubilans ingenter' is the result. Similarly: 'Et
hec sunt cantica canticorum et gaudia gaudiorum.' Sometimes, however,
alliteration works more or less accidentally without any fixed system:
"O dulce, delectabile et desiderandum osculum quod tantum confert
gaudium, gignit devotos, nutrit ferventes, perficit pios."

Rolle's English prose shares some of this stylistic feature, though
it is more or less sparingly used.6)

II. Selection.

The other aspect of linguistic structure is substitution, which
takes place within a syntactic framework. In the context x—y, the
element that may fill the blank is variable. The substitution counters
may stand to each other in the meaning relation that varies from
synonymy to antonymy. Synonymy in the dyadic context is the
simplest case.

Synonyms in pairs: and þan lygge wanand and granand be þe
wall (FL., 87 / 85), in lufe and charite (FL., 114 / 190), þe voyce of
haly men, þat covetys and þernys þe comyng of Jhesu Crist (Ps., 10/
4—5), I am in angwys and sorow in my saule of delayinge (Ps., 11/
27—8), my God and my hele (=deus meus et salutaris meus) (Ps.
16 / 2—3), in shrift and penance for my synnys (MP., 28 / 29—30),
al þat ferdnesse and angwishe þat þou suffred for us (MP., 29 / 57—
8), so þat... we mow repente of oure trespas and mysdedes (MP.,
32 / 144—6), al þe holdes and prisons þat þay helden þe in (MP., 33/
178—9), in overhope and overtrist to myself (MP., 33 / 200—1), a
large yift and a plenteuous shedyng of þy love (MP., 34 / 231), in
myrth and glew (L., 45 / 44), abown layery lustes and vile covaytes
(Desyre and Delit, abbr. DD., 58 / 28—9), also with alliteration: of
all mekest and mylde(L., 46/73), Lufe es a gastly wynne, þat makes
men bygghe and balde (L., 45 / 51), etc.

Synonyms may also occur in a series, centring upon a single
idea: so þat al my hope, trist, comfort, solace, and gladnes be in þe
(MP., 31 / 115—6), and yf I fle to any syn of þe world, my fleishe,
or be fend (MP, 30/81–3), Jhesu, my lufe, my swetyng (ED, 72/350), etc.

Antonymy is as often the meaning-relation implied in the dyadic context, where antithesis or a dichotomic view of the world is the key-tone.

Per in es descrived pe medes of gode menne, pe pynes of ille menne (Ps, 6/59–60), in euche wel or wo (MP, 31/116), lufe gladdes 3ong and alde (L, 45/49), etc.

Irony or paradox is a form of meaning framed in a wider context than an antonymic dyad:

bot he hase deleyte and covaytes pat he war worthy for to suffer torment and payne for Crystes lufe (FL, 112/116–8), pe sift es, when pe thyng pat es hard in itselse semes byght for to do (FL, 115/227–8), For als Austyne says, ‘Lufreden (‘love’) es pat bryngs pe thyng pat es farre nerehande, and imposibel til possibel apertyl.’ (FL, 115/228–30), pe sevent es, delitabilite in sawle when he es in tribulacion, and makes lovynge to God in ilk anger pat he suffers (FL, 115/236–8), my hert es redy to suffir angwys for thi luf (Ps, 15/73–4), Pow al þi woo be þe leef, ne art þou nouȝt swythe large? (MP, 23/139–40), Pe nyght it (‘luf’) tournes intil þe day, þi travel intyll reste (L, 43/3), Jhesu þe nyght turns to þe day, þe dawyn intil spryng (L, 47/42), And oftsithes some haves þar likyng and þair wil in þis worlde, and hell in þe toþer; and some men er in pyne and persecucion and anguysh in þis lyfe, and hase heven to þair mede (ED, 65/139–43), etc.

The predominant theme in these examples quoted above is characteristically the irony of love, which makes the impossible possible and turns the night into the day. In two succeeding clauses of similar structure, the meaning is often antithetic, as in the last example. More examples of antithesis may be quoted from Rolle.

Bot oftsythes it befalles þat ay þe mare joy and wonduryng þai haue withouten of þe lovynge of men, ay þe les joy þai have within of þe luf of God (FL, 87/96–99), as þe love was makeles, so þe
sorewe was perelees (MP, 22/113-4), Wa fra me away war went, and comne war my covaytyng (L, 44/23), In fylth þai lat þaim ly, þaire fairhed wil þai tyne (L, 50/14), similarly within the phrase structure: Lord, þat lyghted fro hevyn to erth for love of mankynd, fro so heigh to so low, fro so heigh lordship to so low poverta, fro so heigh nobeley to so low meschief, fro so heygh wel to so low wo, fro so heigh blys to so low peyne, fro so heigh myrthe to so low sorow, fro so lykynge a lyf to so peynful deth (MP, 28/9-14), and let me love þat þou lovest and hate þat þou hatis (MP, 31/128-9), Dede and lyf began to stryf wheþer myght maystre mare (L, 43/43), but outhire þay lufe þayn over mekill, settand thaire thoghte unryghtwysely on thayn, or þay luf thaym over lytill, yf þay doo noghte all as þey wolde till þam (BS, 55/24-7), etc.

Thus, ‘charite’ is dissociated from ‘covaytise’ in Rolle: Alsswa, seven experimentes er, þat a man be in charite. þe fyrst es, when al covatise of ertly thyng es slokkend in hym. For whare sa covaytise es, þare es na lufe of Criste; þan if he have na covaytyse, signe es þat he hase lufe (FL, 114/212-6); it is associated, on the other hand, with ‘burning yearning of heaven’: þe secunde es, byrnand þernyng of heven (FL, 114/216-7).

‘Wisdom’, again, is associated with ‘poverty’ and dissociated from ‘coveting’: þou ert wyse, when þou ert pore, withowten covaytise of þis world (FL, 112/139-40), and elsewhere it is defined as denial of worldly things: Wysdom es, forgetyng of ertly thynges, and thynkyng of heven with discreciOn in al mens dedes (FL, 116/15-6).

Mystic terms that form a salient feature of Rolle’s language are groups of such words that fall within common areas of semantic association or dissociation. They frequently occur in pairs or in antithesis.

þai gif joy endles for a litell joy of þis lyfe (FL, 85/13-4),
The associative chain of love-joy, joy-sweetness-melody (song)-burning holds together the inner texture of Rolle's mystic language, as it expands and develops itself. 'Pe swetnes of Goddes lufe' has other associations: Swete lufe es, when bi body es chaste and bi thoght clene (FL., 113 / 173–4), Nowe, swet Jhesu, here (MP., 32 / 150), Quikne me, Lord Jhesu Crist, and gyf me grace, bat I may fele som of pe savowre of gostely swetnesse (MP., 25 / 204–5), Jhesu, I besech pe, graunt me swete savoure of mercy in pe holsom resseit of grace (MP., 36 / 302–3), In bi swetnes fyll my hert (L., 41 / 8), etc.

We are told that this sweetness is ghostly, that is, spiritual, but at the same time it is almost a physical savour and it is constantly associated with a physical sense of burning:

Lufe es hatter þen cole, lufe may nane beswyke. / Þe flawme of lufe, wha myght it thole, if it was ay ilyke? (L., 44 / 13–4), Þi sawle þan hase he fedde, in swete lufe brennand (L., 53 / 36), and kyndelde with fyre of Cristes lufe, sa þat þou sal verraly fele þe bernyng of lufe in þi hert ever mare and mare (ED., 69 / 278–80).

Miss Allen refers in her Introduction to this miraculous experience of Rolle's as his full complement of joy, 'heat, sweetness, and song.' And, indeed, everywhere in his writings, his rhapsodic sense of joy bursts out into song and melody, in impassioned, repetitive language. He witnesses in his own words that he was delighted to hear the sound of this heavenly music.
And þam þat lastes in þaire devocioun he rayses þam in to contemplatif lyf and ofte syth in to soun and myrth of heuen (Ps., Prol., 4/7—9), þe sang þat delites tille hertes and leres þe saule es made a voyce of syngand (Ps., 5 / 28—9), Bryng me to þi lyght, þi melodi to here (L., 53 / 32), Þou be my lufyng (‘beloved one’),/ Þat I lufe may syng (ED., 69 / 255—6), If þat my sawle had herd and hent þe sang of þi lovyng (‘praise’) (L., 44 / 24), If þou wil lufe, þan may þou syng til Cryst in melody (L., 46 / 68),

and Ego Dormio ends, with his usual emphasis, in the following ecstatic lines:

And I þi lufe sal syng thorow syght of þi schynyng
In heven withowten endyng (72 / 362—3).

It is our common view that the consociation of these synonyms and antonyms rests upon the principle of similarity. What is rhetorically known as metaphor is another instance of this principle. When we say a is p, and a and p belong to different semantic areas, we express ourselves in a metaphor. In this metaphorical expression, a and p are associated in a certain way, through a tertium quid of comparison, as the traditional rhetoric would say. This equation presupposes the presence in language of other members, which are dissociated from a, of the class of elements to which p belongs, q, r, s, etc. One has to choose between the associated member and the dissociated ones, in order to create an appropriate metaphor.

The wealth of figurative imagery in mediaeval literature has been noted by scholars. Professor Robert K. Stone has studied the use of metaphor and simile in two religious writers, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, in his work on Middle English Prose Style.7) His list of examples of these figures of speech found in the two religious adepts will be a useful supplement to my earlier article on Margery Kempe, where only scant mention is made of this aspect of

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her language. 

A brief examination of Rolle's language, however, will reveal that the author is more sparing in his use of metaphor and simile than might be expected, for he seems to cultivate more factual than figurative language. And this is probably where the secret of his popularity in part lies.

The terms 'light' and 'fire' both occur in metaphoric use in Margery and Richard: The light is cause of our lif (The Book of Margery Kempe, lxxxvii), God es lyght and byrnyng (FL., 109/12); in the fire of tribulation (BMK., lxxii), þe fyre of hys lufe (FL., 88/127).

In Rolle, however, the expression 'þe fyre of hys lufe' or 'þe fyre of luf' seems to tell more of a direct, physical experience than of an imaginary one:

þou sall destroy his trappes, and byrn in þe fyre of luf all þe bandes þat he walde bynd þe with FL., 88/133—5).

It may be said that his language is metaphorical in the sense that religious language is generally metaphorical.

lovand and seand þe kyng of joy in þe fayrhyde and in þe schynyng of his maieste (FL., 96/43—5), Verray luf clenses þe saule (FL., 110/53), hunger and thyrst, myses ('discomft') and anguyS for þe lufe of Jhesu Cryste (FL., 113/160—2), Devowte luf es, when þou offers þi prayers and þi thogtes til God with gastly joy and byrnand hert in þe hete of þe Haly Gaste. swa þat þe thynk þat þi saule es, als it war, drunken for delyte and solace of þe swetnes of Jhesu (FL., 113/170—8), in swetnes of Cristes lufe (FL., 116/259—60), bot als sone als þai dye, þai er broght before God, and sese (pl.) hym face til face and egh til egh (FL., 119/71—3), a parfit man or woman þat has gaderd to geder al þe desires of þaire saule and with þe mayle of luf fested þam in Jhesu Crist (Ps., 10/12—5), þe bede of blysse ('the seat of happiness') (L., 44/11), etc.

__8) Hideo Yamaguchi, 'Study of the Book of Margery Kempe,' in Studies 18.1, Kobe College, 1971, 1-44._
Note that these terms, *seand, hunger, thyrst, byrnand, hete, swetnes, mayle, clenses* and the rest all `make an impression by appealing to the senses.'

On the other hand, metaphors, creative or conventional, do occur in Rolle:


Instances of simile are not wanting:

> als þou war in sylence and slepe and sette in Noe schyppe (*FL*, 113 / 182–3). Þan was þy body lyk to hevyn (*MP*, 34 / 232). And yit, swet Jhesu, þy body is lyk to a medow ful of swete flours and holsom herbes; so is þy body ... holsom as herbes to euch synful man (*MP*, 36 / 298–301). In þis degre es lufe stalworth as dede, and hard as hell (*C*, 74 / 47). In þe fyrst degre (i. e. of love) es men likend to þe sternes; in the toþer, till þe mone; in þe thyrd, til þe sonne (*FL*, 107 / 86–8; quoted from St. Paul), all þe ioy of þis werld es bot als a floure of þe feld (*PS*, 15 / 67).

Sometimes, this figure of speech is expanded into a more complex form of comparison in parallelism:

> And as a nette draweth fyshe to þe londe, so, swet Jhesu, brynge me to þy blisse (*MP*, 35 / 258–9), þy body is lyke a boke writen al with rede ynke; so is þy body al written with rede woundes (*MP*, 36 / 285–7). For als a man pusonde ('poisoned') of a swet morcell takes venome þat slase his body, sa dose a synful wreche in likyng and luste of hys flesche (*ED*, 64 / 97–9).

Another variant is seen in the following example: þai have na mare syght of þe lufe of God in þaire sawle þen þe egh of a bak ('bat') has of þe sonne (*C*, 74 / 24–5).

Comparison is also the favourite form of an allegory as a literary means of conveying a deeper meaning or a moral beneath the literal meaning.

If þou saw a man have precious stanes, þat he myght by a
kyngdom wyth, if he gaf þam for an appyl, als a barne wil
do, ryghtwysly moght þou say þat he war noght wyse, bot a
grete foles (*FL*, 112 / 144—9).

What we have learned from these examples is that under the
type of comparison, the realized patterns of meaning are not
always the same, but may vary in different contexts.

III. Oscillations in the system.

Language is subject to variation; it does not remain constant. It
is usual to speak of changes in language in the course of time, but
instability is equally true of language in its static aspects. On the
one hand, some structural views of language have argued with
abundant proofs that language is a system of signs and that ‘tout se
tient’ in the system, where every term plays its role under the
systemic constraint. It would seem, according to this view, that the
mechanism of language requires every alteration in its system to be
constant and absolute. But there are other views, which call our
attention to the fact that the speech of an individual manifests
frequent oscillations in sounds, in word-forms and word-meanings,
and in sentence-patterns. Professor V. Mathesius speaks, as early as
1911,⁹ of static oscillation in the speech of an individual, opposed to
dynamic changeability in the history of language. His theory of
potentiality explains how the quality of a sound is not constant, but
variable, how it moves within limits. Word-limits, again, are uncertain,
notwithstanding the generally supported arguments for the indepen-
dence of the word within the sentence. Word-stress is variable; it is
not inherent in word-categories, but only potential. Word-order is also
relatively free, though there is regularity that governs it, as there is

⁹ Vilém Mathesius, ‘On the Potentiality of the Phenomena of Language’.
Originally published in Czech, now translated into English by Professor Josef
Vachek and reprinted in *A Prague School Reader in Linguistics* (Indiana
in the patterns of sentence. Professor Mathesius also refers to semantic oscillation in speech as another of its aspects of potentiality. Variable, for example, is the relation of intellectual and emotional elements in the semantic content of a large part of lexical and other units. A word may denote both of these aspects of meaning. The semantic potentiality of language is, thus, manifested by the relation $f(s_1, s_2, \ldots, s_n)$ or $s(f_1, f_2, \ldots, f_n)$. In the field of style, a speaker may prefer either the subjective expression, emphasizing the emotional side of his view, or the objective expression, confining himself to the conceptual side. These realities of language, it must be noted, are an important starting-point in the study of an individual form of speech, rather than language as an objective fact divorced from the actual speaker.

There is a curious union of mediaevalism and modernity in the style of Rolle's language. Many of his words and phrases are archaic, and the modulations of his sentence rhythm are more or less even and unvaried except for occasional ornaments and repetition. But for all his mediaeval mannerisms, he usually speaks with the preciseness and intelligibility of a modern writer. His narrative style is simple and plain, and its sweetness and directness breaks through the strangeness of his spellings, as Professor R.W. Chambers suggests.

His constant theme is the mystical love of Christ, but the language in which he tells about his understanding of it is mostly practical and free from obscurity. Miss Allen thinks that the secret of his enduring influence was probably 'a very human, attaching simplicity of emotion,' which he retained through all his years of mystical concentration.

She continues further: "However esoteric his mystical joy, there was nothing recondite in the method by which it was attained." Here is the manner in which he communes with Jesus Christ:

“Swete Lord Jhesu Crist, I thanke þe and þerde þe graces of þat swete prayere and of þat holy orysoun þat þou madest befor þe holy passyoun for us on þe mownt of Olyvete. Y beseche þe, swete Lord, þat þou here my prayere.” (MP., I.)

The emotive expression and the objective statement frequently alternate in Rolle like the rippling surface of a gliding current.

Þe gruchynge and þe gronynge, þe sorwe and þe syschynge, þe rewthe of hys chere I wolde were my deth (MP., 20/14-6); A, Lord, þi sorwe, why were it not my deth? (MP., 21/54).

Alas, þat I schal lyve and se my gracious Lord, so soffrenge and so meke, þat nevere trespasyd, so schamely bedy3t! (MP., 20/42-4).

I se in my soule how reuffully þou gost: þi body is so blody, so rowed so bledderyd (MP., 21/59-61). A, Lord, þe pyte þat I now se (MP., 24/173).

The compact and the loose construction are also interchangeable. What Miss Allen calls a ‘loose construction’ is found where a coordinate clause is embedded as an afterthought in a subordinate clause:

Þi body is so seek, so febyl and so wery, what with gret fastynge before þat þou were take, and al ny3t wooke withowten ony reste, with betynge, with bofetynge so fer Ovurtake, þat al stowpynge þou gost, and grym is þi chere (MP., 21/71-5).

What rhetoric has termed a zeugma is the result, in the following example, of amalgamating a coordinate clause with a preceding one where it does not properly belong: Þe cyte is so noble, þe pupyl is so mychel, þe folke comyth rennynge owt of iche a strete, þanne stondyth up þe folke, and þe reke, þat wonder men may þat þereonne thynke (MP., 21/81—22/84).

Another instance of syntactic oscillation will be seen where one and the same verb is made to govern both a nexal phrase and a clause-nexus at the same time:

Some þere were of þe comown peple þat sysched sore and grette for þi wo, þat wysten þe so turmentyd and þat it was for envye
In the following example, a preposition is either tagged on or suppressed after the relative ‘pat’:

Or if thou have other thoughtes pat thou has mare swetnes in and devotion pat in base pat I lere pe, thou may thynk [pam]. (FL, 104 / 41—3).

Semantic oscillation is seen in polysemy. The use of words in mystic literature is often based on this principle of polysemy. Rolle’s distinction of different degrees of love and other virtues is closely associated with the problem of static oscillation in language. Word-meanings are overlapping and bounded by no definite lines. It is in the nature of mystic terms that they are mutually related in most complex ways and each partakes of the meaning of the other without losing their identity.

_Sweetness_ is either physical or spiritual: So may I no manere pe swetnesse of pe taste (MP, 25/196—7); and gyf me grace, pat I may fele som of pe savowre of gostely swetnesse (MP, 25 / 204—5).

Our _delight_ is either pure or unclean: Twa thynge makes oure delyte pure. Ane es, tornynge of sensualite to the skyll; for when any es tornede to delite of hys fyve wittes, alsoune unclennes entyrs into his saule (DD, 58 / 31—4).

_Ego Dormio_ dilates upon the three degrees of _love_, _primus_, _secundus_, and _tertius_ (pe thirde) (ED, 63 / 85f., 64 / 114f., and 69/263 f.), stressing the ten commandments, the forsaking of the world, and the contemplative life. In _The Commandment_, on the other hand, the first degree of love is called _insuperabel_, the second _inseparabel_, and the third _singuler_ (C, 74 / 31—4), indicating three ascending degrees of perfection towards the love of Jesus Christ.

This threefold definition of _love_ is in unison with Rolle’s traditional threefold ways of thinking which manifests itself in his general exposition of religious beliefs: the three manners in which ‘the devil has power to be in a man,’ ‘the three things that cleanses us of sinful filth against three manners of sins,’ that ‘clennes of
mouth kepes thre thynges' \((FL.)\), etc. Mention has already been made of the threefold method of mediaeval Scriptural interpretation.

Semantic oscillation is also seen in synonymy. From the onomasiological point of view, a certain group of words provide different, but equivalent names for a single idea.

The idea of \textit{humility} is variously called \textit{mekeness, suffering} or \textit{buxomness}; and gife þe til mekenes, suffryng, and buxumnes \((ED., 64/122−4)\), and

the pseudonyms for the idea of \textit{evil} are the world, the flesh, and the devil: and yif I fle to any syn of þe world, my fleishe, or þe fend, swet Jhesu, fet me sone home ayeyne as lordes bondman, and dryve me with tribulacion to penance \((MP., 30/82−4)\). They are man’s enemies \((ED., 66/190−1)\).

An additional feature of Rolle’s language is formal oscillations in grammar. They are not many, but they sufficiently indicate the fluid state of the speech of an individual writer who lived and thought in a period of transition.

In accounting for the difference of forms in a text, various factors must be taken into consideration: the dialect, the scribe’s emendations, the genuineness of the manuscript, and so forth. When all these factors have been duly considered and explained, there may still remain some variability of form in phonology, lexis, and syntax. These formal differences are probably to be regarded as instances of linguistic oscillations allowed for the speech of an individual writer.

Our knowledge of the phonology of Rolle’s language is naturally imperfect, but something may be learned about its nature from his occasional spellings.

The vowel of an unstressed syllable is sometimes left unmarked, but sometimes is indicated as weak by the spelling: a mans hert þat verraly es byrnand in þe lufe of God \((ED., 63/65−6)\), þat þou lufe Criste verraly \((ED., 67/195−6)\); if þou wil luf Jhesu verraly \((FL., 171)\), And þan þe fire of lufe verrali ligges in þair hert and byrnes þarin \((FL., 119/65−6)\), And how I sal lufe God verraly? \((FL., 108\.
Some ðere were of ðe comown peple ðat sysched sore and grette for ði wo (MP., 22/86–7), when ðou eart commen þartill (FL., 95/16–7), where the two texts belong to two different Camb. Univ. MS. divisions; swa mykel (adv.) (ED., 66/183), His godenes es sa mykel (ED., 66/186–7), so wele payde es he (ED., 66/188).

The vowels may interchange in the stressed syllable in some words: al wicked desyres of ðe flesch (ED., 65/134), ðe worlde, ðe devel, and ði flesche (ED., 66/190–1), ðe world, my fleishe, or ðe fend (MP., 30/82–3), at ðe beginnyng of owre werkes (FL., 116/6), bodili warke (FL., 117/2), ne in evel warke (ED., 67/195); in gode lyf (FL., 85/27), Se how gude lufe es (FL., 109/33), where 'gude' is a Northern form; with good wille and sorow of hert (MP., 28/27–8); thurgh ðe corrupciouns of ðis werld (Ps., 5/34), when I owt of ðis world sal wende (L., 40/5), in bisynes of ðis worlde (ED., 62/43–4); many yiftis, gostly, bodily, and worldly (MP., 27/1–2), al wordely wele (MP. I, 27/272), the former text being based on the Camb. U. MS. and the latter on the Bodleian; and destroy thorow Goddes grace al wicked desyres of ðe flesch (ED., 65/133–4), (a synful wrecche) destreu his sawle (ED., 64/99–100).

Metathetic forms occur beside the etymological: brynandest hertes (ED., 62/37), It wil ... make þi hert brennand in Cristes lufe (C., 248–49), þat (= 'those who') maste lufed God and byrnandest es in hys lufe (ED., 62/34); þe thrid in loyynge of endeles lyf (Ps. 2, 6/51–2), þe thrid es (FL., 93/128), þe thyrd (FL., 97/4).

The forms 'kirke' and 'chirche' occur in two different mss.: þe trowth of hali kyrke (ED., 63/88), holy chirche (MP., 35/260), the difference being dialectal, Northern vs. Southern.

The forms 'wymen' and 'wo men' occur side by side in a Northern text: men and women (FL., 88/131), Haly men and women (FL., 114/194, cf. any man and woman FL., 114/193), in men and wymen (FL., 116/1). From the spellings we learn that certain consonants alternate, probably in the relation of free variation, as in:
tive mystic language (MP., 28 / 9), with earthly bysines (FL, 93 / 8), na
man wate in erth ṭat ṭai er in charite (FL, 114 / 190–1); of earthly
thoughts (FL, 115 / 255).
to do negligently (FL, 99 / 87), on brede and on lenkthe (MP., 24 / 162), though the last example may better be explained as sound
change in samdhi.

The alternance of /w/ and /v/ seems to be in evidence in the
following passages: I say ṭe ṭat na man wate (FL, 106 / 72), Bot I
vate wele (FL, 102 / 214), a similar case of alternance being also
recorded as late as Dickens’ days, in Cockney speech.

The forms heest, heyest, and heghest seem to point to the presence
of the pronunciation with a glide and the glideless pronunciation in
the same speaker: sekand ṭe heghest place in heven (FL, 95 / 7–8),
ṭai begyn in ṭe heyest degre (FL, 96 / 3), for I walde ṭat ṭou moght
wyn to ṭe heest (FL, 104 / 1–2).

The following pairs of different forms are due to dialectal differ-
ences: fet me sone home ayeyne as lorde bondman (MP., 30 / 83–4),
turnynge agayne (MP., 31 / 139–40); synnes ayeyns kynde (MP., 29
/ 71), na thyng ṭat es agaynes ṭe lufe of Jhesu Crist (C, 73 / 9–10);
and yif I fle to any syn (MP., 30 / 81–2), if we covayte to fle ṭe
payne of purgatory (ED, 70 / 305–6), Southern vs. Northern. It will
be noted that examples of this kind must be discussed from another
point of view than we are here concerned with.

Other kinds of formal oscillations may include morphemic and
syntactic variants that are functionally equivalent in similar environ-
ments.

The native term ‘wanhope’ and the French loan-word ‘dispaire’
are both found in Rolle: gret synnys, as overhope, wanhope, and al
maner of synnes ayeyns kynde (MP., 29 / 70–1). Let never my hope
be to streite, lest I falle in wanhop, ne to large, lest I trist in overhope
(MP., 31 / 117–9), in overhope and overtrist to myself (MP., 33 / 200–1), where if we find only the term ‘wanhope’, it is because of
the presence of other forms in -hope, of their systemic constraint upon
the form to be chosen; for the word ‘dispare,’ I quote from *O. E. D.*: a 1340 Hampole, *Psalter* cxviii. 156 Of synful men peryss nane þare dispare.

‘Lufreden’ and ‘lufe’ co-occur, the former being the counterpart of ‘hateredyn’: whethir he be worthi hateredyn or lufe(*FL*, 114 / 200—1), For als Austyne says, ‘Lufreden es þat brynges þe thynge þat es farre nerehande, and impossibel til possibel apertly (*FL*, 115 / 228—30).

The French term ‘secund’ replaces the native ‘þe toþer’ in some passages: (iij states of Cristens mans religioun) þe first in penaunce, þe toþer in rightwisenes (*Ps.*, 6 / 50—1), Þan enters þou into þe toþer degre of lufe (*ED.*, 64 / 118—9), Þe fyrst thynge ... Þe toþer thynge (*FL*, 97 / 3—4), And mykel mare, þat er in þe secund degre, þan in þe fyrst (*FL*, 106 / 60—1), Þe secunde es, byrnand þerneyng of heven (*FL*, 114 / 216—7).

It is noteworthy that in Rolle there occur the earlier pronominal forms *he*, *heo*, f. and the late forms *scho*, *sche* side by side: os a womman owt of hyreselve hyre handys sche wrong; wepyngle and syshynge hyre armys he caste; ... he fel in dede swowne, .... Þe sorewe þat he made ... (*MP.*, 22 / 103—6), he or scho, þat es in þis degre (*FL*, 105 / 38), bot he or scho þat feles it (*FL*, 106 / 73), For he or scho kan noght lufe (*FL*, 112 / 122—3), where ‘he or heo’ would scarcely make sense. The general preference which the Cam. Univ. MS. shows for the form ‘scho’ is in keeping with the theory that attributes the origin of ‘sch-’ forms to some sort of liaison with a preceding sibilant in the context, though there has been made some counter-proposal by Professor Stevick. The form ‘sche’ made its first appearance in the *Old English Chronicle* (Laud MS.), anno 1140, as commonly known: And te Lundenissce folc hire wolde tæcen. &

We need not discuss the question further here.

Verbal forms in -and and -ynge are both found in Rolle, but their difference is strictly functional, the former being participial and the latter gerundial or substantival in most Northern texts: Mykel luve he schewes, þat never es irk to luve, bot ay standand, sittand, gangand, or wirkand, es ay his luve thynkand, and oftsyth þarof es dremand (ED., 61 / 3–6). For ay, whils þi hert es heldand til luve any bodely thyng, þou may not perfitely be coupuld with God (ED., 61 / 16–7), als deede slas al lyvand thyng in þys worlde (C., 74 / 47–75 / 48); in thynkng of his passyoun(ED., 65 / 152), thorow covaytyng of Cristes luve(ED., 67 / 200–1), in al oure understandyng, withowten erryng (C., 73 / 3–4), and ordane þi prayng and þi wakyng and þi fastyng þat it be in discrecion (C., 75 / 79–80). It is in a Southern text, such as Meditations on the Passion, that the forms in -and disappear and those in -ynge step in in the double function of a present participle and a gerund: þe cyte is so noble, þe pupyl is so mychel, þe folke comyth rennyng owt of iche a strete (MP., 21 / 81–22 / 82), wepyng and syschyng hyre armys he caste (MP., 22 / 102–3), þef a man ... thenk hymself owtcastynge and rebukynge and revlynyngg (MP., 25 / 211–2), and grant me, swete Jhesu, þat my beleve be in mesure, nat to large, belevynge þat shold nat be beleved (MP., 31 / 109–111); How was it þat arwenesse of womman-kynde or maydenhed schamynge ne hadde þe withdrawyn ? (MP., 23 / 117–19), þi woundys in þi streynynge reche so wyde (MP., 24 / 173–4), Now, swete Jhesu, graunt me to rede upon þy boke, and somwhat to understand þe swetnes of þat writyng, and to have likynge in studious abydynge of þat redynge (MP., 36 / 287–90).

The kind of oscillation found in these texts, therefore, is purely dialectal, but not individual, due to the scribe, but not to the author. The phrases `with hepyng sorewys' (MP., 22 / 110) and `brennyng kene' (MP., 22 / 112) are typically Southern in the use of the -ynge form.

However, a Northern form occasionally emerges in a Southern
text, as in: so þat gret conforte it schal to me be with lykande thouȝt (MP. I, 26 / 221—2).

The progressive forms are similarly constructed: It is tokenyng of my deth (MP., 25 / 189); Na wonder gyf I syghand be (L., 47 / 85), For if þow stabil þi lufe, and be byrnande whils þou lyfes here (ED., 62 / 44—5), þe fyrst es, when al covatise of ertyl thyng es slokkend in hym (FL., 213—4), bot if þou be als gode, or better, within in þi sawle, als þou erty semand at þe syght of men (FL., 93 / 2—4).

The infinitive phrase seems to be formed sometimes with the preposition to and sometimes with the preposition at, but in fact the latter occurs only in a particular turn of expression: þis I say to kyndel þi hert for to covayte þe felichip of aungels (ED., 62 / 28—30), perplexite, þat es, dowt what es to do and what noght (FL., 97 / 19—20); Seraphyn es at say ‘brynand’ (ED., 62 / 35), þe whilk despises all ertyl thyng, þat es at say, lufs it noght (FL., 93 / 9—11). The latter phrase is exclusively Northern.

The impersonal construction is gradually being replaced by the personal in this period, so that these constructions are sometimes interchangeable: Me langes, lede me to þi lyght, and festen in þe al my thoght (L., 41 / 7), In þe first degre, men may say: ‘I languysch for lufe’, or ‘Me langes in lufe’ (FL., 106 / 33—4); but ‘me thynk’ and ‘us behoves’ are isolated turns of expression: and als me thynk þat it may be (FL., 108 / 7—8), us behoves restreyne us perfitley fra þe lust and þe likyng and al þe il delytes and wikked drede of þis worlde (ED., 70 / 306—8).

The split infinitive occurs once in Miss Allen’s emended text, but otherwise it seems of rare occurrence: Nowe, swete Jhesu, yeve me grace to have most deynyte (‘delight’) to inwardly loke and þynk upon þat blessed face (MP., 32 / 163—5; MS. to þe; also Univ. Coll. MS), and graunt me grace wilfully to go to þy service (MP., 33 / 193—4).

The difference between ‘whilk’ and ‘þe whilk’ is functional, for
the form without the article is always an interrogative, while the form preceded by the article denotes a relative connective: Bot sa mykell we sal latlyer (=‘less readily’) gyf fayth till any dreme, ßat we may not sone wyt whilk es soth, whilk es fals, whilk es oure enmy, whilk es of ße Hali Gaste (FL., 93 / 134—37); ßat luste or ßat will of his flesche, ße whilk he myght have done (FL., 97 / 23—4), Luf es thyng, thurgh ße whilk God lufes us (FL., 109 / 18—9), of vanitees, ße whilk will comber ßam (FL., 119 / 61).

The latitude allowed for word-order within the phrase or the sentence is not very large in the prose of Rolle’s time, but we see that everything is not fixed and settled here.

Some element of a sentence, whatever its grammatical function, may vary from its subordinate position to the front position, as when a word or phrase which bears an emotional stress stands first: ße grucchynge and ße gronynge, ße sorwe and ße syschynge, ße rewthe of hys chere I wolde were my deth (MP., 20 / 44—6), with anaphora: A, Lord, ßi sorwe, why were it not my deth? (MP., 21 / 54), My hert, when sal it brest for lufe? (FL., 107 / 4), also L., 50 / 25. We will speak of stylistic oscillation here, since the transposition depends on the emotional element in speech. Other instances of transposition are what we usually term inversion: His enmy he calles ße devel, or fleshcely custome, ßat es heghed oboven hym (Ps., 11 / 36—7), With swyche a processyoun of worldely wondrynge was nevere no thef to ße deth lad (MP., 22 / 84—6). Of this kind of inversion examples are many.

Lastly, we have examples to show that the preposition may enjoy a certain degree of freedom in its position in the sentence, as it often does in Rolle’s prose; with a pronoun: and how ßou may come til perfectioon, and to lufe hym ßat ßou hase taken ße til (FL., 119 / 77—8), If it do ße gude, and profit til ße, thank God (FL., 119 / 78—9); with a relative clause: A, Lord, ßat peyne ßat lyther Jues, so cruel and so kene, at ße mownt of Calvarye withouten ony mercy pynyd ße with! (MP., 24 / 157—59), and bryn in ße fyre of luf all
pe bandes þat he walde bynd þe with (FL., 88 / 133 /5), If þou saw a man have preciouse stanes, þat he myght by a kygndom wyth (FL., 112 / 144—6), For in þe self degre þeir prowde devels fel downe fra, er meke men and wymen, Criste Dowves, sett, to have rest and joy withowten ende (ED., 62 / 47—50), with an infinitive phrase: A sparkle of þi passyoun of love and of reithe kynde in myn herte to quycnen it with (MP., 27 /267—9); Luf es thyng, thurgh þe whilk God lufes us (FL., 109 /18—9), in thris fyfty psalmes in þe whilk iiij states of Cristens mans religioun ere signfyed (Ps., 6 /49—50), In þe whilk luf þat þow wax ay mare and mare es my covaytyng and my amonestyng (F.,96 /9—11), etc. In the syndetic relative construction above, the postposition of the preposition is regularly found with the connective þat and its pre-position is conditioned by the use of whilk in the context.

We have so far surveyed how Rolle's language is built upon the relations of chain and choice between its diverse elements, how he speaks a language of complex consociation, without falling, however, into the fault of over-emphasis or too much liberty. The flowing cadence of his devout language falls constantly upon an unchanging theme of his life, that undying love of God.

Lufe es a lyf, copuland togedyr þe lufand and þe lufed (FL., 109 / 14—5).

Lufe es lyf þat lastes ay, þar it in Cristes es feste (L., 43 / 11). For me and my lufyng, lufe makes bath be ane (L. 45 / 56).

B. The Language of Deonise Hyd Diuinite.

We seem as if transplanted into an unfamiliar world of shadows when we turn from Rolle to the author of Deonise Hyd Diuinite. The general tone of language passes from that of assertive confidence to that of obscure uncertainty, though it speaks of the 'sovereign-substantial beam of the godlike darkness', unflinchingly.

From the Prologue we have learned that the writer is translating
into his own words the Latin from the original mystic writings ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite. Its stylistic features as well as the thought behind them are directly transmitted into the English of the translator, imparting the latter some of the original glamour and mystery. The usual texture of religious language is here varied with exotic and often esoteric turns of expression.

I. Language as a network of consociation.

The general nature of the language of Deonise Hyd Diuinite and other related treatises has been characterized by Miss Phyllis Hodgson as essentially logical in an introduction to her edition of these devotional works.13) It is written in strictly controlled prose, which appeals more to intellect than to emotion. The truth of this statement cannot be contradicted, in so far as the external structure of language is concerned. The language indicates a perfect mastery of syntax, although a case of anacoluthic construction mars the opening paragraph of Deonise Hyd Diuinite, which seems to betray its occasional deviations: Of þe whiche book, forþat it is mad minde in þe 70 chapter of a book wretin before ... how þat Denis sentence wol cleerli afferme al þat same book; þerfore, in translacioun of it, I haue not onliche folowed þe nakid lettre of þe text, bot for to declare þe hardness of it, I haue moche folowed þe sentence of þe Abbot of Seinte Victore, a noble & a worþi expositor of þis same book. Miss Hodgson remarks: “Their matter appears deceptively plain to a casual reader because of their lucidity and directness; their style seems apparently simple through mastery of syntax and the unobtrusive use and organic function of figures of rhetoric.”13) The above quotation (ll. 5—12) already cautions us to beware of the disguised simplicity, underneath which we detect a highly complex prose with its substructures and involved relations. The deceptiveness of plainness does not involve style alone, but it also overshadows the semantic aspect.

The quintessence of the mystic thought here insisted on is not simply intellect, but really 'affection', or what Richard Rolle calls *Incendium Amoris*. We read in the prayer preceding Cap. I of Deonis *Hyd Diuinite* the following declaration: And for alle þees þinges ben abouen mynde, þerfore wiþ affección abouen mynde as I may, I desire to purchase hem vnto me wiþ þis preier (11. 25—7).

Two opposed human faculties, intellect and emotion, are called (1) *mynde* 'mind', 'thought' and (2) *affección* 'feeling' in *Deonis Hyd Diuinite*. The relations in which these terms stand to each other will be made known by the ways of placing them in concatenation and also of collocating them with other affiliated terms. Another term related to *mynde* is *wit, witte* 'mind, reason, understanding', though with a wider application (*wittes, pl. 'senses').

We are given a clue to the meaning of the term *mynde* in a synonymic pair: abouen al knowyng & mynde (*DHD*, 4 / 3); and also in an antonymic collocation: wiþ affección abouen mynde (2 / 25—6). The phrase *abouen mynde* is also found in: to be knowing abouen mynde (5 / 24), & abouen mynde (6 / 28). The metaphorical expression *iþen of mynde* seems also to refer to its faculty of understanding.

Our *wittes* are physical or spiritual: þi bodely wittes (as heryng, seyng, smelling, taastyng, & touching) (3 / 2), þi goostly wittes, þe whiche ben clepid þin vnderstondable worchinges (3 / 3—4), goostly wittes of natureel philosophy (3 / 28).

Other synonyms *knowyng, vnderstongyng*, and *reson* are found in the following collocations: abouen alle substaunces and al manner knowyng (3 / 12), þe propre fourme in þi knowyng (3 / 15—6), (4 / 3), al knowable knowing (5 / 18); þe teermes & þe boundes of mans vnnderstondyng (5 / 1—2), abouen alle settyng & alle vnnderstondyng (8 / 26); reson & vnnderstondyng (9 / 11, 12), ne reson, ne vnnderstondyng (9 / 27—8), ne ... reson, ne vnnderstondyng (9 / 28).

Instances of *affección* are few, but it either stands in an antonymic relation to *mynde*, or in collocation with *derknes* 'unknowing';
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wiþ affeccioun (2/25—6), abouen mynde in affeccioun (3/15—6); entren wiþ affeccioun into derknes (4/26). Affeccioun is said to be ‘single’: in syngulertee of affeccioun (5/15).

In derknes we have the key-word by which we may be led to the understanding of what is meant in Deonise Hyd Diuinite. We will return to this question later, but here it suffices to quote the collocations in which the term is found.

These collocations sometimes enter into the relation of synonymy, and sometimes of antonymy, but sometimes again stand in the absolute meaning-relation without possible associations elsewhere.

An instance of synonymic consociation occurs in: þe derknes of vnknowing (5/17). Both terms are privative.

Other cases are antonymic: entren wiþ affeccioun into derknes (4/25), we entren into þe derknes þat is abouen mynde (8/13).

Where two usually antonymic terms enter into an immediate relation, we have a figure of irony, which abounds in this treatise: þe souereyn-schinyng derknes of wisest silence (2/20—1), for to schine priuely in þe derkyst (2/21—2), þis souereyn-schining derknes (5/27).

However, derknes is essentially an absolute idea in our author: þat souereyn-substancyal derknes (7/7). This concept is renamed in various ways elsewhere: þat vnknowyng (7/5), vnbigonne & euerlastyng Wysdome (2/14), þe souereyn-substancyal Jhesu (7/22). Souereyn-substancyal renders supersubstantialem of De Mystica Theologia: et supersubstantialem illam videamus caliginem ab omni lumine in existentibus occultatam.

The irony of darkness is sometimes buttressed by structural parallelism, in which framework the insistence of the idea is more impressively made: ... we foulden alle togeders & done hem awey, þat we mowen clerliche knowe þat vnknowyng,

þe which is wallid aboute from al knowable miȝtes in alle þees being þinges;

and þat we mowen see þat souereyn-substancyal derknes,
One of the more common patterns of expression in this treatise is dyadic. A dyadic formula is usually a medium for expressing synonymic, antonymic, or hyponymic meaning-relations.

The triadic pattern is also common as a framework for putting together related terms in a field of meaning: al worldly, fleschly, & kyndely likyng (3/14). It behouiþ us for to sette (‘attribute’), for to see, & for to afferme ... (4/1–2), ouerhid & ouerlappid & ouerleide (6/20), bot in oure deniinges we begynnen at þe leest, & stien up to þe moste, and ofstones by þe menes (7/2–3), þoo þinges þat ben & leuyn & lackyn felyng (9/8–9), and the inevitable Trinity: Faderheed & Sonheed & þe Holi Goostheed (7/16–7).

Another common pattern of sentence here is a construction of two paratactic phrases or clauses in antithetic meaning-relation: clene fro al wordly, fleschly, & kyndely likyng in þin affeccioun, and fro al þing þat may be known by þe propre fourme in þi knowing (3/15–7), bi cleer bodely siȝt of his outward iȝe, or ... by cleer crafte
of ymaginacioun (6/4, 6), What is þe skyle (‘reason’) whi þat in 
affirmatyue deuinitie we begynne at þe moost worþ þinges, & in þe 
negatyue deuinitie at þe leest worþ þinges? (8/22–4), etc.

The last quoted passage is followed by an exposition of what 
the writer calls negative divinity, i.e. the negative way of compreh-
ending Godhead.

Another pattern is a formless one of simple, but insistent cumu-
lution: how þat he is namyd Good, how Beyng, how Liif, how 
Wisdome, & how Vertewe, & what oþer þat þei be of þe vnderstand-
able namynges of God (7/26–8: an example of polyonomasia), 
able þe names... as whiche ben ..., whiche ben ..., whiche ben ..., 
whiche ben ..., whiche ben ..., whiche ben ..., & whiche ben ..., (7/30–8/3), & alle þoo þinges þat fallyn to body, 
or to bodely þinges — as is schap, fourme, qualitee, quantitee, wiȝt, 
steedlynes (‘local existence’), visibilitee, sensibilitee, & al doyng, & 
suffryng (9/13–5), where the physical attributes of matter are 
enumerated as in a scientilc treatise.

We notice that alliteration is only sparingly used in all these 
patterns of expression, in contrast to what we see in Richard Rolle. 
De Mystica Theologia is likewise free from this phonological device.

The language here is often metaphoric in the usual sense of the 
word, as when we call such phrases as ‘iȝen of þe mynde’ and ‘þe 
derknes of vnknowynge’ metaphors. Miss Hodgson directs our attention 
to the remarkable imagery of obstruction in: conielid (‘congealed’) as 
it were in a kumbros clog abouten hym (6/22–3), hid in þe þik, 
greet, sounde stok (6/23–4), ‘not in the Latin, but reminiscent of 
The Cloud.’ But metaphor in mystic language is distinguished from 
literary metaphor in its greater directness and power of pointing at 
the object of thought. And the more dominant tone on the surface is 
logicality.

One of the common features of logical prose is its use of 
expository language, or language of interpretation. This metalingual 
use of language may be observed in the phrase ‘that is to say’, or
‘Pat es at say’ of Richard Rolle. Our example from Deonis Hyd Diuinite follows: And ‘an he is assoild bope fro pe vnderstandable worching mi3tes of his soule, & fro pe obiectes of hem, ‘at is for to sey, alle ‘oo pinges in ‘e whiche ‘ei worchen (5 / 11—4).

Underneath this seeming logicality, however, we find frequently hidden the inner form, paradoxical in nature, as mystic language usually is.

We may return at this point to the above-quoted paradoxical idea of darkness which is shining, the seat of ‘vnbigonne & euerlastyng Wysdome’, ‘pe souereyn Good.’ It insistently stresses that the darkness of unknowing (7 / 5), or the ‘cloud of unknowing’ as it is elsewhere called, is full of light because it is where the unborn and everlasting Wisdom dwells. Because ‘alle ‘e pryue pinges of deuinitye ben kouerid and hid vnder ‘e souereyn-schinyng derknes of wisest silence, makyng ‘e souereyn-clerest souereynly for to schine priyely in ‘e derkyst’ (2 / 19—22).

This ‘godliche derknes’ is only reached when one relinquishes oneself and everything worldly and is freed from all that hampers and fetters one: ‘ou schalt be drawen up abouen mynde in affecioun to ‘e souereyn-substancyal beme of ‘e godliche derknes, alle pinges ‘us done awey(3 / 16—8), De Mystica Theologia: Etenim excessu tui ipsius et omnium irretentibili et abs01utO, munde ad supersubstantialem divinarum tenebrarum radium, cuncta auferens et a cunctis absolutus sursumageris. The English writer makes it clear here that this spiritual ascent is made ‘abouen mynde in affecioun’, that is, through an act of love. This interpretation reflects the same point of view expounded in what is generally known as Beniamyn: And ri3t as Rachel & Lya weren bope wyues to Jacob, ri3t so mans soule þorow li3t [of] knowyn in þe reson & swevenes of loue in þe affecioun; by Rachel is vnderstondden reson; by Lya is vnderstondden affecioun (12 / 9—13). Only, the emphasis is laid on ‘affecioun’, rather than ‘mynde’ in the former writer.

In another passage, after urging you to afirm as well as deny all
the existing things in the first cause, 'in him ἃτ is abouen al knowyng & mynde', the writer cautions you not to suppose that this denial and that affirmation are the opposites: (It behouiʃ us) not for to haue it in opinyon ἃτ ὑes deniinges of ὑes being ὑinges ben contrary to ἃτ first affermynges of hem, but fastliche for to holde in si3t of byleue him for to be abouen alle doyng awey of ὑes beyng or beable ὑinges, ὑe whiche in himself is abouen alle (4 / 7—10), De Mystica Theologia: (Oportet enim)et non negationes oppositas opinari esse affirmationibus, sed multo prius ipsam super privationes esse, quae est super omnem et ablationem et positionem. The absolute being is said to be above 'privations', doyng awey of all the existing or exist-ible beings, and above affermyng of them all.

The writer pursues his theme further in a strain of paradox: (Bartholomew says) ἃτ Cristes deuinitee, it is boʃe moche and it is leest; and ὑe Gospel is brode and moche, & eftsones he seib it is streite & litil (4 / 13—5). In ὑis souereyn-schining derknes we prey to be done up, &, bi nou3t seeyng & vnknowyng, for to see & for to knowe hym ἃτ is abouen al seing & al knowyng in ὑis same not se & not knowe (5 / 27—9), we foulden alle (i. e. beyng ὑinges) togeders & done hem awey, ἃτ we mowen cleerliche knowe ἃτ vnknowyng (7 / 4—5).

A striking fact that comes to our notice about the language used here is that the language of paradox is as often as not couched in that of negation, as some of our quotations already show.

II. The Language of Negation.

As we have already seen, our key-word derknes is typically privative, the concept of which E. Leisi introduced as long ago as 1953. It is synonymous with vnknowyn in ὑe derknes of vnknowyn, ὑe whiche derknes is vereliche hid. It is ὑe derknes ἃτ is abouen mynde', where 'we schul not onliche fynde ὑe schortyng of

words, but as it were a madnes & a parfite vnresonabilltee of alle pat we seyn’ (8/13—5). But it is at the same time the ‘derknes, where verely he ('Christ') is (4/25)’, and where Moses entered ‘for to fele in experience þe presence of hym þat is abouen alle þinges’ (5/19—20). It is this very same theme that The Cloud of Unknowing harps on. Derknes is thus symbolic of the shortage of words, of ‘a þing þat is vnspekable’. The language which speaks of this darkness must necessarily be a language of negation for shortness of words, as was precisely said.

Man makes ‘an ymage of his nakyd, vnmaad, & vnbigonne kynde’ (6/12—3). It is said: þat he is neiþer soule, ne aungel, ne he haþ fantasie, ne opinion, ne resoun, ne vnderstondyng; ne he is reson, ne vnderstanding; ne he is seyde, ne vnderstoneden (9/25—9), he is no noumbre, no ordre, ne greetnes, ne litylnes, ne euenehed, ne licnes, ne vnlicnes; ne he stondeþ, ne he moueþ, ne he holdeþ no sylence, ne he spekiþ (9/30—10/1). This manner of speaking is modeled exactly after the negative language of the Latin De Mystica Theologia: dicimus quod omnium causa neque est anima, neque mens; neque habet phantasiam inferiorem aut superiorem, neque rationem, neque intellectum; neque est ratio, neque intellectus; neque dicitur, neque intelligitur. / neque est numerus, neque ordo, neque magnitudo, neque parvitas, neque aequalitas, neque similitudo, neque dissimilitudo; neque stat, neque movetur. And it goes on interminably in the same mood.

we sey þat he haþ no vertewe, ne he is vertewe, ne liþt, ne he leuiþ, ne he is liif, ne he is substance, ne eelde, ne tyme, ... ne he is spirit after þat we vnderstonde spirit; ... ne he is anyþing of not-beyng þinges, ne anyþing of beyng þinges; ... (10/3—10 ff.); De Mystica Theologia: et in summis negationes terminemus, neque virtutem habet, neque est virtus, neque lumen, neque vivit, neque vita est; neque substantia est, neque aevum, neque tempus; ... neque spiritus secundum quod nos intelligimus spiritum, ... Sed neque Deus
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est aliquid non existentium, aut aliquid existentium;...

In the last line quoted, negation is antithetic and paradoxical, as also it is in the following lines: (the sovereign being is) wipinne alle creatures, not inclusid; wipouten alle creatures, not schit out; abouen alle creatures, not borne up; binebe alle creatures, not put doun; behynde alle creatures, not put bak; before alle creatures, not dreuen forþ (6 / 14—6).

This persistent form of recurrent negation immediately reminds us of the same pattern of negation of thought and language in some Oriental religious literature, particularly Indian. Two familiar names easily suggest themselves in this respect: the sutra generally attributed to Vimalakirti with its philosophy of Absolute Equality and the Bhagavadgītā, the sacred song incorporated within the epic of the Mahābhārata.

In fact, there is only a faint trace of this negative language in The Cloud of Unknowing, where negation is no more than a simple denial when the writer speaks of things negatively at all. Instances are very few even here: & do þat in þee is to for3ete alle þe crea_t[u]res þat euer God maad & þe werkes of hem, so þat þi þouȝt ne þi desire be not directe ne streche to any of hem, neiþer in general ne in special. Bot lat hem be, & take no kepe (‘heed’) to hem (16 / 6—9). 14) According to the author of this book, man stands between the two poles of knowledge, a cloud of unknowing and a cloud of forgetting: þee þinkeþ, parauenture, þat þou arte ful fer fro God, forþi þat þis cloude of vnknowing is bitwix þee & þi God; bot sekirly, & it be wel conseuyed, þou arte wel ferþer fro hym when þou hast nO cloude of forȝetyng bitwix þee & alle þe creatures þat euer ben maad (24 / 4—8). 15)

More congenial is the negative way of thinking to the old Indian philosophy, with its logic of reconciling being with non-being. In the Bhagavadgītā, Kṛṣṇa, the highest god of Brahmanism, reveals to

Arjuna, prince of the Bharatas, the secrets of the ways of entering into the world of the Absolute, initiating him in the knowledge of the Most High. The term 'aum' stands for this inexpressible Absolute, the unmanifested eternal being, from which all the manifested beings are derived (Bh., VIII.18.1). This unmanifested being is also called the Imperishable.

21. avyakto ksara ity uktas.
(This Unmanifested is called the Imperishable.)
The imperishable father of the world speaks to Arjuna in these words:

IX. 19. 3—4 amrtam ca 'va mṛtyuḥ ca
sad asac cā 'ham arjuna
(I am immortality and also death,
I am being as well as non-being, O Arjuna.)
The Blessed Lord also promises freedom from all sins to

X. 3. 1—2 yo mām ajam anādim ca
vetti lokamāheśvaram
(He who knows Me, the unborn, without beginning,
also the mighty lord of the worlds)

Arjuna, in turn, addresses the Lord in various terms, which assert the multiple attributes of this perfect being, much as Richard Rolle does: arjuna uvāca

X. 12 param brahma param dhāma
pavitram paramam bhavān
purusāṁ śāśvataṁ divyam
ādidevam ajāṁ vibhum
(Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode
and the Supreme Purifier, the Eternal, Divine
Person, the First of the gods, the Unborn, the
All-pervading.)

The Śrībhagavān himself speaks elsewhere in a language of assertion, reminiscent of the *Revelations*:

X. 20. 3—4 aham ādīś ca madhyaṁ ca
bhūtānām anta eva ca.

(I am the beginning, the middle and the very end of beings.)

With regard to cumulative negation in Indian philosophy or literature, K. Kunjunni Raja says: "In the ordinary sense of the word the Absolute is beyond definition.... When Brahman is described as Intelligence, Bliss, etc., It is described by means of a name, form or action superimposed on It. If we want to describe Its true nature free from the difference due to the limiting adjuncts, it is an impossibility. The only way is by negation, 'Not this, not this'. However, it is possible for words to suggest meanings and ideas beyond the range of their expressive power."\(^ {17}\)

It is in order to supply this 'schortyng of wordes' (*DHD.*, 8 / 14) that they have resorted to the language of negation. It strives to attain to the knowledge of ‘he souereyn-schinyng hei3t (*DHD.*, 2 / 18), of the transcendency of ‘he moost hi3e hei3t abouen alle, bo3e settyng & doyng away’. Even negation in itself is not the last resort in this attempt. The author of *Deonise Hyd Diuinite* concludes: "And his not-vnderstondable ouerpassyng is vn-vnderstondably abouen alle affermyng and deniinge" (10 / 21—23).

It is strange to think how this negative principle still manifests itself in the modern God-forsaken world, where, as Georg Lukács observes,\(^ {18}\) this our quietly decaying life would become aware of a lack of substance in itself only when men fall prey to the power of the demon and overreach themselves in some unreasonable ways. In these godless times, the writer's irony is that he does not go beyond

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“a portrayal of the kindly and malicious workings of the demons, a refusal to comprehend more than the mere fact of these workings; and in it,” Lukács continues, “there is the deep certainty, expressible only by form-giving, that through not-desiring-to-know and not-being-able-to-know he has truly encountered, glimpsed and grasped the ultimate, true substance, the present, non-existent God.”

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