



Raphaela Sophia Rohrhofer

Familial Discourses in *The Book of Margery Kempe*

“Blyssed be the wombe that the bar
and the tetys that yaf the sowkyn”

Table of Contents

1. Proem.....	13
2. Medieval Spirituality.....	19
2.1. Mysticism – A Concise Analysis.....	19
2.1.1. The Ladder Symbolising the Ascent to God.....	22
2.1.2. <i>Vita activa</i> and <i>vita contemplativa</i>	23
2.1.3. Stages of Ascension	26
2.1.4. <i>Theologia apophatike</i> and <i>theologia kataphatike</i>	33
2.2. Female Spirituality in the Middle Ages	37
2.2.1. Affective Devotion.....	39
2.2.2. Ascetism.....	44
2.2.3. Laic Female Spirituality and the Formation of Groups	47
2.2.4. The Feminisation of Sainthood.....	48
2.2.5. Female Mysticism: Textualisation and Critique.....	49
2.2.6. Female Mysticism and Hysteria.....	55
3. The Book of Margery Kempe	61
3.1. Questions of Author, Scribe, Genre and Style	61
3.2. Contemporaneous and Recent Theories Surrounding the Medieval Family.....	88
3.3. The Representation of the Earthly Family in <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	95
3.3.1. The Representation of the Kempes' Marriage.....	95
3.3.1.1. The Concept of the Marriage Debt, the Chastity Agreement; Abstinence and Spiritual Marriage.....	106

3.3.1.2. Old Age, Senility and Excrements: Lynn's Society and Conflict.....	109
3.3.1.3. John Kempe, the Cult of St Joseph and the "New Man"	112
3.3.2. Childbirth, Children and Medieval Parenthood in <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	113
3.4. The Representation of the Holy Family in <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	121
3.4.1. The Practice of Adapting Familial Concepts to Designate Religious Relationships.....	121
3.4.2. Jesus' Multifacetedness in His Relationship with the Female Visionary.....	121
3.4.2.1. Love and Desire between Margery Kempe and Jesus; The Soul as Their New Home.....	125
3.4.2.2. Divine Effects on Margery Kempe's Senses.....	128
3.4.2.3. The Tokens of Divine Love.....	130
3.4.2.4. Hurtful Effects of Christ's Love; <i>Imitatio Christi</i> and Hardships Imposed on the Visionary.....	131
3.4.2.4.1. Fervent Desire for the <i>mors mystica</i>	131
3.4.2.4.2. Divine Withdrawal and Spiritual Draught.....	131
3.4.2.4.2.1. Reasons and Benefits	132
3.4.2.4.3. The <i>charisma lacrimarum, imitatio Christi</i> and <i>imitatio Mariae</i>	133
3.4.2.4.4. Doubts and <i>discretio spirituum</i> ; White Clothes and Virginal Dress.....	137
3.4.2.4.5. Fraudulent Food and Episcopal Bread: Food Practices, the Host and Christ's Body	138
3.4.2.4.6. Pilgrimage.....	139

3.4.3. The Broken Seal Restored: The Concept of Honorary Virginity	143
3.4.4. Spiritual Climax: The Mystical Marriage to the Godhead – and to Christ?	143
3.4.5. Mary and the (Extended) Divine Family of All Saints.....	145
3.5. Margery Kempe’s Spiritual Family	148
4. Epilogue.....	155
5. Bibliography.....	157
5.1. Primary Sources	157
5.2. Secondary Sources	159
6. Index.....	171

