

AESTHETIC PLEASURE AND NEGATIVE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE
IN THE *OLD ENGLISH MARTYROLOGY*

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on recent research on aesthetic emotions and folk aesthetics, the purpose of this paper is to look into the way aesthetic pleasure and negative aesthetic experience are described and rendered in the *Old English Martyrology* (OEM). Using different Old English lexical tools and an edition of the OEM with a translation, this paper analyses these two aesthetic responses taking into consideration the context of the composition of the text and the possibility that it was aimed towards the emotional education of a particular religious community. It argues that, to a certain extent, the author of the OEM standardises the aesthetic experiences that they narrate, both positive and negative, and associates them with particular religious and doctrinal messages that are aimed at providing sensory inputs through which the conceptualisation of abstract and religious experiences is facilitated.

Keywords: Old English; *Old English Martyrology*; aesthetic emotions; aesthetic pleasure; negative aesthetic experience.

1. Introduction²

Over the last years, the study of aesthetic emotions (Fingerhut & Prinz 2018, 2020; Menninghaus et al. 2019, to name a few) and folk aesthetics (e.g., Gladkova & Romero-Trillo 2021) has bloomed. The appearance of these new theoretical ideas and methodologies has provided tools to explore and tackle the study of aesthetic concepts and experiences in ancient languages, cultures, and their literatures.

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However, as has been discussed in previous research (Franzen 2012: 1; Minaya Gómez 2020, 2021a) the study of aesthetic experience in certain textual and literary contexts like Old English literature remains a relatively unexplored field, with the exception of a few publications. Previous research (Minaya Gómez 2021a, 2022) has explored the numerous attestations of aesthetic emotion markers and the importance of aesthetic experience in Old English poetry. In the field of Old English, and from different theoretical angles, certain researchers like Dailey (2012) have looked into the relation between some aesthetic emotions (wonder, in this case) and a precise textual genre (the riddles). Other Old English scholars like Ramey (2017) have focused on particular terms, like OE *wrætlīc*, while some authors have analysed specific motifs, like the aesthetics of nostalgia in Trilling (2009), or the aesthetic qualities of selected poems, as in the contributions to Hill's (2010) volume.

Nevertheless, whilst most of the works cited above focus on texts of a poetic nature, no Old English scholar has looked into how aesthetic experience is discussed and lexically rendered in prose, despite the fact that certain genres are likely to include insightful descriptions of aesthetic emotion episodes. For instance, previous research (Minaya Gómez 2019) has shown that OE *fæger* is attested ten times more frequently in verse than in prose. However, it is also true that the attestations of these terms in prose are most frequently found in a specific genre: hagiography. As such, the purpose of this paper is to perform an analysis of two important aesthetic responses, aesthetic pleasure and negative aesthetic experience, and the terminology through which they are described and evoked in one of "the longest and most important prose texts written in Anglo-Saxon England" (Rauer 2013a: 1), the *Old English Martyrology* (OEM). Drawing on previous studies on the usage of lexical aesthetic emotion markers in the poetic genre, the purpose of this paper is to establish key differences in their usage, to look into their contexts of application, and to try to identify strategies behind their usage that could point to intentional evocations of these aesthetic emotions in connection with specific spiritual or religious messages. This paper, furthermore, offers an insight into how the ongoing research on the conceptualisation of (aesthetic) emotions can offer new perspectives on the study of medieval texts.

2. Recent research on aesthetic emotions

'Aesthetic emotion' is a label that refers to those emotional experiences that are triggered by the non-pragmatic properties of an object. Scherer (2005: 707) describes some of the general characteristics of aesthetic emotions, and one of them is central to create a working definition of this term: unlike utilitarian emotions (i.e., those emotions that are crucial for the survival of the individual,

like fear), aesthetic emotions show an absence of utilitarian functions. While aesthetic emotions behave like utilitarian emotions in many other respects, the key difference between them resides in the nature of the evaluation that takes place during the aesthetic emotion episode. This evaluation is influenced by how the subject appraises the object, and, in fact, drawing on the Appraisal Theory (Roseman & Smith 2001: 3) several scholars have developed appraisal theories of aesthetic emotions (Menninghaus et al. 2019: 179–180). This theory fundamentally posits that aesthetic objects are likely to be appraised as appealing when they are familiar, novel, albeit following familiar patterns, exciting, intrinsically pleasant, and congruent with the goals of the subject.

More specifically, Fingerhut & Prinz (2020) divide aesthetic emotions into different sub-families, highlighting the characteristics of each emotion and the appraisals and contexts in which they are most commonly found. One of these families of emotion is relevant to this analysis of the *Old English Martyrology*. Fingerhut & Prinz (2020: 229) point out the family of “emotions of pleasure”, which includes aesthetic pleasure, attraction, and fluency. This is a family of emotions that typically entails no tendencies for active action. From this sub-family, the emotion of AESTHETIC PLEASURE stands out as one of the most important because it is related to the notion of beauty frequently found in hagiography. Cognitively speaking, aesthetic pleasure and beauty are often discussed through the Processing Fluency Theory (Reber, Schwartz & Winkielman 2004), which claims that objects, people, and circumstances are experienced positively if they are easy to process. In this framework, beauty is understood as an appraisal that elicits and precedes AESTHETIC PLEASURE. Other researchers, however, Armstrong & Detweiler-Bedell (2008: 326) for instance, claim that THE EXPERIENCE OF BEAUTY qualifies as a separate aesthetic emotion, differentiating it from mild aesthetic pleasure. For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that there is an intrinsic, and often ambiguous, link between the emotions of THE EXPERIENCE OF BEAUTY and AESTHETIC PLEASURE, and, furthermore, attestations of terms rendering ‘beauty’ in Old English will be taken as indicative of the experience of AESTHETIC PLEASURE.

The theories of aesthetic emotion proposed by, among others, Menninghaus et al. (2019) and Fingerhut & Prinz (2020), however, neglect to take into consideration the negative side of aesthetic experience. Other aesthetic emotions commonly found in Old English literature include the experience of ugliness (Minaya Gómez *forthc.*) or aesthetic disgust (Minaya Gómez 2022). In this respect and regarding the analysis of the negative aesthetic emotions in the *Old English Martyrology*, this study relies on the theoretical frameworks for negative aesthetic emotions developed by Olatunji & Sawchuk (2005) and Silvia & Brown (2007). This analysis relies, more particularly, on Silvia & Brown’s (2007: 48) idea that “appraising an event as incongruent and aversive

is the core of disgust” and Olatunji & Sawchuk’s (2005: 935) subdivision of moral disgust, which, as Minaya Gómez (2022) showed, was the central negative aesthetic emotion in Old English verse. All in all, these studies from the disciplines of cognitive linguistics and psychology provide solid theoretical and methodological frameworks for the literary study of the conceptualisation and expression of aesthetic emotion in the *Old English Martyrology*.

3. The *Old English Martyrology* and its background

The *Old English Martyrology* (OEM) is a text with a long scholarly background. It has been analysed with regard to its particular characteristics and to the way it relates to other hagiographical writings, vernacular and foreign, from the early medieval English period. Rauer (2013a: 1) tells us that it was possibly “intended as a reference work” and its main aim “must have been to educate Anglo-Saxon readers in the cults of native and foreign saints”. The OEM also provides other “detailed information on time measurement, the season of the year, biblical events, and cosmology” (Rauer 2013a: 1). The OEM is particularly relevant as far as aesthetic experience is concerned because, even though its focus is to contextualise a particular saint or saints in terms of date of birth or death, it also provides information about saints’ lives, physical aspects, and, most importantly, about the wonders that they performed while they were alive and, in some cases, after death.

The importance of the text’s educational aim should not be overlooked. Herzfeld (1900) before Rauer (2013b) suggested that this text was intended as an inventory of materials for preachers, and, indeed, while it might have been intended to preach and teach about saintly worship, it is important to bear in mind that the text also does this by means of emotion-regulation scripts (Menninghaus et al. 2017), i.e., the practice of a particular textual or literary genre to trigger emotions by dint of particular narrative strategies. Stodnick (2013: 32) also discusses the usage of these “repeated narrative motifs” throughout the OEM. As will be discussed below, the usage of lexis for aesthetic evaluation will similarly serve to associate moral ideas with aesthetic judgments, as has been discussed in the context of the Old English poetic corpus (Minaya Gómez 2019). It is, therefore, safe to assume that, while the OEM is heavily reliant on Latin hagiography, there will also be a degree of originality in the lexical choices of this particular Old English author (or authors), which will be reflective of culture-specific mappings and conceptualisations and that will reveal, to some degree, a literary style that is employed when discussing aesthetic ideas and the emotions that they trigger or seek to trigger.

4. Methodology

In order to carry out this research, several lexical tools have been employed, the main two being the *Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE) and the platform Evoke, developed by Stolk (2018),³ with the datasets of the vocabulary of the OEM developed by Porck (2021). The online interface of the TOE was consulted in order to produce preliminary lists with the terms that would function as markers of aesthetic emotion in the OEM. To do this, the lexical items have been distributed in two main categories: lexis for beauty and pleasant personal experience, generally found under the labels **7.10 Beauty, fairness** (TOE, s.v. *Opinion*, 7) and **8.1.1.3.9 Pleasantness, agreeableness** (TOE, s.v. *Good feeling, joy, happiness*, 8.1.1.3); and terms for ugliness and negative aesthetic experience in the categories of **7.10.2 Ugliness** (TOE, s.v. *Beauty, fairness*, 7.10) and **8.1.3.7 Unpleasantness** (TOE, s.v. *Bad feeling, sadness*, 8.1.3.). Using Porck's (2021) dataset and Evoke, I have identified the terms in these categories that occur in the OEM. These have thereafter been looked up in the Dictionary of Old English (DOE) and the Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (BWT) in order to refine their definitions and to ascertain whether the emotional sense is the dominant sense or a secondary sense, which ultimately depends on whether the dictionary lists it as a main or secondary sense.⁴

Even though these emotional responses are just some of the common aesthetic emotions that are described in literature on aesthetic emotions, they are the most recurrent in the hagiographical genre. These emotions are in fact at the core of the hagiographical genre, and they are essentially central to the OEM, not only considering its literary value, but also the way these emotions might have been triggered intentionally as part of commonly shared literary and doctrinal strategies that would have contributed to the creation of emotional communities, an idea explored by Rosenwein (2007). On the one hand, this research is based on the notion that the OEM is a text produced in a particular religious community, which, to a certain extent, would resemble an emotional community, defined by Rosenwein (2007: 2) as “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value—or devalue—of the same or related emotions.” On the other hand, it will also be assumed that the OEM was intended to associate the narration of a given saint's life with the prototypical emotional responses that it was expected to elicit in the framework of Christianity and its values through the

³ See Khan et al. (2021) for more on the usage of Evoke in mapping conceptual variation in Old English.

⁴ This approach is consistent with other studies in the field of emotional expressions in Old English, e.g., Díaz-Vera (2021, 2022). In accordance with these studies, if the emotional sense is secondary, it will be assumed that the expression is figurative, rather than a literal term of emotion.

usage of particular lexical markers for said emotion and that, in this sense, the OEM operates as a source of emotional education.

This paper is structured in two main blocks, roughly corresponding to these two emotional responses. The first section explores the general emotion of AESTHETIC PLEASURE. In it, the main attestations of the terms for beauty and aesthetic pleasure will be analysed. For this particular field, this study relies heavily on previous research on the lexical domain of BEAUTY and its metaphors (Minaya Gómez 2021a). In this sense the main terms under analysis here are OE *fæger* (and related terms such as the adverb OE *fægere* and the noun *fægernes*) and OE *wlitig*, all of which refer prototypically to beauty. Additional terms in this category include OE *wynsum*, which refers to pleasant personal experience triggered via proximity senses, and which is fundamentally employed in descriptions of smell.

Regarding negative aesthetic experience, it is worth mentioning that previous research has been unable to determine the core constituents of an Old English literary model for ugliness and unpleasant personal experience, as discussed in Minaya Gómez (2022). Instead, different Old English terms operate as markers of negative aesthetic experience. Some of them prototypically refer to negative aesthetic experience, such as OE *fīl* ‘loathsome’, *unclāne* ‘unclean, dirty’, or *lāð(lic)* ‘loathsome, repulsive’, but in other cases terms from other domains are used in order to describe what is unpleasant to the senses, such as OE *grimm* ‘grim, terrible’ or awe-related lexis.

Considering the nature of this research and the length of the text analysed in it, this study does not directly rely on corpus linguistic methods, and in any case the index in Rauer’s (2013a) edition of the OEM makes it possible to find most of these specific markers of aesthetic emotion in the text for their subsequent close reading. Because the OEM is a relatively manageable text in terms of length, the methodology for this study entails the creation of a database to which the occurrences of these terms are imported. This is aimed at, on the one hand, keeping a tally of the number of occurrences and, on the other hand, at arranging the excerpts in which these occurrences are found alongside the citation number. In this sense, the research reported here is data-driven and, therefore, may provide an insight as to the stylistic choices of the author of the OEM as far as aesthetic emotion terminology is concerned.

5. Aesthetic pleasure and the experience of beauty

Previous research on the lexical domain of BEAUTY in Old English verse (Minaya Gómez 2021a) has established that one of the most common figurative options found in descriptions of a person’s beauty in Old English relied on an

association between the physical quality of beauty and a person's morality, at least in the case of religious texts. This metaphor is also discussed in Harbus (2012: 61), THE EXTERNAL IS AN INDEX OF THE INTERNAL. In most of the Old English poetic corpus, terms for beauty are used as substitutes for terms for morality. Through allusions to a person's beauty it is inferred that this person is of an impeccable moral integrity.

Quite surprisingly, however, the attestations of the terms in the lexical domain of BEAUTY in the OEM emphasise physicality that is absent in other poetic writings. There is a deliberate stress on the fact that saints are physically beautiful, not only spiritually. Consider the following examples:

(1) *Da æfter syxtigum dagum, þa heo ut eode of þam <carcerne>, þa wæs hire ansin swa reod and swa **fæiger** s<wa> **winsummestan** fæmnan þonne heo **fægerost** bið* (2, Anastasia)

Then after sixty days, when she left prison, her face was as red and as beautiful as that of the prettiest virgin at her most beautiful (Rauer 2013a: 35).

(2) *He wæs **fæger** on ansyne ond <angellic>, and his eagan wæron swelce sunnan leoma* (97, Erasmus)

He was good-looking in appearance and angelic, and his eyes were like rays of sunshine (Rauer 2013a: 110)

(3) *Þa hi þæt noldon, þa het he hi nacode sendan on wildra deora geweald. Þa weop eall Romana dugoð for þære dæde, forþon þa weras wæron **wlitige** ond **fægres** lichoman. Ða noldon þa wildan deor him onhrinan for Godes ege, ac þurh oþerne martyrdom hi heora lifgeendedon, ond hira lichoman restað on Rome.* (139, Abdon and Sennes)

When they refused, he ordered them to be handed over into the power of wild animals, naked. Then the whole Roman senate wept because of that deed, because the men were handsome and beautiful of body. Then the wild animals would not touch them for fear of God, but they ended their lives through another martyrdom, and their bodies rest in Rome (Rauer 2013a: 149).

In the above excerpts the saints' moral qualities or divinity are assumed and, instead, the author carries out not a cognitive evaluation, but an aesthetic evaluation that takes as a source sensory material. Saint Anastasia, for instance, is deprived of food or water and subjected to torture, even though the spirit of Saint Theodota visits her and brings her sustenance. The imprisonment and lack of *eorðlicne mete* 'earthly food' does not affect her and so, when she leaves the prison on her way to her martyrdom, her beauty is described through lexis for beauty, but also making reference to the emotion that sight of her elicits, i.e., aesthetic pleasure (OE *wynsum* 'pleasant'). Rauer (2013a: 229) points out that the reference to redness is an instance of mistranslation on the part of the martyrologist, who mistakes Latin *robur* 'strength' for Latin *rubor* 'redness'.

Saint Erasmus' (2) beauty is not directly related to the experience of martyrdom, but is simply descriptive of his appearance, compared to the angels (OE *engellic*), and said to be bright like the sun. This luminous beauty is one of the traits that is traditionally attributed to the angels and other divine beings and, as was shown in Minaya Gómez (2021a), sometimes expressed not through terms for beauty but through terms for light through processes of metaphorisation. The beauty of Saints Abdon and Sennes is similarly emphasised through two synonymous terms, OE *fæger* and *wlitig*, and it even gave rise to a strong emotional reaction from those who beheld them on the way to their martyrdom. In these three cases the emphasis on physicality is reinforced through OE *on ansyne* 'of appearance, in the face' and *lichaman* 'in the body', as well as through reference to specific body parts, such as the eyes.

The physical beauty of saints that are subjected to torture is, furthermore, developed in the description of Saint Lawrence's martyrdom:

(4) *Ond æt nehstan he hine het aþenian on irenum bedde, ond hine cwicne hirstan ond brædan. Ond swa hine mon ma hirste, swa wæs he fægera on ondwlitan* (151, Lawrence).

And eventually he ordered him to be stretched out on an iron bed, and roasted and fried alive. And the more they roasted him, the more glorious he was to look at (Rauer 2013a: 159)

This excerpt establishes a direct connection between a saint's holiness and outer physically observable appearance. The more that the saint is burned alive and tortured, the more appealing he is to look at. Beauty is, therefore, indicative of holiness. In other cases, however, the experience of beauty takes place after the saint's death, as is the case of Saint Eulalia's martyrdom:

(5) *And sona swa hig man heafdode, þa com þær fæger culfre of þam lichaman and fleah ymbe þone lichaman and hyne freode, and þa fleah to heofenum* (234, Eulalia).

And as soon as she had been beheaded, a beautiful dove came from the body and flew around the body and touched it gently and then flew to heaven (Rauer 2013a: 223).

After the saint dies, a beautiful dove that symbolises her spirit emerges from her body and sets her free. The emotional experience here is triggered both by the imagined beauty of the dove and also due to the knowledge that, in the Christian framework, the dove represents her spirit. This is not the only example of doves that representing holy spirits in the OEM, albeit it is the only case in which they are included in an explicit aesthetic evaluation, equating the beauty of the animal with the beauty of the spirit of the dead saint.

Other excerpts from the OEM employ terms for beauty in different ways, for example, to establish a difference between earthly and heavenly beauty. In Saint Adrian's entry (38) the OEM narrates the way his wife, Natalia, instructs him not to "allow any worldly beauty to change his way of thinking" (Rauer 2013a: 61). This excerpt employs the compound OE *woruldfægerness* 'worldly beauty' in order to do this. Conversely, other passages establish a hierarchy between earthly beauty and heavenly beauty, emphasising the superior beauty of the latter over the former, as is the case of the entry on Saint Theodota, who instructs Saint Anastasia on heavenly beauty in entry number 2. More specifically and concerning things on earth that are beautiful, the only man-made objects that are described as beautiful in the OEM are monasteries and churches, some of which eventually come to hold the saints' bodies after death. Some examples of this are the monastery that Saint Fursa (21) builds among the East Angles, called Cnobheresburh, or the beautiful church where Saint Saturninus (231) is buried.

Regarding aesthetic pleasure and its main literal denominator, OE *wynsum*, there is an episode in Christian history described through this Old English term in both prose and verse. In Minaya Gómez (2021a: 231) the way the discovery of the True Cross by Saint Helena involved an episode of aesthetic emotion in which the cross emits a pleasant scent from below the ground is discussed; a comparison between the Latin source upon which the Old English poem *Elene* is widely acknowledged to have been based and the Old English poem itself demonstrates a preference of this Old English author to employ lexis denoting subjective aesthetic experience rather than descriptive terminology aimed at describing the characteristics of this smell. This is also the case of two attestations of OE *wynsum* in the OEM that describe the smell emitted by the cross:

(6) *Seo Cristes rod, on þa he wæs ahongen, is on ðære byrig Constantinapole on cirican, and on treowenre ceste belocen. Ond ðonne seo cest bið onlocen, þonne cymð ðær upp wunderlic stenc and swa wynsum, swa þær syn ealle blostman gesamnod. Ond of þæm ostum ðæs treowes floweð ut swetes stences wæte, se <o> hafað eles onlicnesse. Gif mon ðæs wætan ænne lytelne dropan seleð untrumum mæn, him bið sona sel.* (56, Annunciation Day, The Crucifixion)

Christ's cross, on which he was hanged, is in the city of Constantinople in a church, and shut away in a wooden box. And when the box is opened, a nice smell comes out, so wonderful as if there were all blossoms gathered together. And from the knots of the tree trickles a sweet-smelling liquid, which is similar to oil. When you give one small drop of the liquid to a sick man, he recovers immediately (Rauer 2013a: 75).

(7) *Ðær com upp of ðære eorðan wynsumes stences rec; ðær seo rod wæs gemeted* (77, The Discovery of the Holy Cross)

The scent of a wonderful smell came out of the ground there; there the cross was found (Rauer, 2013a: 95).

Excerpt number (6) details the final resting place of Christ's cross and the sensory characteristics that it has. The smell it emits is described through two markers of aesthetic emotion, OE *wynsum*, indicating aesthetic pleasure, and OE *wundorlic*, denoting wonder, in this case resulting from positive aesthetic experience. The smell is compared to that of flowers (OE *blōstma*). Through synaesthetic language, the liquid that the cross exudes is also said to have a sweet smell (OE *swetes stences*). Example (7) is to be found in a factual and relatively straight-forward entry that describes the discovery of the True Cross. In it the reference to a pleasant smell (OE *wynsumes stences*) is aimed not at triggering aesthetic experience or at describing somebody's embodied experience, but it simply indicates the way the cross was found by means of this smell. This instrumental usage of terms for aesthetic emotion clashes with the way the same episode is narrated in the Old English *Elene*, in which aesthetic experience is central to Saint Helena's discovery of the cross.

A more in-depth examination of the couplet *wynsum stenc* 'pleasant smell' in the OEM, however, demonstrates a narrative strategy that may further illuminate the usage of OE *wynsum* in the preceding two excerpts. This formula and this narrative recourse, or narrative motif, in accordance with Stodnick's (2013: 32) terminology, are typically found in the OEM in descriptions of the circumstances surrounding the saints' deaths:

(8) *ƿa het he hi slean mid sweorde, ond hi ƿa onsendon heora gastas, ond ƿær ƿa com micel **wynsum stenc**. Ond Cristne men bebyrgdon heora lichoman on ðæm ylcan scræfe ƿær hi ær Gode ƿeowedon* (103, Ferreolus and Ferrucio)

Then he commanded them to be killed with the sword, and they then gave up the ghost, and there came a powerful, pleasant smell then. And Christians buried their bodies in the same cave where they had previously served God (Rauer 2013a: 117).

(9) *Ƣa sona com fleogan of ðam carcerne snawhwit culfre, ond seo fleah to heofenum. Ond ðær com to ðam lichoman swyðe **wynsum stenc**, ond eac fyrhto mid* (220, Benignus).

Then suddenly a snow-white dove came flying from the prison, and it flew to heaven. And there came a very pleasant smell over the dead body, and also awe (Rauer 2013a: 211).

(10) *Ƣa he his gast asende, ƿa wæs in ƿam huse wynsum stenc, swa hit wære mid eallum deorweorþum wyrtum gefylled, ond his lichama resteð in Sithio ƿam minstre* (181, Audomarus)

When he gave up the ghost, there was a wonderful smell in the house, as if it had been filled with all precious spices, and his body rests in the monastery of Sithiu (Rauer 2013a: 179).

In these three instances, a saint's death is followed by a pleasant smell, though it is unclear whether this smell is emitted by the saints' bodies or whether it is external.

Example (8) and (10) seem to suggest that the former is more likely. Indeed, in the Old English poetic corpus, the emission of pleasant smells on the part of Jesus and other religious figures is not entirely uncommon. As is explained in the DOE, in the entry for OE *æpele*, sweet or pleasant smells may be used figuratively to indicate “the odour of sanctity and of the resurrected Christ” (DOE, s.v. *æpele*, adj., 3.d.). In these three cases, as well as in the two previous, this pleasant smell serves to conceptualise in simple sensory terms the abstract idea of sanctity through an accessible and approachable stimulus. While it is natural to associate death and bodily decay with the experience of disgust (cf. Minaya Gómez 2022), when the figures that are described in the OEM die, since they are saints and have a divine standing, their sanctity is manifested by this pleasant smell that furthermore and in the context of these narratives indicates that their martyrdom has elevated them to the status of saints. These attestations still reflect the figurative recourse THE EXTERNAL IS AN INDEX OF THE INTERNAL (Harbus 2012: 61) in the sense that, as well as being beautiful inside and outside, this beauty and this aesthetic pleasure are not only manifested through and rendered by visual stimuli, but also through olfactory cues. As example (9) indicates, these aesthetic and divine experiences are also experienced, or should have been experienced, by the onlookers with AMAZEMENT, as OE *fyrhtu* “fear, dread; awe” but also “astonishment, amazement” (DOE, s.v. *fyrhtu*, n., 1 and 1.c.) attests.

Besides the visual and the olfactory, there is only one additional instance that includes the usage of OE *wynsum* related to aesthetic experience. This is the case of entry number 37, devoted to Saint Chad. In this entry, Saint Chad’s arrival in Heaven is described as follows:

(11) *ond openlice Godes englas læddon hine mid **wynsume** sange to heofonum*
 (37, Chad)
 and God’s angels openly led him under jubilant song to heaven (Rauer 2013a: 61).

In this case OE *wynsum* refers to the song of the angels and again, rather than describing it in objective terms, it uses this Old English term, which is prototypically associated with the experience of bodily (aesthetic) pleasure, to describe the way this song would have or should have been experienced and the emotions it would have or should have elicited.

All things considered, it is evident that the terms described in this section operate mainly in the visual dimension, while OE *wynsum* is also found in excerpts involving aesthetic evaluations through proximity senses. It is worth mentioning that the lexical domains of beauty and aesthetic pleasure are not extremely frequent in this text, considering the length of the OEM, as Table 1 indicates.

Table 1. Occurrences of terms for beauty and aesthetic pleasure in the OEM.

Term	Translation	N° of occurrences
<i>fægerness</i>	‘beauty’	3
<i>fæger(e)</i>	‘beautiful/ly’	12 + 1
<i>wlitig</i>	‘beautiful’	4
<i>wynsum</i>	‘pleasant’	7

With OE *fæger* as the main term employed to refer to what is beautiful, it becomes clear that, judging by the low number of attestations of the terms in this lexical domain, narrating and describing the experience of beauty was not the main concern of the author of the OEM. When this is the case, as the above excerpts emphasise, the purpose of the author is to reinforce the saints’ physical beauty, or the objects and circumstances connected with them, as further indicators of their inner goodness and divinity or to instruct potential audiences on the emotions that the death of the saints are supposed to elicit.

6. Negative aesthetic experience

As has been mentioned above, the nature of the negative aesthetic experiences that are depicted in the OEM vary and, to a certain extent, resemble those found in texts of a poetic nature. While poetic texts employ a different range of terms to describe what is unpleasant to the senses, they nevertheless feature terms for disgust as the main components of the poetic formulaic style in evocations of negative emotions that have a symbolic transcendence (Minaya Gómez 2022). This, however, is not the practice of the author of the OEM. Instead, they aim to elicit a negative aesthetic experience by dint of negative stimuli, without necessarily alluding to the emotions that these stimuli seek to elude. For the purpose of this discussion, negative aesthetic experience in the OEM will be best analysed categorizing occurrences by the nature of their stimuli.

Visually speaking, the notion of uncleanness is commonly found in passages that seek to elicit a negative response, for example, in entry number 34 on Saint Babylas, in which a bishop explains that he is locking the door of his church against the emperor Numerian because he has polluted hands (OE *ðu hafast besmitene handa*), or in the following excerpt where a visual depiction of Adam’s tomb is offered:

(12) *Adam lifde her on wræcsiðe nigan hund geara ond ðritig geara, ond his ban syndon bebyrged noht feorr be eastan ðære byrig ðe is nemned Cebron, ond him is ðæt heafod suð gewend ond þa fet norð, ond seo byrgen is bewrigen mid **dimmum stanum** ond **yfellicum*** (53, The Sixth Day of Creation, Adam and Eve)

‘Adam lived here in exile for nine hundred and thirty years, and his bones are buried not far east of the city called Hebron, and his head is pointing south and his feet north, and the grave is covered with horrible dark stones’ (Rauer 2013a: 73).

In this passage Adam’s grave is described with one term for visual perception, OE *dimm* “dark, without light, dimly illuminated” (DOE, s.v. *dimm*, adj., 1.), which also operates as a marker of evil: “4. dark, gloomy, dreadful, dismal, spiritually dark or wicked” (DOE, s.v. *dimm*, adj., 4.). His grave is also depicted with another adjective that refers not to visual perception, but to proximity senses, OE *yfellīc* “bad, foul, rotten” (BWT, s.v. *yfellīc*, adj., I.). That there are no other occurrences in the OEM that describe ugliness or other phenomena unpleasant to the eyes indicates that the author of the OEM did not hold the sense of sight to be the main avenue for the description of what is unpleasant to the senses related to morality, religiosity, or lack thereof.

Anecdotally smell is almost as frequently attested as sight. The only instance where there is an identifiable connection between a bad smell and a person’s morality is the following excerpt from the entry dedicated to the Machabees:

(13) *Onð þa sona æfter þon, ða gefeol hine se ofermodig cyning of his scrīde. Þa afulode he sona, swa ðæt nænig mon ne meahte aræfnan þone stenc, ne furðon he sylua. Ac he aweol eal wrymum, ond earmlice swealt on elðeodigum muntum* (140, The Machabees).

And then soon after that, the arrogant king caused himself to fall out of his chariot. And he became putrid straightaway, so that nobody could tolerate the stench, not even he himself. And he was crawling with worms all over, and died miserably in the mountains of a foreign land (Rauer 2013a: 151).

This excerpt tells the way King Antiochus is punished by God, because he had tried to force the Machabees to eat pork, something forbidden by Old Testament laws. Antiochus is described as arrogant (OE *oferhygdig*) and he goes on to order the boys to be killed, tempting the last boy standing to renounce Christianity in exchange for earthly goods. It is only fitting that, through divine action, King Antiochus is shown to be as impure on the outside as he is inside. After Antiochus falls out of his chariot and his wound festers, he is described as having an unpleasant smell that, in this case, metaphorically renders his flawed morals.

While it is rare to find individual senses mentioned in depictions of negative aesthetic experience, it is also more common to find descriptions that utilise more than one type of stimulus, including cognitive stimuli. Take the following example:

(14) *Onð þær him com to Godes engel ond ætywde þære ðeode hwæt hyra god wæs þe hi ær beeodon. He him ætywde micelne Sigelhearwan, ðæm wæs seo onsyn sweartre þonne hrum, ond se beard ond þæt feax him wæron oþ þa fet side, ond ða*

*eagan wæron swylce **fyren** iren, ond <him> sprungon spearcan of þam muðe, ond **ful rec** him eode of ðæm næsþyrlum, ond he hæfde fīpru swylce þyrnen besma, ond ða handa wæron gebunden tosomne mid fyrenum racentum, ond he hrymde **grimlicre stefne** ond **ladlicre** ond fleah aweg ond nahwær siþþan ætywde. Þæt wæs þæt deofol, þæt seo þeod hyre ær for god beeodon, ond hi nemdon þone Astarop.* (162, Bartholomew)

And an angel of God came to them there and revealed to the people what their god was, whom they had worshipped previously. He showed them an enormous Egyptian whose face was blacker than soot, and his beard and hair reached down to his feet, and his eyes were like hot irons, and sparks came from his mouth, and a foul stench came out of his nostrils, and he had wings like a thorny broom, and his hands were tied together with fiery chains, and he cried out with a terrible and loathsome voice and fled away and never appeared again anywhere. That was the devil, whom the people had earlier worshipped for themselves as a god, and they called him Astaroth (Rauer 2013a: 167)

This Egyptian deity is portrayed through different stimuli with the aims of eliciting a multifactory aesthetic experience. First, there is a reference to blackness, which Clark (2019) explains and the relevant entries in the BWT and the DOE corroborate is indicative of evil: “*sweart* has such a strong association with sin and damnation in poetry and religious prose” (Clark 2019: 16). Second, the sense of smell is involved in the description of the ‘foul stench’ (OE *ful rec*) that this deity emits. Finally, to these visual and olfactory cues the author adds a reference to a sound that is described as OE *grimlic* ‘fierce, cruel’, a term that clearly refers to the emotional response of those who would have heard this voice, and *ladlic* ‘unpleasant, loathsome’, a term for moral disgust, in this case. A similar circumstance is found in entry 22, on Saint Anthony the Hermit:

(15) *Onð hine þær deofla costodon mid ofermaete unclæne luste, efne swa þæt hi eodon on niht to him on geglengedra wifa hiwe. Ðær he geseah eac þone **fulan** gast þe men lærð unalýfede lustas. Þæt wæs **sweart** cniht ond lytel ond **egeslic**, ond he him sæde sylf þæt his nama wære *spiritus fornicationis*, þæt is *dernes geligeres* gast. Hwilum ða deofol hine swungan þæt he ne mihte hine astyrigean ne noht cweðan. Hwilum hi hine **bylgedon** on swa fearras, ond ðuton eallswa wulfas.* (22, Antony)

And devils tempted him there endlessly with dirty lecherousness, even to the point where they visited him at night in the appearance of dressed-up women. There he also saw the foul spirit which incites men to illicit lust. That was a black boy, small and horrible, and he himself told him that his name was *spiritus fornicationis*, which means ‘spirit of illicit sex’. Sometimes the devils beat him so that he was unable to move or talk. Sometimes they bellowed at him like bulls and howled like wolves. (Rauer 2013a: 51).

In this passage four different terms indicate three levels of aesthetic evaluation: OE *fūl* and *sweart*, which represent visual as well as cognitive notions; OE *bylgan*, referring to the animal-like and bellowing sounds these devils make;

OE *egeslic*, referring to the emotion that these spirits are supposed to elicit: fear. What these excerpts have in common is that through different types of stimuli the author paints an extremely negative image of these pre-Christian deities and demons that contrasts heavily with the beauty, radiance, and pleasantness with which Christian saints and other religious figures are envisioned and portrayed in the OEM.

In fact, this negative aesthetic experience is, at times, neither represented nor elicited through lexis that refers to sensory processes, but through negative emotion terminology. For example:

(16) *Ðær wæron inne geseted hweras ond pannan, ond he þa þurh Godes miht wæs oncierred fram þæm fæmnum ond clypte ða hweras ond cyste ða pannan, ðæt he wæs eall sweart ond behrumig. Ond þa he ut eode, þa flogon hine his agene mæn, ond wendon þæt hit wære larbo, þæt is **egesgrima** (59, Agape, Chionia and Irene)* Inside there were pots and pans stored, and through the power of God he was diverted from the virgins and hugged the pots and kissed the pans, so that he was all black and sooty. And when he came outside, his own men ran away from him, thinking that it might be a *larua*, that is a horror creature (Rauer 2013a: 79).

(17) *Þa Þome þæder ineode, þa eode þær **egeslic** deoful ut of þam goldgeweorc and stod beforan hym, and þæt goldgeweorc eall todreas, swa swa weax gemylt æt fyre (238, Thomas).*

When Thomas went in there, a horrible devil came out from the golden structure there and stood before him, and the golden structure completely disintegrated, just as wax melts near a fire (Rauer 2013a: 227).

In example (16), the reeve Dulcitius attempts to force Agape, Chiona, and Irene to renounce God through sexual defilement, and through God's power he is tarnished with the grease of the pots and pans that there are in the house where the women are praying. When he goes outside, he is black and dirty, and his men mistake him for an *egesgrima*. This term is remarkable in that it encodes an emotional root, OE *ege* 'fear, terror, dread', in a description of the creature that is supposed to cause it. Similarly, when Saint Thomas goes to worship the devil/sun deity in excerpt (17), it is described not as it is physically, but drawing on the emotion that it would have elicited in the beholder, through the term OE *egeslic* 'terrible, frightening'. Even if these two instances are not fully descriptive of the creatures that elicit these emotions, the author of the OEM indicates unambiguously the emotions they should and would have elicited, associating pre-Christian deities with the experience of extremely negative emotions. Similar to the experience of ghosts and devils in the usage of lexis of negative emotions, two more excerpts employ a shame-related lexis to describe actions that are carried out by men who refuse to comply with the Christian faith:

(18) *On ðone ylcan dæg bið þæs martyres tid Sancti Genesi, se wæs ærest sumes kaseres mima, þæt is leasere, ond sang beforan him **scandlicu** leop ond plegode **scandlice** plegan* (163, Genesius the Comedian)

On the same day is the feast of the martyr St Genesius, who was first some emperor's *mimus*, that is an actor, and sang disgusting songs before him and played disgusting plays (Rauer 2013a: 167).

(19) *ond he wæs heafde becorfen for scandfulra wifa bene, ond for <geglisces> mægdenes plegan, ond scondfulles gebeorscypes hleahtre, ond for drucenes kyninges wordum* (168, The Death of St John the Baptist)

and he was beheaded at the behest of scandalous women and for a lascivious girl's dance and for a laugh at a disgusting feast, and at the command of a drunken king (Rauer 2013a: 171).

Before Saint Genesius is baptised and he sees an angel sent by God, he leads a life that is described as shameful or disgraceful (OE *sceandlic*). A similar evaluation is found in excerpt (19), where the behaviour of those who partake in those lascivious feasts is negatively described through the same shame-related root, in this case clearly demonstrating a behavioural dimension in aesthetic experience, and further stressing that negative aesthetic experience is not always necessarily rendered through the lexis of aesthetic emotion, but at times it may be described through vocabulary related to utilitarian emotions.

7. Concluding remarks

All things considered, this paper serves as an example of the way the application of the most recent theoretical ideas from the fields of emotion research and cognitive linguistics sheds light on the emotion dynamics behind Old English texts, and the conceptualisation and expression of aesthetic emotions in early medieval England. Even if, as the two sections above have emphasised, there is no high degree of occurrence of lexical markers of aesthetic emotion in the OEM, particularly compared with the poetic genre, in which one in every 100 terms is an word representing aesthetic emotion,⁵ aesthetic experience is central to some sections of the OEM.

A review of the appraisals mentioned in section 2 demonstrates that the main appraisal that precedes and elicits the aesthetic emotions that may be reconstructed from the OEM is the appraisal of goal congruence

⁵ This figure is based on the findings from my PhD thesis, which contains an analysis of the lexical domains of positive and negative aesthetic experience: the comparison of the number of attestations of lexical markers of aesthetic emotion with the number of words in the poetic corpus “yields a relative frequency of attestation of terms for aesthetic emotion in poetic writings of 1.09%” (Minaya Gómez 2021b: 408).

(cf. Menninghaus et al. 2019). If there is a correlation between the goals of the emotional community in which this text was written, i.e., a congruence with the goals and beliefs of Christianity, and the behaviours of the individuals described in the OEM, the author expresses it through the available Old English lexis that denotes aesthetic pleasure and beauty. If, conversely, the behaviour of the individuals depicted flouts Christianity and the saintly figures described in a positive light, they are rendered through many different terms and expressions that seek to describe and evoke negative aesthetic experiences by dint of these specific narrative motifs (Stodnick 2013: 32) that constitute the particular scripts of emotion-regulation (in accordance with the terminology proposed by Menninghaus et al. 2017) of this genre and of this text.

Rauer (2013a: 15) and Herzfeld (1900: 409–421) before her have both pointed out the repetitive, or quasi-formulaic, nature of the OEM. Based on the existing analyses of the lexical domains of beauty, aesthetic pleasure, and negative aesthetic experience in the Old English formulaic style (Minaya Gómez 2021a, 2022), it is possible to establish preliminary differences between prose and verse styles in referring to aesthetic experience. After the analysis that has been offered in the two sections above, it is clear that the lexis for aesthetic pleasure and the experience of beauty in the OEM relies heavily on literal and unambiguous terminology. While verse exhibits a tendency to refer to beauty and aesthetic pleasure through different metaphors and metonymies, involving additional lexical domains such as those of LIGHT, CLEANNESS, or INTRICACY, to name but a few, and to use terms for beauty and aesthetic pleasure in extremely figurative manner, this was not the stylistic choice of the author of the OEM. This author relies on the fundamental constituents of the Old English aesthetic paradigm, such as OE *fæger* and *wlitig*, which they use literally to refer to individuals who are beautiful outside because they are morally pure, or to places or objects that are indicative or representative of saintly or divine figures. Aesthetic pleasure is almost entirely reserved for posthumous miracles that involve the emission of a pleasant fragrance that is indicative of sanctity and holiness.

To contrast the findings from this research with research carried out on Old English poetry and negative aesthetic experience (Minaya Gómez 2022), this paper further stresses that there is no prototypical term in Old English to render negative aesthetic experience outside OE *lāð* ‘loathsome’, a term, incidentally, that does not occur in the OEM. Instead, the author of the OEM chooses to elicit and describe negative aesthetic experience through the selection of different kinds of stimuli. In terms of cognitive stimuli, the OEM includes references to evil, horror, fear, and shame either as aesthetic responses or as adjectives and nouns that qualify visual, olfactory, or auditory stimuli. In terms of sensory stimuli, there is a prevalence of references to darkness, dirt, foulness,

and fire in the visual domain; in the olfactory, the author makes frequent references to bad, unpleasant, and foul smells; and in the auditory these allusions include voices that are categorised as loathsome or terrible and bestial sounds. These evaluations are always associated with two types of figure: on the one hand, they are applied to demons and pre-Christian deities, which, in the Christian cosmology, are the same; on the other hand, they may be found in depictions of the pagan antagonists who torture and are responsible for the deaths of the saints in the OEM. Both of these commonly share a physical manifestation of sin and moral turpitude, beliefs, and behaviours in either unpleasant smells, sounds, or appearances. In this sense, and throughout the OEM, Harbus' (2012: 61) maxim, *THE EXTERNAL IS AN INDEX OF THE INTERNAL*, is never flouted.

It may therefore be said that the OEM relies on the contrast that the inclusion of both positive and negative aesthetic responses facilitates. Through the depictions of unpleasant and disgusting entities and circumstances directly associated with those who defy the Christian doctrine, the beauty, brilliance, pleasantness, and wonder that the saintly figures displayed throughout the OEM stand out as much more intense. As has been mentioned above in section 3, we also see the way the OEM homogenises and guides the emotional experience. While the factual nature of the OEM suggests that eliciting aesthetic experience is not its main purpose, unlike poetic texts, as the very nature of the genre suggests, it is also evident that there is an important degree of emotional education behind the OEM. This connects directly with Rosenwein's (2007: 202) "basic and general point [...] that emotional styles have much to do with modes of religious expression", particularly in reference to the way "new words—and their attached ideals may enter the religious vocabulary". Through the usage of specific Old English terms and particular emotional responses, the author of the OEM effectively associates aesthetic experiences with religious ideas, ideals, and norms. In using these lexical markers of aesthetic emotion in these precise contexts, the author fuses together doctrinal, cultural, and embodied aesthetic ideas, and this may have taught the emotional religious community for which this text would have been intended the way divine, saintly, and godly figures and their terrifying, evil, and shameful counterparts are to be experienced in the light of Christian history and its doctrine.

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