As beautiful inside, as it is outside: On the connection between beauty and morality in the Old English corpus

Francisco Javier Minaya Gómez[1]

Abstract. This paper aims to look into the link between the experience of beauty at a sensory level and its connection with more cognitive considerations in Anglo-Saxon England. To do so, I have carried out a complete analysis of the usage of the Old English adjective *fæger*, one of the main descriptors of beauty in the linguistic variety. Using the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, I have created a concordance and a database containing all its attested forms, which I have analysed following diverse sociolinguistic criteria. This analysis has proven that the evaluation of beauty as rendered by Old English *fæger* had a strong cognitive component, mainly related to the moral and spiritual virtues of the aesthetic object and often visually represented by an abundance of light. According to this analysis, the experience of beauty in Anglo-Saxon England constitutes a rare experience that in most cases, goes beyond the sensory and the purely physical.
Keywords: beauty, Old English, historical linguistics, *fæger*, aesthetics.

[es] Tan bello por fuera, como por dentro: Sobre la conexión entre la belleza y la moralidad en el corpus del inglés antiguo

Resumen. El propósito de este artículo es investigar la relación entre la experiencia de la belleza a un nivel sensorial y su conexión con aspectos más cognitivos en la Inglaterra anglosajona. Para ello, he llevado a cabo un análisis completo del uso del adjetivo *fæger* perteneciente al inglés antiguo, uno de los principales descriptores de belleza en la variedad lingüística. Usando el *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, he creado una concordancia y una base de datos con sus distintas atestaciones, las cuales he analizado siguiendo diversos criterios sociolingüísticos. Este análisis ha demostrado que la evaluación de la belleza tal y como es descrita por *fæger* tenía un fuerte componente cognitivo, principalmente relacionado con las virtudes morales y espirituales del objeto que a menudo son representadas visualmente con una abundancia de luz. De acuerdo con este análisis, la experiencia de la belleza en la Inglaterra anglosajona constituía una experiencia poco frecuente que, en la mayoría de casos, traspasaba las barreras de lo sensorial y lo puramente físico.
Palabras clave: belleza, inglés antiguo, lingüística histórica, *fæger*, estética.

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[1]   Department of Modern Philology, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Francisco.Minaya@uclm.es.

1. Introduction[2]

Despite a surge in interest in aesthetic experience and beauty, very few publications address the topic of beauty as represented by the Old English language (henceforth OE). They are limited to the following: an exhaustive article by Ramey (2017) on OE *wrætlic* one of the lexemes describing beauty, a book on the aesthetics of Beowulf and other Anglo-Saxon poems edited by Hill (2010), an article on the aesthetics of nostalgia by Trilling (2009) and a volume by Tyler (2006) on the aesthetics of the familiar. While there exist many volumes written on the Western canon of beauty, they focus on a more classic type of beauty, and there is not a consistent, continuous or exhaustive line of research for the study of aesthetic experience within the Anglo-Saxon context.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the OE adjective *fæger* 'beautiful' in order to uncover aesthetic assumptions in Anglo-Saxon England and to gain a better understanding of the recurrent connection between what has been traditionally called "inner" and "outer" beauty. In other words, I will explain the link between sensory aesthetic experience, morality, spirituality and divinity. To do so, I will combine methods from corpus and cognitive linguistics and traditional literary analysis of the texts in the concordance. Each of these methods is equally important and provide complementary data that helps understand Old English beauty from different perspectives.

2. Some considerations about Old English beauty

Anglo-Saxon England tends to be imagined under a rather dull and colourless atmosphere, lacking beauty and light. Franzen (2012: 1) acknowledges that "we know that the Anglo-Saxons produced and prized beautiful things, but our knowledge of their aesthetic standards is incomplete." There are no writings left that provide information as to what was beautiful in the Anglo-Saxon mind, or what was deemed a violation of aesthetic standards and, hence, considered ugly. Nevertheless, two ideas are fundamentally embedded in the concept of the beautiful as depicted in the literature. The first idea is also discussed in Franzen's *Anglo-Saxon Keywords,* under the heading of *Aesthetics:* "things declared to be beautiful in OE sources are often assessed spiritually rather than visually or in terms of another sense" (Franzen, 2012: 1). The second idea is pointed out by Ramey (2017: 478) with regards to the OE adjectives *fæger* and *wlitig* 'beautiful', which "point to qualities of bright and pleasing appearances." That is, the second idea is that OE *fæger* is connected to luminous images in visually-marked aesthetic experience.

In most cases, beauty is not conceptualised as a property that occurs naturally in the aesthetic object, but rather as a result of elaborate and deliberate crafting. Ramey's (2017: 480) study of OE *wrætlic* 'wondrously beautiful' concludes that:

> The Anglo-Saxon poetic imagination rarely distinguishes beauty from creativity. It conceives beauty as something made—as the product of skill and design, even in the case of the beauty of nature, which, drawing from biblical images, is celebrated as an intricately fashioned artwork.

Indeed, we should think of beauty, particularly in the case of Old English poetry, as an artificial, purposeful and intricate creation of beautiful aesthetic objects on the part of the poet or scribe. Not only is this intentional crafting of beauty implicit lexically in some of the lexemes, like OE *wrætlic*, but present throughout the corpus.

Therefore, beauty during the Anglo-Saxon period, or at least the reconstruction of the cultural model for beauty that we are able to produce through linguistic methods, is far from the every-day aesthetic experience. Rather, this type of beauty is seen as a rare experience resulting from intricate creation, or as Markovic (2012: 2) puts it "as a provocation of the higher level pleasures, such as the pleasures of the mind." This separation of the ordinary Anglo-Saxon aesthetic experience, to which we have no access due to the lack of native speakers, is also discussed by Ramey (2017) who states that "in Old English, poetic representations of beauty [...] have a priority to pleasure" (Ramey, 2017: 481). In this sense, Anglo-Saxon beauty fulfils the notion that aesthetic experience satisfies these pleasures of a higher order, in many cases religious and, to a certain degree, cognitive in their evaluation of non-religious reality.

Also specific to Old English beauty is the concept of the familiar. Particularly in verse, beauty was constructed around the idea that what is familiar is beautiful. Tyler (2016: 123) claims that "the formulaic inheritance of Old English poetry licensed an aesthetics which took pleasure in the familiar—and that desire for the familiar became a stylistic imperative." What is familiar is beautiful, partly because it is esteemed. Affection plays an important role in the appreciation of aesthetic objects as such.

Anglo-Saxon beauty was not only experienced in a purely positive context but also in relation to strangeness and sometimes resulting in fear. Ramey (2017: 481) found out that there was an intermixed pattern between beauty and the experiences of strangeness, mystery, and awe, as compared to the classical models that favoured imitation, singularity, symmetry and pleasure. From the field of cognitive linguistics, Keltner and Haidt (2003: 305) identify seven features in the experience of awe, which they divide into two groups: central and peripheral features. Peripheral or "flavouring" features are optional characteristics of elements of the aesthetic object that modify or modulate the aesthetic experience and "[give] rise to the variety and diversity of awe experiences," namely: threat, beauty, ability, virtue and supernatural causality (Keltner and Haidt, 2003: 304-5). Pertaining beauty as a flavouring feature, Keltner and Haidt (2003: 304) remark: "beautiful people and scenes can produce awe-related experiences that are flavoured with aesthetic pleasure."

The study conducted by Díaz-Vera (2016) on the experience of awe, another aesthetic emotion, analysed OE lexemes for awe basing on these "flavouring features" proposed by Keltner and Haidt (2003). Díaz-Vera (2016: 13) indicates that "beauty is the only awe-appraisal that is not encoded in any of the lexemes rendering 'awe' in Anglo-Saxon texts." Nevertheless, his study concluded that, while beauty was not lexically implicit in awe words, it was clear that in the case of Old English beauty contributed to the experience of awe. There was a certain degree of awe implicit within the Anglo-Saxon experience of beauty: the perceived beauty in the object is

such that it causes fear in the subject. This is by no means limited to OE terms. The same semantic change and the interaction between fear and marvel can also be appreciated in the transition from the older sense of the Present-Day English (henceforth PDE) term *awesome* 'inspiring awe; appalling, dreadful, weird' (OED, s.v. *awesome* adj., 2) to the sense that is more frequent in current speech 'in trivial use, as an enthusiastic term of commendation: 'marvellous', 'great'; stunning, mind-boggling. slang.' (OED, s.v. *awesome* adj., 3b). This semantic change emphasizes the idea that the dividing line between beauty and fear is not clear-cut.

To sum up, Old English beauty fits into the larger Western Medieval canon of beauty, as it is for instance described by Eco (2012) or Carruthers (2013), particularly in those cases where the religious is concerned. It is also true that isolation of England as compared to Continental Europe and the resilience of the Anglo-Saxon substratum influenced a distinct and diverse canon of beauty, as the examples provided in section 4 will attest.

3. Methodology

3.1. Choice of corpus

A critical shortcoming of linguistic, historical research is the absence of living informants. To retrieve the linguistic data to support this study, I have used textual corpus loaded in concordance software. From among the different corpora available for OE texts, I have chosen the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (henceforth *DOEC*) above other corpora like *The Diachronic Part of Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* or a combination of the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry* and *Verse* for two main reasons:

a) its larger number of words: the *Helsinki Corpus* contains 415,000 words, and the combination of the *Parsed Corpora* yields around 1,6 million words, compared to the 3 million words indexed in the *DOEC*;

and b) its greater variety of texts: because the *DOEC* comprises every surviving OE text, it offers a wider selection of texts;

The materials for the *DOEC* were compiled and digitalised in the 1970s and released in 1981. It was last updated in 2009. It contains at least one copy of each surviving OE text, or more if the variants are interesting to look at from a chronological or dialectal perspective. Research using the *DOEC* provides a broader perspective as it is based on the data represented by the existing body of OE texts, mostly edited, but in some cases unedited. Since this is a very precise study of just an OE term, the *DOEC* can offer a broader perspective in an exhaustive analysis of OE *fæger*.

3.2. Specific methodology: categorisation, treatment and analysis of data

The methodology used for this study is derived from Díaz-Vera's (2011, 2014, and especially 2016) approach to the reconstruction of the historical, cultural models of a given emotion, departing from cognitive linguistics to gain a better understanding of historical sociolinguistics. The methodology proposed by Díaz-Vera is, in this case, adapted to suit the purpose of this research and modelled after Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014) and their treatment of PDE *beautiful*.

In their study, Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014: 144) established four main semantic explications of PDE *beautiful:*

a) *beautiful¹*, referring to visual appreciation of humans and objects;
b) *beautiful²*, referring to aural appreciation;
c) *beautiful³*, categorising human actions
d) *beautiful⁴,* describing pleasant personal experience, that is, smell taste and touch.

These explications were then extrapolated to OE *fæger* and adapted for the purposes of this study into the following:

a) OE *fæger¹,* for the visual appreciation of humans, supernatural agents and object;
b) OE *fæger²,* for the sensory appreciation of sounds;
c) OE *fæger³,* for the cognitive evaluation of human, supernatural and divine actions;
d) OE *fæger⁴*, for the sensory appreciation of smells.

This classification offers different information as to what sense is being used in evaluating the object perceived as OE *fæger*, and, similarly, whether the evaluation is cognitive or not (represented by OE *fæger³*).

After loading the corpus onto the concordance software, I manually extracted the occurrences of the OE adjective *fæger.* Rather than using the wildcard, I searched the different spellings of the adjective as proposed by the *Dictionary of Old English* (hence *DOE*) for the creation of a more reliable concordance. Thereafter, I carefully considered the cases where a spelling variant of the adjective could also represent the adverbial form and deleted them (for instance the nominative plural of the OE adjective was *fægere,* which coincided in spelling with the OE adverb). The occurrences were selected along with at least one or two lines of adjacent text. This was aimed at retaining the context and contextual information of the occurrence that would ground it in its literary and cultural background, rather than considering the lexeme in more general terms or terms of its collocation with immediately adjacent lexis. These occurrences were then imported to a database where they were categorised, according to the following criteria: (i) text citation and line number, (ii) file number, (iii) type of text, (iv) collocations with nouns and adjectives, (v) sense in the *DOE*, (vi) category derived from PDE *beautiful* treatment proposed by Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014), and (vii) whether OE *fæger* was used in a sensory or cognitive context. This provided a grand total of 636 entries in the database. After removing the adverbial cases and fragments that were repeated across the different OE texts, these 636 entries were reduced to 379[3].

A preliminary and superficial analysis of the concordance showed that OE *fæger* evaluated nouns in sensory and/or cognitive terms. Its entry in the *DOE* provided the following senses: 1) "Beautiful to the senses/perception" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 1), 2) "Light-coloured skin" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 2), 3) "Free from blemish or impurity"

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[3]   The difference between the figure of 636 mentioned above and the circa 450 occurrences indicated by the *DOE* in the entry for *fæger* is due to those repeated fragments and parallel passages; these constitute a prominent characteristic of the Dictionary of Old English Corpus, as pointed out by Mohlig-Falke (2015).

(DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 3), and 4) "Fair, favourable, benign, not disturbed" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 4). The first two senses roughly correspond to the sensory dimension of the adjective, while the last two clearly belong to the cognitive dimension of the adjective's aesthetic evaluation, or to occurrences that were not aesthetic. Nevertheless, this category is not entirely reliable because some subdivisions of the first sense were more cognitive than sensory, hence the importance of a specific tag that could precisely determine in which proportion OE *fæger* evaluates in sensory (and, if so, to see what senses were involved using the categorisation derived from Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014)) or cognitive terms, and, more importantly, in which cases the evaluation was twofold and combined the sensory and the cognitive. In other words, this last tag would provide with the opportunity of exclusively selecting and further analysing those occurrences that showed a connection between outer and inner beauty, and easier access to individual fragments that would contribute to a better understanding of the link between the sensory and the cognitive in the context of the experience of beauty in Anglo-Saxon England.

This study also draws from corpus-based lexical semantics, the "study of lexical items, their distribution, and what their distribution reveals about their semantics and pragmatics / discourse function(s)" (Gries and Otani, 2010: 121). This approach, as Miller and Charles (1991: 5) remark, is aimed to attain "some abstraction or generalisation derived from the context that has been encountered." Thoroughly analysing a term, how and where it appears yields information about not only the term but its cultural and cognitive associations in a given language. Furthermore, and considering the nuances of the methods described above, this study is adapted from the Behavioural Profiles (BP) methodology for lexical semantics proposed by Gries (2010), Gries and Otani (2010), and Gries and Divjak (2009), which tries to overcome some of the traditional drawbacks of corpus linguistics by implementing the usage of databases where the occurrences extracted from the different corpora are annotated and treated statistically. Nevertheless, there are some marked exceptions in my application of this methodology that should be pointed out:

a) Gries' (2010: 327) first step is to retrieve "(a representative random sample of) all instances of the lemmas of the word(s) to be studied from a corpus in the form of a concordance." Because the corpus used in this study is more limited in terms of occurrences than, for instance, a PDE corpus, it was possible to carry it out considering all occurrences of OE *fæger*, not only in its base form but in all its inflexions.

b) Gries (2010: 327) proposes creating concordance with "(so far largely) manual analysis and annotation of many properties of each match in the concordance of the lemmas." Gries (2017) draws on Atkins (2017) to enumerate a series of ID tags which classify these lemmas according to morphological, syntactic and semantic criteria. In this study, occurrences in the database are sorted in different ID tags that take into account semantics and other factors (like collocates). Some of these semantic ID tags have been mentioned previously, like the OE *fæger* sense in the *DOE* or the tag derived from Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014). However, the data shown in this paper, concerning a part of the complete study (i.e., the cognitive (moral) side of aesthetic emotion as represented by OE *fæger*, as opposed to the exclusively visual), only takes into consideration the semantic.

c) The next step for Gries (2010: 329) is to convert "these data into a co-occurrence table that provides the relative frequency of co-occurrence of each lemma/sense with each ID tag." This could only be done partially in the case of my study, and the tables drawn only provide the percentage of each tag above the total of the concordance.

d) Similarly, Gries' (2010: 329) fourth step, to evaluate "the co-occurrence data [...] by means of statistical techniques" was carried out for the exclusively visual dimension of OE *fæger*, but these findings are not included herein.

4. Old English moral beauty as rendered by OE *fæger*

There is a great variety of lexemes to refer to beautiful objects in Old English. Among them, OE *fæger* stands out as one of the main aesthetic indicators in the linguistic variety. It is the etymological root of PDE *fair*, but it has undergone a narrowing in meaning, as it is now chiefly used in the sense of "just or appropriate in the circumstances" (OED, s.v. *fair*, adj. n1, 1), which roughly corresponds with sense number four of the OE adjective. Nevertheless, it still retains part of its historical meaning. The OED includes it under the senses of "(of hair or complexion) blond; light or pale," (OED, s.v. *fair*, adj. n1, 2) "(of weather) fine" (OED, s.v. *fair*, adj. n1, 4), and a last sense (OED, s.v. *fair*, adj. n1, 6) considered archaic as synonymous of beautiful. All of them correspond to senses one to three for the historical OE adjective.

Nevertheless, as much as PDE *fair* exhibits a strong cognitive component in the evaluation of what is just, it does not represent anymore the OE connection between what is beautiful on the inside and also on the outside. Nowadays, one would not look at a beautiful person and immediately think "how *fair!*" The third sense for OE *fæger* in the DOE groups together occurrences describing objects, people and situations that are "free from blemish or impurity" (DOE, s.v. *fæger*, adj. 3). As it is, this category presents a strong degree of cognitive evaluation and is concerned with the topic discussed in this article, that is, moral beauty and its connection with sensory aesthetic experience. The first subdivision for this sense specifies the framework even further: "of moral beauty: free from (moral) stain, unblemished, noble, excellent" (DOE, s.v. *fæger*, adj. 3.a). This shows a conceptual connection between purity and proper moral behaviour. While the tendency in the entries for the DOE is to maintain a non-religious approach to the different senses of a given word, most of the occurrences in this study, nevertheless, deal with the religious rather than with the moral. It should be mentioned that the proposed categories and data presented in the following subsections are derived from a bottom-up or data-driven analysis of the complete instances of the lexical items in the concordance and do not rely on any other type of criteria. As such, they represent the larger structure of OE moral beauty.

4.1. Of human beings and their behaviour

A priori, the idea of cleanness and the idea of beauty seem to be intrinsically connected as if being "free from moral stain" (DOE, s.v. *fæger*, adj. 3.a) were equivalent to being perceived as beautiful. Humankind as a whole is perceived as beautiful in its shape because they are a reflection of God's beauty and act according to his wishes.

However, when the occurrences in the concordance deal specifically with men or women, there are some differences in their aesthetic treatment.

In most instances, male beauty is connected with a strong and visually abundant perception. The qualities of being OE *strang* 'strong', OE *lang* 'tall', OE *geong* 'young', and OE *brād* 'broad-shouldered, strong' are central to the perception of men (OE *wer, mann, cniht*). While this is a clearly visual judgment, it also has a cognitive component that links the inner and the outer. Beauty was often evaluated in terms of reproductive ability, and for a man to be strong, tall, and young implied being healthy and hence (at least in Anglo-Saxon thought) able to reproduce. Women, on the other hand, were evaluated in terms of being OE *eadmod* 'modest', OE *clæn*[4] 'clean (in the moral sense)', OE *wynsum* 'pleasant', OE *geong* 'young' or beautiful in their shape (OE *hīw*). The emphasis on the reproductive could also be identified; it is clear that female beauty is more connected with moral considerations. The notions of purity and modesty were fundamental to the perception of female beauty as represented in the corpus.

In the behavioural dimension, human beings are often gifted with the ability of fluent speech, which contributes to their perceived beauty. As Marwick (2007: 3) points out "the moral qualities of intelligence and understanding, charm and sparkle [...] are transmuted into physical beauty." Thus, eloquence stands as one of the contributing factors to the experience of beauty:

> (1)   *hwæt ða him geuðe. se ælmihtiga God.* **fægre** *getingnysse. ðam folce to lare.* (ÆCHom II 10 85.132) [5]
> 'then the almighty God conceded him beautiful eloquence to teach the people'[6]

The ability of fluent speech is seen as a gift from God, and it stresses the power of words in Anglo-Saxon culture, to the point that they become part of the aesthetic paradigm and become objects of beauty. What is more, words are seen as ornaments that adorn texts or particular interpretations:

> (2)   *We habbað nu gesæd sceortlice on Englisc þis halige godspell, swa swa ge gehyrdon nu, þa nacedan word ana; ac we nu wyllað mid* **fægerum** *andgite hi gefrætewian* (æHom 8 50)
> 'we have briefly talked in English about this holy Gospel and its bare words that we have heard, but now we wish to adorn these words with a beautiful interpretation.'

From this perspective, the word is described as an instrument of beauty, an element that, because of its inherent beauty, is able to transfer it and thus adorn a certain passage or text. It links to Eco's (2016: 111) description of certain words as ornaments. This purposeful modification of the words of the Gospel to create beauty

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[4]   In fact, the corpus search of *clæn fæmn* and its different spelling varieties provides a grand total of 28 occurrences, proving that this was a recurrent term in the Anglo-Saxon mind-set.
[5]   The text will be cited using the abbreviations proposed by the *DOEC* for the long titles. The list of texts, their long titles and abbreviations are available at https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/#listoftexts (last access March 25, 2019).
[6]   The translation proposed for these excerpts are my own.

echoes Ramey's (2017: 480) assumptions as regards Anglo-Saxon poetic imagination, which "rarely distinguishes beauty from creativity. It conceives beauty as something made." In this sense, humans not only are beautiful because they are God's creation and follow his teachings, but they exude beauty and create beautiful works.

4.2. Of Saints and their circumstances

Occurrences in the concordance concerning saints and the episodes of their martyrdom also show the recurrent connection between physical beauty and spirituality. Often, there is a marked emphasis on physicality related to the suffering and torture to which the saint is subject:

> (3) *and he het wallende stanes on hire **fægre** lichaman geworpan* (LS 14 17.8)
> 'and he threw stones to her beautiful body'

This excerpt narrates the martyrdom of Saint Margaret, who is also described as *fæger fæmn* 'beautiful woman' in (LS 14 9.3). In her final torture, the emphasis is placed on her body, on the fact that she is incarcerated under loathsome conditions and on the torments and pains she suffers. Highlighting her bodily suffering contributes to her elevation as saint and martyr. This idea is further developed in the torture and martyrdom of Saint Lawrence:

> (4) *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* (Mart 5 Au 10, A.7)
> 'he ordered him to be stretched on an iron bed and roasted alive; and the more he was roasted the more beautiful was his face'

There is a growing progression in the appreciation of beauty in Saint Lawrence's face. The more he is roasted alive and the more he endures torture, the more of a martyr he is and, in consequence, the more beautiful he is. His face (OE *andlwitan*) is seen as a reflection of the saint's spiritual, moral and holy qualities, making thus the invisible visible upon his countenance. The experience of beauty and a physically visible element are also present in the death of Saint Eulalia:

> (5) *Ond sona swa hig man heafdode, þa com þær **fæger** culfre of þam lichaman ond fleah ymbe þone lychaman ond hyne freode ond þa fleah to heofenum* (Mart 2.1 De 10, A.22)
> 'and as soon as the man beheaded her, a beautiful dove came out of her body and flew around it, set her free, and flew to heaven'

The dove that comes out of her body (or her mouth, according to Latin sources) becomes a metaphor of Saint Eulalia's bodily and moral beauty, unified together in a beautiful dove. Therefore, it is clear that the saints' moral qualities, spirituality, and connection to God, which ultimately is what makes them beautiful inside, reflect inside out and have a sensory manifestation in their countenance or in the circumstances of their lives and deaths.

4.3. Of angels and their descent to Earth

The apparition of angels as messengers of God descending to the earth to deliver a message or to perform a divine intervention is also notably recurrent in the concordance. These occasions are depicted as an extremely beautiful vision causing the subject to experience beauty and awe. The angels are almost always dressed in white or golden and surrounded by an abundance of light:

> (6)   *þa on þare ylcan nihte þe constantinus slep 7 hine gereste þa com him to sum swiðe **fæger** æncgel on hwitum scinendum reafe 7 hine awehte* (LS (Invent-CrossMor) 17)
> 'the same night when Constantinus slept and was finally resting, a very beautiful angel descended on white shining clothes and woke him up'

In this instance, it is not possible to separate the exclusively visual from the cognitive, and it is applicable to most of the instances depicting the divine or the supernatural. Angels and divine agents are depicted as infinitely more beautiful because of their holiness.

   In other cases, the vision of angels is complemented by victorious or clear music, creating a multifactorial aesthetic experience where the senses combine and enhance the experience of beauty. However, in other cases, it is the angels' own voices what is depicted as powerful and sometimes with healing properties:

> (7)   *þa sona æfter þære stefne þæs ængles geheortlice him wæron þa limu cwiciende 7 **fægre**.* (GDPref and 4 37.317.15)
> 'soon after the voice vigorous voice of the angels his limbs came to life and became beautiful'

Beauty is not only a perceived quality in the angels but the result of their intervention. Indeed, these visions are referred to as having qualities of beauty through OE *gesiht* or OE *ansyne*. Yet, they should be understood not as exclusively visual or sensory, or exclusively cognitive, but as a combination of several senses and holding a strong cognitive evaluation. For instance:

> (8)   *he gode ðancode 7 marian sæde 7 þam femnen, þe mid hire wæron, þa **fægræ** sihðe þæs englæs* (Ls 18.1 633)
> 'he thanked God, and told Mary and the women who were with them about the beautiful sight of the angels'

These visions sometimes have a positive effect on the subject, enhancing their mood and releasing them from anxiety (example 9). However, other times, the effect is not positive, but causes fear (example 10):

> (9)   *Cyning wæs þy bliðra ond þe sorgleasra, secga aldor, on fyrhðsefan, þurh þa **fægeran** gesyhð* (El 96)
> 'the king was happier and less sorrowful after beholding the sight of the prince of warriors'

(10) *Ell ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed, forht ic wæs for þære **fægran** gesyhðe* (Dream 20)
'I was disturbed with anxiety; I was afraid of the beautiful sight'

This last excerpt is taken from *Dream of the Rood*, and it narrates the scene where the cross bleeds from one side, as Jesus once did. As Carruthers (2013: 7) points out in relation to this scene in the poem "this is not 'sick stuff'; this is commonplace medieval sense-derived understanding." The subject experiences this vision with such an intensity that it causes them to experience both beauty and also awe, which would not be so intense if it were not for the religious nature of the aesthetic object. It supports Díaz-Vera's (2016) claim that there is a connection between awe and beauty, and in this case, there is lexical evidence occurring within the same clause. The all-golden and exquisitely ornamented cross does cause the experience of beauty, but it is the holiness of it what gives it meaning and flavour to the experience.

4.4. Of Jesus, God, and their splendorous light

Many occurrences are describing the presence of both Jesus and God. Yet, they have an essential difference: Jesus is depicted both in an anthropomorphic and angelic manner but in the concordance for this study God is treated in visual terms, but only metonymically. He is identified with a current of extremely bright and beautiful light. In the data collected for this study, there are no occurrences that describe with any specific detail God's physical appearance. For instance:

(11) *Him þa **fægere** frea ælmihtig, ece drihten, andswarode* (GenA,B 2353)
'to him the beautiful almighty lord, the Eternal ruler, answered'

The evaluation of God's aesthetic presence is carried out in an exclusively cognitive context. He is *fæger* because he is God, and he is the source of all beautiful things and source of the eternal light that reflects on his creation. This idea is clearly not Anglo-Saxon in its origin, but rather imported from Continental Europe along with Christianity, and fits perfectly into the Western Canon of beauty, in which "God is identified with the splendour of a sort of luminous current that traverses the universe" (Eco, 2016: 102)[7]. The sight of God is often related to other aesthetic lexis:

(12) *He bið þam godum glædmod on gesihþe, **wlitig**, **wynsumlic**, weorude þam halgan, on gefean **fæger**, freond ond leoftæl, **lufsum** ond liþe leofum monnum to sceawianne þone **scynan wlite**, weðne mid willum* (ChristA,B,C 918)
'he is to the good glad in the heart in sight, beautiful and pleasant to the people, beautiful on his rejoice, friend and dear, kind and gentle for the men who behold his shining beauty'

In this passage from to the Old English poem *Christ III,* the emphasis is placed not on physicality, but on personal pleasant experience on the part of the beholder (e.g. OE *wynsumlic* 'pleasant' or OE *lufsum* 'lovable/pleasant') and on light (OE *scinan wlite* 'shining beauty/appearance'). The use of OE *fæger* alongside OE *gefeon* 'to

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7   My translation of the Italian original.

rejoice/joy' refers to the experiential domain of aesthetic experience, and establishes a third element in the appreciation of beauty: from inner and outer beauty to the pleasant aesthetic experience of beholding something beautiful, equated here to that of being in Paradise.

As mentioned above, Jesus' image is described in more precise terms. Likewise, he is the extension of God's far-reaching light and beauty, but he has a human dimension, and he is conceptualised as such. The references are so specific that they allude to something as particular as his *fæger* hands:

> (13) *And þam þe englas þeniað he sylf þenode mannum and þwoh his gingrena fet mid his **fægerum** handum* (æAdmon 1 4.38)
> 'and the angels gathered around himself and his men, while he washed his apostle's feet with his beautiful hands'

This fragment recounts Christ's washing of the apostle's feet and seems to imply that every single part of Christ's body is beautiful. It could also be taken as a metonymy: the fact that his hands are seen as *fæger* implies that he, as a whole, is beautiful too. Moreover, he is also infused with this abundance of light when he abandons the human shape and is depicted in an angelic manner with white clothing:

> (14) þa feringe wearð Cristes anseone swiðe wunderlice ***fæger*** *iworden beforen heom þrym, swa þæt his wlite scean swa sunnæ, and his claðes weron iworden swa hwite swa snaw* (HomU 12)
> 'the journey leads to Christ's face/figure, so wonderfully beautiful before his multitude of angels; his beauty shone like the sun, and his clothes turned as white as snow'

This powerful image beautifully summarises most of what has been discussed before. Jesus, who once was human, was morally beautiful, and this reflected on his countenance and was perceived as physically beautiful too. Once he dies and ascends to heaven, his image becomes angel-like and is surrounded by this luminous atmosphere, which is metaphorical for the inner beauty of people and celestial beings alike. In the Anglo-Saxon poetic imagination, to be beautiful is to be surrounded by light that shines inwards and outwards.

5. Interpretation of the data

The analysis of OE *fæger* and, more specifically, its predominant religious usage relates beauty to the condition of being morally pure. This link between cleanness and beauty is undoubtedly not exclusive to OE *fæger*, but very predominantly stressed by this adjective. The main question that arises from this analysis is whether the cognitive and sensory dimension of the adjective was its principal semantic feature.

One of the categorisations proposed for this study distributed the occurrences attending to the main senses of the adjectives. Table 1 provides the total number of occurrences sorted by the different senses proposed in the DOE, whether they occur in isolation (i.e., a give occurrence only evaluates in sensory terms) or in combination (i.e., an occurrence evaluates in sensory and moral terms). Table 2 specifies whether

these attestations exclusively belong to one sense or more, and if so, which ones. The first sense in the DOE, "1. Beautiful to the senses" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 1), whether in isolation or in combination with other senses, yields a grand total of 295 occurrences. In isolation, sense number one is attested 190 times. This sense is closely followed by sense number three (the sense that is more relevant to the analysis of the link between the cognitive and the visual), "3. Free from blemish or impurity" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 3), with a total of 226 occurrences in combination and only 35 in isolation. More interesting yet is the impressive number of attestations of the combination between the sensory (sense 1) and the cognitive (sense 3). This indicates that OE *fæger* evaluates chiefly at a sensory level, but it also links the visual and the cognitive, to the extent that an exclusively moral evaluation without a sensorial component becomes quite infrequent (35 occurrences). As the number of attestations in terms of senses in Table 2 includes combination and individual occurrences, the sum of the figures in Table 1 does not fit the total of analysed occurrences, but the addition of the figures in Table 2, specific combinations and individual attestations, does represent the total of 379 analysed tokens.

Table 1. DOE categorisation (1).

Sense (total in combination and individual)	Nº of occurrences
1. Beautiful to the senses	295
2. Light-coloured skin	1
3. Free from blemish or impurity	226
4. Fair, favourable, not disturbed	53

Table 2. DOE categorisation (2): Specific combinations and individual number of attestations.

Senses	Nº of occurrences
1	190
1 and 3	84
4	45
3	35
1 and 4	16
3 and 4	5
1, 3 and 4	3
2	1

The predominance of the sensory over the cognitive cannot be denied, but the separation in senses does not provide enough relevant information as to the type of

evaluation that takes place. Table 3 provides information on whether the occurrences evaluate in exclusively visual or cognitive terms or both. The sensory still stands out prominently with 170 occurrences, but the combination of the sensory and the cognitive has a remarkable total of 113 attestations. In other words, out of the 379 occurrences in the concordance, 113 of these (29,8%) deal exclusively with the connection between inner and outer beauty.

Table 3. Category designed for this study.

Sensory, cognitive or both	Nº of occurrences
Sensory	170
Both	113
Cognitive	96

Moreover, Table 4, which showcases the categorisation derived from the PDE *beautiful* model proposed by Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014), indicates in more specific terms which senses take place in the evaluation of these beautiful entities. Inside the sensory (*fæger$_1$, $_2$ and $_4$*), the visual (*fæger$_1$*) stands out with a total of 281 occurrences. This total, as well as the other figures in the table, comprises both the attestations of *fæger$_1$* in isolation and in combination with other tags, since many times (96, according to Table 3) occurrences evaluate in sensory and cognitive terms, using different tags. *Fæger$_3$* is next in evaluating human actions and behaviour with 191 total occurrences. The aural dimension of aesthetic experience and personal experience are proven infrequent, 13 and 32, respectively. All in all, the prevalence of the sensory is attested both in the *DOE* categorisation and in the one derived from Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014), though the latter provides specific information as to the different senses involved.

Table 4. Category derived from Gladkova and Romero-Trillo (2014).

Sense (individual and combination)	Nº of occurrences
Fæger$_1$ - visual	281
Fæger$_2$ - aural	13
Fæger$_3$ – human actions	191
Fæger$_4$ – personal experience	32

The semantic analysis of all the occurrences of the OE adjective *fæger* re-establishes the hierarchy between its different senses. Despite the fact that the sensory occurrences are more numerous, the fact that these adjectives are extremely often accompanied either by nouns such as OE *(on) ansyn*, OE *(on) andlwitan* '(in) the face', OE *(on) bodige* '(in) the body' or OE *wlite* 'appearance', to name a few, or by perception

verbs like OE *seonne* 'to see' or OE *locianne* 'to look', indicates that OE *fæger*, *per se*, had a weak visual (sensory) semantic meaning that needed reinforcement. The stressing of the visual was particularly necessary when the co-text or context of the instance did not provide information as to what type of evaluation was taking place. By extension, this implies that, semantically speaking, OE *fæger* had a more cognitive meaning, like those found in senses "3. Fair from blemish or impurity" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 3) or "4. Fair, favourable, not disturbed" (DOE, s.v. *fæger* adj. 4).

6. Concluding remarks

The detailed analysis of these 113 occurrences which treat inner and outer beauty as a unity highlights a transcendence from the purely sensorial. These evaluations are founded in strong cognitive evaluation of people, saints and divine agents that are regarded as "free from moral stain," and for whom to be *clean* is to be beautiful, but it is not only restricted to this, as they are concerned with a wider range of phenomena. Beauty is also connected to imagination and uniqueness, order and prosperity. Eloquence often transforms into beauty, proving thus that in the Anglo-Saxon mind, there was an intrinsic power in words as objects of beauty.

The transmutation of eloquence into beauty is not the only case where inner beauty and outer beauty actively interact, one creating another. Often, beautiful appearances or visions have a bodily effect on the subject to the extent that a given part of them becomes beautiful, either morally or physically. The experience of a beautiful sight has an effect on the subject, improving or altering their mood and their emotional state. Elevating an object into the category of aesthetic object also influences the subject's emotions.

Nevertheless, the most recurrent process of this interaction between the different types of beauty is more complex. The fact that something is beautiful on the outside does not imply that this object is also morally right. Therefore, the origin is pinned down in moral beauty. When someone is morally beautiful, they act according to God's law: they act beautifully. This has its main reflection on the visual. A person who is beautiful on the inside, will also be beautiful on the outside, and their works, words and deeds will likewise be conceptualised and lexically expressed as beautiful. This inner beauty is made extensive to the different areas of human action, while outer beauty alone does not influence anything beyond the mere sight.

This process is prototypically fulfilled in the instances that concern the religious. The most notable example is how the increasingly painful torture of martyrs often results in a similar increase in their visible beauty. When describing divine beings, there is a total identification between the spiritual, the behavioural and the sensorial. This last element is represented in the visual sense by an abundance of light, and in the aural, chiefly, by the sound of trumpets or singing of the angels. The divine is seen as synonymous to light and beauty, establishing thus a triple connection between one of the most recurrent motifs that cannot be isolated in terms of the exclusively visual or spiritual. When this motif is taken to the extreme, light is seen as metaphoric of divine presence.

All things considered, even if the sensory evaluations of OE *fæger* are more numerous, it is in the spiritual and in the ever-recurrent connection between the visible and the invisible where the potential of the adjective develops. Through extensive

descriptions of corporeal, supernatural and divine experience, OE *fæger* contributes to the recreation of an atmosphere of light, splendid shiny objects and entities, and blissful sensations, often complemented by other senses, which engage the subject in an aesthetic trance where he elevates the ordinary object to the category of aesthetic object. In doing so, they experience not only the beauty that results from a positive aesthetic experience but the pleasure of framing it in a religious context where the abstractness of the scriptures is realised in bodily sensations, fully experiencing what is beautiful inside and what is beautiful outside.

7. Future research

The complete analysis of OE *fæger* has provided me with some insights as regards aesthetic experience in Anglo-Saxon England, but these are insufficient to account for a representative reconstruction of the Old English cultural model for beauty or aesthetic experience. As a consequence, in future research I will engage with a more detailed analysis of the OE lexicon for beauty, and more broadly for pleasant aesthetic experience. Among the lexemes that will be part of this study, a few central ones should be highlighted: OE *wlitig* 'beautiful'*,* OE *wynsum* and *wynlic* 'pleasant'*, anlic* 'unique (in its beauty)', OE *æþele* 'noble (beautiful)', and the semantic domain of light in its aesthetic connection to beauty: OE *beorht* 'bright', OE *torht* 'bright/beautiful', or OE *wlitescine* 'of brilliant beauty' to name a few. Following the line between beauty and awe, the study of the OE words for wonder will also contribute to a deeper understanding of Anglo-Saxon aesthetic experience. In this category, I will chiefly analyse the OE word *wundor* 'wonder' and its different derivations, and terms that ground the spiritual side of aesthetic experience in the domain of the sensory like OE *tacn* 'token'.

By contrast, this study opens the door for the analysis of negative aesthetic experience. In studying beauty, it can be contrasted with Old English descriptions of ugliness and deformity and see if there are any parallels between light, beauty and holiness, and darkness, ugliness and evilness. Some of the lexis that I will be analysing will be the negation of lexical forms describing beauty, like OE *unfæger* or OE *unwlitig* or specific vocabulary for ugliness like OE *wliteleas* 'without beauty/ugly'*,* OE *fūl* 'dirty, ugly', or verbs indicating disfigurement like OE *geatolhiwian*.

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