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Guy's Transformation in *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* as a Sensory Experience

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The *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* is a Middle English romance dating back to 1300 and surviving only in the Auchinleck manuscript.¹ It narrates the story of Guy, the romance hero, who, after his marriage, experiences an emotionally charged epiphany that changes the narrative. Instead of living joyfully with the woman he has long desired, Guy decides to go on a pilgrimage as penance for his previous acts. In his description of the process that has led to Guy's transformation, the author stresses the role of the senses. Guy's sudden desire to get closer to God does not come as a result of learning. Rather, it is stimulated by the sensory experience he undergoes at the top of the tower when, directly after the end of his marriage ceremony, Guy goes to contemplate the sky at night where he experiences feelings of remorse for his previous acts. It is the sight of the sky that brings about the realization of new affections, the affections towards the good. As a reaction to this affective sensory experience, Guy's decision is immediate. Only a moment of looking into the sky has been enough to move him from worldly love to the love of God. The poem's representation of Guy's transformation as an event in which affections, rather than reason, predominate, suggests that the change he undergoes does not take place in the mind but in the heart, and that it is not initiated by the intellect but by the senses. This representation of the forces that have guided the protagonist reflects the poem's strong focus on exploring his decision to transform as an act that is initiated by his free will which is weighted by affections rather than reason.

The aim of this article is to read Guy's transformation in the context of the late thirteenth-century voluntarist moral philosophy and discourse on emotions. It proposes that the late thirteenth-century voluntarist approach to emotions provides the philosophical basis for the literary representation of Guy's moral transformation as a sensory experience. It mainly

¹ Available in online and print facsimile: David Burnley and Alison Wiggins. Eds. *Auchinleck Manuscript*. MS. National Library of Scotland, 1330s, nls.uk/auchinleck/index.html. Accessed 16 March 2017. See also Susanna Fein. Ed. *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2016.

argues that Guy's transformation is a sensory experience in which affections rather than reason predominate. Accordingly, the supernatural in *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* is examined as a sensory phenomenon that amplifies Guy's affections for justice, reinforces his arational choice to transform as a free choice of the will, and consequently guides him through his journey.

Representing Guy's free act of the will as stimulated by sensation rather than cognitive learning recalls the late thirteenth-century voluntarist perception of the will as a power that is completely independent from the intellect. Voluntarism is a school of thought that was dominant in late thirteenth-century England and which appeared as a reaction to the intellectualism that controlled the cultural climate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Unlike the intellectualists who gave precedence to the intellect over the will, the voluntarists believed in the superiority of the will and its passions.² With their emphasis on the freedom of the will from the intellect, the late thirteenth-century voluntarists, primarily John Duns Scotus, believed that knowledge of the divine and the choice to be tied to it arises from an arational affective and sensory experience.³ In an absolute contrast to the intellectualists of the early thirteenth-century, the voluntarists believed that faith precedes understanding and that one should first believe in order to understand.⁴ This is mainly because, following Augustine, they believed that the perception of God is beyond the reach of human rational understanding and the exchange between the individual and God can be only perceived in terms of sensual and emotional experience that is entirely separate from the intellectual experience.⁵

² For a better understanding of the voluntarist philosophy of the later Middle Ages, see: Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg. Eds. *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. pp. 629-41.

³ This expression was used by medieval moral philosophers to refer to the phenomenon which belongs to a domain that cannot be grasped by reason, not which contradicts reason.

⁴ See: Norman Kretzmann. "Faith Seeks, Understanding Finds". *Christian Philosophy*. Ed. Thomas Flint. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990. pp. 1-36 (p. 11).

⁵ Niklaus Largier. "Inner Senses-Outer Senses: The Practice of Emotions in Medieval Mysticism". *Emotions and Sensibilities in the Middle Ages*. Ed. C. Stephen Jaeger and Ingrid Kasten. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003. pp. 3-15 (p. 4).

Though it is a close translation of the Anglo-Norman version, the 1300 Middle English *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* sets itself apart by highlighting the stage in which Guy's personality undergoes a significant transformation. It is also significant to note that the socio-cultural and intellectual context of the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* is different from that of the AN *Gui de Warwick* that was composed a century earlier, which suggests an alternative reading. Differences in sentiment and mood between the two versions of the romance are very suggestive. Critics have argued that the sentiment in the ME versions has obviously shifted towards the patriotic. Rosalind Field argues that, with the new patriotic readership and the change in the romance address from the elite to the nationalistic, the sentiment has changed to reflect an increase in patriotism.⁶ It seems that this increase in patriotism has also necessitated a re-consideration of the portrayal of Guy's personality and the motivations of his actions. Giselle Gos explains that Guy's personality and his need for penance were revised in the later Middle English versions. Gos traces back the origin of this revision to this stanzaic version in the Auchinleck manuscript which, according to him, shows the "roots of such developments in the recasting of the nature of Guy's sin".⁷ Earlier scholarship on the production of the Auchinleck manuscript can give us an insight into the particular sentiment that featured the manuscript's material. Thorlac Turville-Petre stresses that the Auchinleck is a themed manuscript, and he describes it as a "book of the nation" which was deliberately fashioned to invoke patriotic sentiment.⁸

The increase in patriotism in the ME version seems to be related to the cultural development that took place in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries when religious

⁶ Rosalind Field. "From Gui to Guy: The Fashioning of Popular Romance". *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*. Ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2007. pp. 44-60 (pp. 58-9).

⁷ Giselle Gos. "Constructing the Female Subject in Anglo Norman, Middle English, and Medieval Irish Romance". PhD Dissertation. University of Toronto, 2014. pp. 122-3 (p. 141).

⁸ Thorlac Turville-Petre. "English in the Auchinleck Manuscript". *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity, 1290-1340*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. pp.108-41.

activity started to be combined with the utilitarian aspect of life, particularly politics. Andrea Ruddick describes how the secular and religious discourses started to be significantly fused in fourteenth-century England. Ruddick explains that one aspect of this combination is the fusion of personal piety and political rule to serve national interests by producing “saintly national patrons”.⁹ If read in the context of this cultural development, Guy’s pilgrimage in this stanzaic version can be seen to be coloured by a nationalistic patriotic sentiment as well as a religious sentiment.

The stanzaic version’s patriotic sentiment has also been associated with the rise of Englishness as an important aspect of England’s national identity in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Central to the rise of Englishness was the development of a new system of ethics where the individual’s intersubjective relationship with his community and with God was informed by love.¹⁰ This development had impacted the depiction of English heroes in the literature of the later Middle Ages who started to be portrayed as independent individuals with a deep moral responsibility. Among the scholars who have addressed the effect of the development of this new system of thought on the literature of the later Middle Ages is David Klausner, who traces a development from the AN version to the ME version where Guy’s thoughts shift from being focused on horror and bloodshed to being organized around the dichotomy of worldly love and the love of God.¹¹ This combination between the individual’s sense of identity and his/her ethics indicates a new subjective dimension of penance. Kiril Petkov argues that the language of penance in the later Middle Ages addressed a major development where the field of individual agency was expanded and the ritual act started to be

⁹ Andrea Ruddick. *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. p. 304.

¹⁰ On love as a central ethical concern of late medieval English literature, see: Jessica Rosenfeld. *Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry: Love After Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

¹¹ David Klausner. “Didacticism and Drama in Guy of Warwick”. *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s. 6 (1975): 103-19 (p. 12).

subjected to the internalized regulation of moral norms rather than following the dictate of external authority.¹² Hence, in evaluating the cultural expectations that the author of the stanzaic version intended to address when he adapted the AN story into ME, and when he focused his narrative on this specific stage of Guy's life, these developments need to be taken into consideration.

The choice of the voluntarist discourse on emotions as an approach is not random. The decision to show the overlap between the poetic and philosophical discourses on emotions is related to the fact that by the mid thirteenth-century both these discourses were brought together in treating emotions as an ethical concern. The possibility of a correspondence between the late medieval moral philosophy and the period's literature is supported by Jessica Rosenfeld:

... the philosophy and poetry of the later Middle Ages together formed a thriving ethical discourse, particularly in response to challenges of defining pleasure and love, usefulness and enjoyment, need and desire, lack and fulfilment.¹³

The same use of medieval philosophical ideas is supported by Richard Utz, who asserts that there was an intersection between late medieval theories, among them Scotist voluntarism, and the literature of the period. To postulate a direct nominalist influence on late-medieval literature, Utz explains that the gap between the learned discourse at the universities, and he mentions Scotus's philosophy as an example, and the popular discourse outside the institution was bridged through sermons and public disputation.¹⁴ Some other scholars have also

¹² Kiril Petkov. *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West*. Boston: Brill, 2003. p. 206.

¹³ Jessica Rosenfeld. *Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry: Love After Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 6.

¹⁴ Richard Utz. "Negotiating the Paradigm: Literary Nominalism and the Theory and Practice of Rereading Medieval Texts". *Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Rereading Late Medieval Texts: A New Research Paradigm*. Ed. Richard Utz. NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995. pp. 1-30 (pp. 7-13). To emphasize the fact that lay people had access to the learned discourse at the universities he mentions how the voluntarist Even William of Ockham complained about laymen and old women pestering him and his colleagues about free will.

suggested a direct Franciscan influence on the contemporary vernacular poetry, especially the poetry that addressed penitential themes.¹⁵ Arthur McGrade argues that in depicting the behaviour of actual fictional characters, fourteenth-century poets could have utilized the framework of human understanding that Ockham and his followers provided.¹⁶ Also, in his discussion of the secularization of the ascetic impulse, John Fleming argues that the body of penitential literature originated from the Franciscan's moral instruction.¹⁷ Fleming discusses this further to emphasise a well-acknowledged impact on Chaucer and Langland.¹⁸ David Strong, who reads *Amis and Amiloun* in the context of Scotus's individuation, stresses the fact that the 'salience of Scotist perspective is well documented in late medieval British poetry such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.¹⁹

A contact between the university-trained friars and lay people is supported by the fact that these friars used to serve as confessors for the royal families. In England, the Franciscan first arrived in Canterbury, then went to Oxford. For many years Scotus himself studied at Oxford and taught philosophy.²⁰ Given the modern critical consensus that the Auchinleck MS was a product of a distinctive London literary culture, it is likely that the concurrent Franciscan moral philosophy was one of the elements that participated in the production of London's distinct literary culture and consequently the sentiment that governs the manuscript's

¹⁵ Andrea Hopkin in *The Sinful Knights: A Study of Middle English Penitential Romance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, explains that disseminating information about penance was done through preaching which "underwent a revolution in the mid thirteenth century after the arrival of the Franciscan friars in 1225" (p. 58).

¹⁶ Arthur McGrade. "Enjoyment at Oxford after Ockham: Philosophy, Psychology, and the Love of God". *From Ockham to Wyclif*. Ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks. Studies in Church History, Subsidia, 5. London: Blackwell, 1987. pp. 5-20 (p. 14).

¹⁷ John Fleming. "Friars and Medieval English Literature". *The Cambridge History in Medieval English Literature*. Ed. David Wallace. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. pp. 349-75 (p. 355). Fleming explains that the penitential literature from 800-1200 is vast, but what distinguishes the context of penitential literature in the late thirteenth-century is the fact that it expanded through lay secular associations (p. 356).

¹⁸ Fleming, p. 369.

¹⁹ David Strong. "Amis and Amiloun". *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 42, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture*. Ed. Reinhold Gleis and Maik Goth. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016. pp. 43-60 (p. 44).

²⁰ Antonie Vos. *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. p. 16.

material.²¹ It is also very likely that the voluntarist approach to the passions had its impact on the literary representation of emotions in the early fourteenth century. Though it is hard to prove that the voluntarists' ideas had directly affected the portrayal of Guy in the stanzaic version, it is logical to believe that their ideas had impacted the poem's immediate context. The above account of the correspondence between late medieval philosophy and the period's vernacular literature suggests that voluntarism, as a school of thought, had impacted the popular culture and participated in shaping the consciousness of the audience at that time. It becomes therefore significant to evaluate the sources that informed the audience's ethics which the author of the stanzaic version, in his portrayal of Guy's conduct, had tried to sustain. Accordingly, this paper proposes that, despite the great textual similarities between the AN and ME versions, differences related to the socio-cultural and intellectual climate of the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick's* had significantly impacted this early fourteenth-century narrative's emotive world. The fact that the stanzaic version is a penitential romance that highlights the stage of Guy's pilgrimage, the topic of free will, and the poem's focus on the dichotomy of earthly love and divine love are all topics that were highlighted by the Franciscan voluntarist of the late thirteenth century, and this explains the significance of the voluntarist approach to the reading of this romance. In depicting Guy's transformation as a result of a free exercise of the will, the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* addresses an issue that was central to the thought of the late thirteenth-century voluntarists. Portraying Guy's decision as weighted by guilt suggests a shift in the treatment of emotions where they become significant to judgment, an understanding that was popularized by the voluntarists of the later Middle Ages.

²¹ Ralph Hanna. "Reconsidering the Auchinleck Manuscript". *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*. Ed. D. Pearsall. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2000. pp. 91-102. See also: Fein.

Niklaus Largier argues that the perception of the divine in terms of an experience of the senses had become most significant in the Middle Ages in the voluntarist Franciscan tradition. Quoting Bonaventure, a thirteenth-century Italian Franciscan who discussed the relation between the divine experience and the senses, Largier explains how the Franciscans believed that what accompanies the divine experience is an arousal of the senses and a stimulation of emotions. He describes how the sensual excitation which accompanies the perception of the divine intensifies emotions.²² In fact, Bonaventure's contribution to the role of the senses is significant since he analysed the role of what he called the five inner senses in the experience of the divine and their relationship with affections. According to Bonaventure, inner or spiritual sensation along with physical sensation are what help man perceive the supremacy of the divine. In *Soliloquy on the Four Spiritual Exercise*, Bonaventure particularly discusses how sight helps the individual communicate with God.²³ His theory of spiritual and physical sensation reflects the Franciscan understanding of how the physical is inextricable from the spiritual experience. It proposes that the corporeal knowledge of the divine adds to the immediacy and actuality of this spiritual experience, a perception that was further developed by later Franciscan voluntarists like Scotus.

In his discussion of how the Franciscan system of ethics involves a concern for the material environment, Keith Warner argues that the late thirteenth-century Franciscans were not concerned with the modern moral philosophers' emphasis on abstract rules. Instead, Scotus and his fellow Franciscans favoured a form of morality that emerges from 'material, mutual relationships' that are highly dependent on sense experience.²⁴ A leading Franciscan of the late

²² Largier, pp. 7-10.

²³ *The Soliloquies of St. Bonaventure, Containing His Four Mental Exercises. And Also His Treatise, Called, A Bundle of Myrrh, Concerning the Passion of Our Saviour. With XIII. Spiritual Exercises of the Said St. Bonaventure.* London: H. Twyford and R. Wingate, 1655. Solil. IV.

²⁴ Keith Warner. "Franciscan Environmental Ethics: Imagining Creation as a Community of Care". *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*. 31.1 (2011): 143-60 (p. 155).

thirteenth century, Scotus, unlike Thomas Aquinas, reshaped sensation from a passive process to an active process. Arguing that active sensation always involves a dynamic change, Scotus believes that affective spiritual change is mainly a corporeal event.²⁵ Scotus argues that the love and knowledge of the divine begin in the senses and that the intellect is unable to perceive any knowledge without sense perception. Building on St. Francis's affective and sensory experience of the natural world, Scotus refuses an approach to ethics that is based on rationality and abstraction alone and he interprets ethics in terms of the individual's embodied experience in the material environment. Scotus's proposed moral system, which treats the sensory experience of the material world as central to the development of the individual's ethics, can help us analyse the material dimension of Guy's ethical choice and its relationship to his affections.

Very early in the poem, the author directs our attention to Guy's realization of the greatness of God and how this comes only after his sensual apprehension of it. In a tale centred around Guy's choice to transform his desire from the worldly to the divine, Guy's first apprehension of the divine through the senses suggests how his religious experience will be profoundly embodied. Guy's exercise of new ethics and experience of new emotions do not take place in a temple, but they come as a result of a direct, actual interaction with his material environment. For Guy, the sight of the sky is enough to manifest the existence of God. His emotional arousal which is followed by a transformation in affections is portrayed as highly dependent on his sensory perception of the divine through sight. Through sight, Guy is able to apprehend the spiritual significance of the created material world. Of all the five senses, the sense of sight had been celebrated by the Franciscan as exceptionally significant to the individual's spiritual experience. In *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Scotus

²⁵ See: Amy F. Whitworth. "Attending to Presence: A Study of John Duns Scotus' Account of Sense Cognition". PhD Dissertation. Marquette University, 2010. pp. 169-71.

emphasizes that sight is the most noble of all senses and argues that spiritual change is significantly related to sight.²⁶

In addition to the role of sight in triggering Guy's epiphany, the poem frequently presents different applications of sight, such as light and colour, as spiritually significant. An episode that shows the role of sight in arousing Guy's emotions and exalting his communication with the divine is the episode of the ermine. The sight of the ermine which comes out of Tirri's mouth, its colour, which is as white as lilies, and its swiftness leave Guy astonished:

Than seighe he an ermine com of his mouthe,
Als swift as winde that bloweth on clouthe
As white as lili on lake,
To an hille he ran withouten obade,
At the hole of the roche in he glade;
Gii wonderd for that sake. (1938-42)

The author's description of the ermine draws particular attention to its material characteristics: It is "swift as winde that bloweth on clouthe/As white as lili on lake" (1939-40). To stress the fact that the actual ermine works as a channel to the divine, the poet connects Guy's actual vision of the ermine to Tirri's dream vision. This is not to ignore the likelihood that the medieval audience, just like Guy, would have known that the ermine was a symbol of purity and virtue and carried a prophetic connotation. Once the ermine disappears, Tirri wakes up and narrates a prophetic dream that foretells what Guy has actually seen (1938-70). Employing the material as a channel to the divine is encountered in the same scene in the lines that describe the sight

²⁶ John Duns Scotus. *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus*. Trans. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter. St. Bonaventure, NY: St. Bonaventure University, 1998. q. 6.

of the sword. Similar to the treatment of the ermine, the material properties of the sword are highlighted. The words that describe the sword reflect its sensory qualities such as shining:

Sir Gii drough out that swerd anon
And alle the pleynes therof it schon
As it were light of leven.
"Lord," seyde Gii, "Y thanke Thi sond
Y seighe never are swiche a brond;
Y wot it com fram Heven. (1989-94)

The stanza's focus on light shows that the brightness of the sword reinforces Guy's perception of its miraculous nature.

The poem highlights Guy's affective, arational response to the sight of the ermine and the sword through describing his feeling of amazement. In fact, we notice an intensification of the voluntarist diction which mainly signifies an affective, rather than intellectual, response to these sensory phenomena. Accordingly, Guy's reaction to such sensory experiences is described by words like "wonder", which is repeated twice in the same stanza. The visionary experience of the ermine and the sword does not activate Guy's intellectual thinking as much as his desire. The sight of the ermine and the sword intensifies Guy's love for God and activates his will, which is mainly weighted by desire, to act. In addition to Guy's original transformation, Guy's redirection of his desire towards justice is heightened by his interaction with the materiality of the ermine and the sword. Hence, the immediacy of Guy's visionary experience of the ermine and the sword intensifies his love for justice and moves him to act. Directly after this experience, Guy becomes totally confident of God's providence and he decides to advance towards the city.

The fact that Guy's sensory experience is transformative, since it has moved him from inaction to action, can be better understood in the context of Scotus's association between sensation and transformation. Stressing that a corporeal object can act as a spiritual object, Scotus, in *The Quodlibetal Questions*, asserts that a spiritual change is a corporal event that involves spiritual transformation.²⁷ This reflects Scotus belief in the union of the bodily organ with the soul, a belief that contradicts the thirteenth-century's negative treatment of the senses. For example, in his *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas argues that the apprehension of spiritual truth can only be achieved if the soul is separated from the body:

For once the impediment of the body has been removed, the soul would return to its own nature, and so would understand intelligible things straightaway (simpliciter) like other substances separate from the body, rather than by turning toward phantasms.²⁸

Scotus not only treats sensation positively but also understands sensation as a form of intuitive knowledge that helps us perceive the divine. More importantly, in his discussion of intuitive knowledge, Scotus highlights the specific role of sight in human communication and intuitive knowledge of the divine.²⁹ Since the affections for justice are innate affections that are not governed by reason, as the affections for the self which are rational, sensation, as a form of intuitive knowledge, becomes particularly significant to Guy's affection at this stage.³⁰

The descriptions of the sky, the white ermine which is like lilies, and the gleaming sword all suggest that the sensory experience of the divine is an experience of physical beauty.

²⁷ John Duns Scotus. *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*. Trans. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. p. 358.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas. *The Treatise on Human Nature: Summa Theologica 1a*, 75-89. Trans. Robert Pasnau. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2002. p. 205.

²⁹ Scotus, *The Quodlibetal Questions*, p. 341.

³⁰ On the affections for justice as the will's innate liberty, see: *The Ordinatio of Blessed John Dun Scotus, Book Two, Distinction 6*. Trans. and Ed. Peter Simpson (Franciscan-Archives.org /Scotus/); hereafter referred to as *Ordinatio*.

It also indirectly suggests that what contradicts with this beauty should be perceived as devilish. The poem stresses physical traits that are related to the body and to material objects to distinguish between those who are blessed and those who are not. Beauty in *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* has much to suggest about characters' virtue and moral standing. In this poem, beauty is linked to bright colours and human size as opposed to ugliness which is perceived in terms of darkness and beastly size. Relating brightness to divinity was most likely to be influenced by the late thirteenth-century Franciscans who often portrayed God as a source of light.³¹ Both Amourant and Colbrond are described as dark giants. These descriptions remove them from the human represented in Guy. Beauty as opposed to ugliness is expressed not only in the human body but also in the material objects these characters use. In his fights, Guy's weapon and appearance are described as beautiful. In his encounter with Amourant, Guy's coat of mail is bright, his silver hauberk is so bright that the entire hall gleams, and his shield is bordered with gold (1082-1120). By contrast, the black giant Amourant is described as ugly and dreadful to look at, and in Guy's description "a devel fram helle" (1140). In fact, Amourant's and Colbrond's physical disposition, more than their actions, is what mainly vilifies them. This is clearly conveyed by many descriptions that focus on their appearance. Describing Amourant's encounter with Guy, the poet's words activate the senses: "He loked on him with michel wrake,/Sternliche with his eyghen blake" (1500-1). The poem describes Colbrond similarly: "A geaunt he hath brought with him /Out of Aufrike stout and grim, Colbrond hat that gome" (2817). The detailed description of the warrior's attire is a characteristic of romance, yet, since appearance in this romance comes as a manifestation of the characters' moral stance, it acquires further significance. Relating physical beauty to virtue highlights again the importance of sensation as a means to perceive the difference between the heavenly and the demonic. It also

³¹ See: Ann Astell. "A Discerning Smell: Olfaction among the Senses in St. Bonaventure's *Long Life of St. Francis*". *Franciscan Studies*. 67. 1 (2009): 91-131 (p. 97).

suggests how Guy's and the audience's emotions of friendship and enmity are dependent on their sensory perception of beauty and ugliness.

Discussing Scotus's idea of how morality is perceived in terms of beauty, Mary Ingham argues that beauty was seen as "part of an overall 'integrated sensibility' of medieval experience."³² In his *Ordinatio*, Scotus describes the morally good act as elegant and ornamented and he compares it to a beautiful body:

...it can be said that just as beauty is not some absolute quality in a beautiful body, but is the sum of all that is in harmony [convenientium] with such a body (for example, size, magnitude, figure and colour), and also the sum of all its aspects [omnium respectuum] (which are those of the body and those of one another), so the goodness of a moral act.³³

To stress the integrity of Guy's desire and his subsequent acts, the poem surrounds Guy with beauty. In his fight with Berard, Guy is described as "an angel from Heven cam" (2253). The heavenly and the demonic are also juxtaposed with beauty in Guy's fight with Colbrond, and there is a stress on light and colour as indications of the warrior's virtue. The difference in the weapons they use indicates that Guy is a defender of justice and Colbrond is the devil's comrade. Here again, Guy is surrounded by brightness and the description of his attire stimulates the senses. Guy's attire is described as "gay", his helmet has a circle of gold that shines very bright, and the front stands a stone as "bright as ani sonne it schon" (2989). On the contrary, after describing Colbrond as monstrous, the author describes his weapon as the fighting equipment that protects the devil's comrade "fendes fere" (3069). While Guy's weapons are decorated with gold and bright stones, Colbrond's armour is "blac as piche" (3082). Hence, Colbrond's villainy, as the poem describes him, is manifested in material

³² Mary Ingham. *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living According to John Duns Scotus*. Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1996. p. 139.

³³ Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1, d. 17, n. 62.

ugliness. The poem's association of abstract qualities like goodness and badness with material qualities like physical appearance and costume suggests that Guy's transformation has a spiritual as well as physical dimension.

The poem employs sight as a channel to the divine as well as the olfactory sense. A scene that shows the impact of the sense of smell on characters' emotions is that in which Felice smells the sweet odour that has come from Guy's body. After Felice arrives in the hermitage which is shining with light and when she sits by Guy who is already dead:

A swete brathe com fram his bodi
That last that day so long
That in this world spices alle
No might cast a swetter smalle. (3528-31)

The image of Guy's corpse in the hermitage recalls the image of St. Francis's body as it is laid to rest in the odour of sanctity, an image that appears in most medieval saints' lives of the later Middle Ages. The sweet fragrance of Guy's corpse indicates that the redirection of his affections towards the love of God has finally granted him God's blessing. Guy's honest affections towards justice and his love for God have finally culminated in him being a divine manifestation on earth. The smell indicates that Guy's body is uncorrupted. This suggests that the poem's representation of Guy's salvation as related to his body is influenced by the late thirteenth century voluntarist Franciscan belief that penance is an extremely embodied experience.

Additionally, the immediacy of the sensory experience of smelling Guy's sweet odour blends the borders between the earthly and the divine. Susan Harvey explains:

Invisible, silent, yet tangibly felt, smells were acutely effective in conveying divine presence or absence... Uncontainable, smells were

transgressive in moving, crossing human and divine domains as intersecting paths of interaction.³⁴

Sensation connects this final scene with the scene that describes Guy's epiphany very early in the poem. In both scenes, the sensory experience is significant as a channel to the communication with the divine. Throughout the poem, sensation affects Guy's free will in its orientation of his desire. While in the first scene the sight of the sky has triggered Guy's choice to redirect his love to God, the fragrance of his body in the last scene indicates that his choice is a blessed one.

Central to Guy's sensory experience of the world is his interaction with the supernatural during his pilgrimage. Guy's affections towards justice, which are triggered by his love for God, are further manifested by the existence of the supernatural. In the domestic environment of the tale a certain level of physicality is associated with supernatural beings in a way that activates the senses. The miraculous element is not particular to this poem; miracles appear in most medieval romances especially those influenced by saints' lives. However, the supernatural in *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* does not aid Guy in his battle as much as amplifies his affections for justice, reinforces his arational choice to redirect his love towards God as a free choice of the will, and consequently guides him through his journey. Commenting on the affective response to magic, Jane Gilbert in 'Being in the Arthurian World' argues that the emotions infused by the supernatural are "spontaneous, disruptive and disorderly, non instrumental and irrational".³⁵ Likewise, the supernatural in *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* does not suggest Guy's

³⁴ Susan Harvey. *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and Olfactory Imagination*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006. p. 7.

³⁵ Jane Gilbert. "Being-in-the-Arthurian-World: Emotion, Affect and Magic in the Prose *Lancelot*, Sartre and Jay". *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*. Ed. Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, and Corinne Saunders. Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2015. pp. 13-30 (p. 17). Gilbert here uses a modern theoretical framework, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, to analyse the relation between emotions and magic in the prose *Lancelot*.

inability to act; however, it enhances his desire for justice through keeping him emotionally aroused. The supernatural is central to Guy's transformation mainly because Guy's choice to love God, as demonstrated above, is a free act of the will that is weighted by desire rather than reason. The poem portrays Guy's free choice to redirect his affections towards justice as being assisted by his sensory response to the supernatural, not by thinking.

Scotus believes that, in addition to the knowledge of God which we acquire through the senses, we need supernatural knowledge.³⁶ He begins the prologue of his *Ordinatio* by raising the question whether it is necessary for man to be supernaturally inspired. After explaining how, without being supernaturally inspired, man will either be in error or remain in doubt, Scotus states that the knowledge related to the divine “must be delivered to us supernaturally, because no one can naturally discover the knowledge of them and deliver it to others by teaching”.³⁷ Scotus's belief that supernatural inspiration is significant to divine knowledge is particularly relevant to Guy's religious experience. The supernatural and the miraculous in this poem are introduced at a time that involves a choice, that is a critical moment. It does not address the characters' intellects, but rather their senses and affections. Hence, the affective response to the supernatural in this poem usually leads to a change. The relationship between the supernatural and affections is heavily stressed by Scotus. He believes that the need for the supernatural is in itself an indication of the intellect's failure to reach certain knowledge. Accordingly, this supernatural knowledge is overwhelming rather than comprehensive; the individual in these cases has belief but “lacks the fullness and clarity that comprehension requires”.³⁸ Throughout the narrative, the supernatural stimulates an affective experience

³⁶ See: William Mann. “Duns Scotus on Natural and Supernatural Knowledge of God”. *The Cambridge Companion to John Duns Scotus*. Ed. Thomas Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. pp. 238-62 (p. 256).

³⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prol. p. 1, q. 1.

³⁸ Mann, p. 256.

followed by a change. Its appearance does not leave room for reasoning, hesitation, or deliberation.

The first supernatural creature that appears is the ermine which comes directly before Guy proceeds to the city to encounter Berard. The appearance of the ermine has impacted Guy's emotions who, before the appearance of the ermine, was weeping pitifully: "Sir Gii biheld him and gan to wepe /And gret morning gan make./Than seighe he an ermine com of his mouthe" (1936-8). The sight of the ermine, its colour and swiftness, and the prophecy it brings cause an emotional transformation from sadness to joy. Guy confirms: "'Now felawe,' seyde Gii, 'bi mi leuté/ That sweven wil turn gret joie to thee'" (1971-2). Further, the supernatural appearance of the ermine reassures Guy of the uprightness of his choice and leaves him excited. Interpreting it as a sign from God, the ermine heightens Guy's love for justice and his faith in what he has chosen, and he decides to speed to the city.

The supernatural re-appears in the story when Athelstan and his men cannot find, through reasoning, a solution to their problem. Unable to find a man who can champion him in battle against Colbrond, Athelstan does not sleep the whole night. As he prays to God to solve his problem, the king sees an angel who introduces himself as an agent from God. The romance's representation of angels as agents from God has a philosophical basis. In his discussion of the necessity for man to be supernaturally inspired, Scotus mentions how human beings need to be inspired by supernatural agents like angels.³⁹ The angel is described as coming from "heven-light" and informs the king of the man that will take the battle for him. Here also, the supernatural has an impact on characters' emotions. Scotus explains that supernatural agents like angels do not move the intellect but the affect:

³⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prol. p.1, q.1.

...this first handing down of such doctrine is called revelation, which is for this reason supernatural, that it is from an agent which is, for this present life, not naturally a mover of the intellect.⁴⁰

The king who has suffered sorrow and dread is now “glad and blithe” (2920). The appearance of the angel has also moved Athelstan from inaction to action where he “ros up ful swithe/ And went to the gate ful right” (2921-2). In fact, the appearance of the angel does not only impact the king’s choice but also Guy’s, though indirectly. While in his previous battles Guy has encountered Jonas and Tirri accidentally and he himself has offered to fight for them, this time he is chosen by God through an angel. This arguably indicates the honesty of Guy’s affections towards justice and his love for God. The angel asks the king to play on Guy’s affections in order to convince Guy to champion him in battle:

Tomorwe go to the north gate ful swithe,
A pilgrim thou schalt se com bilive
When thou hast a while stond.
Bid him for Seynt Charité
That he take the batayl for thee. (2915-8)

Guy at first refuses to take the battle; he only agrees when he is convinced that this battle is central to his affections for justice, an achievement that the men have reached through divine agency.

While the previous appearances of the supernatural come to aid Guy in his choice, the final appearance comes to affirm the nature of Guy’s end. Scotus explains that senses alone cannot inform us about our end: “man cannot from his natural powers distinctly know his end;

⁴⁰ Ibid.

therefore he needs some supernatural knowledge of it”.⁴¹ The appearance of the supernatural while Guy is sleeping in the hermitage indicates that Guy’s choice to transform his love to God is a choice that will grant him eternal happiness. This time the angel brings a more significant emotional transformation from the sorrows of the earthly life to the joy of eternal life:

He schal deliver thee out of thi sorwe
Out of this warld to fare.
To Heven thou schalt com Him to
And live with ous evermo
In joie withouten care. (3408-11)

The appearance of the angel leaves Guy “still” and happy. It also brings a dynamic change; after his moment of amazement, Guy is moved and he decides to meet Felice. The description of the impact of the angel on Guy is not exactly the same in the AN version. The angel for example does not mention that Guy will be delivered from sorrow to joy, instead, he promises him perpetual glory in heaven, not joy (11454-60).⁴² In addition to this, the AN text never mentions that the angel has left Guy astonished; it only describes how Guy has started to pray to God after the angel has left (11473-4).⁴³

What distinguishes the portrayal of the otherworldly in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* is the fact that it is highly actualized. It appears not only in the visionary realm but also in the real. The form and nature of angels was an area of great disagreement between the philosophers of the late Middle Ages. Whereas Aquinas believes that angels have form but not matter, Scotus

⁴¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prol. p.1, q.1.

⁴² ‘Co vus mande de la sus Jhesus/ Que desore vus aprestez./ Alui hastivement vendrez./ Alegera vus de vos dolurs./ Car de cest jur en uit jurz/ Alui vendrez amunt el ciel./ U glorie averez perpetuel’ (11454-60). These lines are taken from the Anglo Norman *Gui De Warwick*, ed. by Alfred Ewert (Paris, Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1933). ‘From on high Jesus tells you to get ready now; for eight days from now, you will ascend to Him in heaven, where you will have perpetual glory’ (11454-60).

⁴³ “Li angle s’en va e Gui remaint./ De Deu preier pas ne se feint” (11473-4). “The angel departed and Gui remained behind, not ceasing to pray to God” (11473-4).

argues that angels have form and matter.⁴⁴ Scotus devotes a principal part of his second *Ordinatio* to the discussion of angels. Unlike most of the previous philosophers, Scotus strongly believes in the angel's singularity and actuality. In answering the question of whether an angel actually exists, Scotus states that there is no need to posit something to measure the angel's existence "other than that very existence".⁴⁵ Unlike Aquinas, who argues that angels are present in a place only by their operation, Scotus argues that they exist essentially, not virtually. This is closely related to Scotus's belief that angels can be contained in a body and can exist by their essence.⁴⁶

In the three appearances of the supernatural in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, the actual existence of other-worldly beings is thus stressed. They do not come only in dreams, but also in reality, and they manipulate the senses. In the first occurrence, Guy sees an ermine coming from Tirri's mouth, then Tirri wakes up and narrates a prophecy he has seen in his dream, which Guy has seen while awake. Guy's sight of the ermine, and the poem's emphasis on physical characteristics like colour and movement highlights the significance of the five senses in the apprehension of the supernatural. The supernatural existence between the visionary and the real occurs again with Guy when he sees an angel in his dream and then wakes up to speak to him in reality: "When Gii was waked of that drem Of an angel he seighe a glem./'What artow?' than seyde he./The angel answerd, 'Fram Heven Y cam,/ Mighel is mi right nam'" (3413-7). Significantly, there is no indication in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* that the angel that comes to Athelstan has only appeared in the king's dream:

When it was night to bedde thai yede;

⁴⁴ See: Evelyn Oliver and James R Lewis. *Angels A to Z*. Detroit, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2008.

⁴⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2, d.2, p.1, q.2.

⁴⁶ James Byrne. "Angels and the Physics of Place in the Early Fourteenth Century". *Conversations with Angels: Essays towards a History of Spiritual Communication, 1100-1700*. Ed. Joad Raymond. London: Springer, 2011. pp. 49-66 (p. 54, p. 62).

The king for sorwe and for drede
With teres wett his lere.
Of al that night he slepe right nought
...
Ther com an angel fram heven-light
And seyde to the king ful right
Thurth grace of Godes sond. (2896-9)

While the AN text clearly states that the king has slept before the coming of the angel (10925-33),⁴⁷ the ME version does not mention that Athelstan, after being unable to sleep the whole night, has slept before the coming of the angel. There is also no indication in the ME version that the king has woken up directly after the angel has left as in the AN (10945-8).⁴⁸ The ME version states that Athelstan is glad directly after the angel has left which strongly suggests that he is awake when seeing the angel, and if he has fallen asleep, that would be after the angel has left.

The examples that are discussed above show how the physical existence of these supernatural creatures and their sensible appearance are both emphasized. The ermine has supernatural abilities but looks like an actual ermine, with a distinctive shape and colour. Even the angels that appear to Athelstan and Guy are humanoid and gendered as male. The angel that appears to Athelstan speaks like a human and is aware of worldly matters like time and directions:

⁴⁷ “Cele nuit s’est li reis colché/ En un chaelit a or entaillé./ Tote la nuit jut esveillé./ Sovent ad Deu deprié/ Qu’il tel home li enveiait/ U de bataille s’afiait;/ E Deu nel mist pas en ubli:/ Si cum li reis ert endormi./ Un angle del ciel li enveia” (10925-33). “That night the king lay down in a bed of carved gold. All night he lay awake, often praying to God to send him a man he could trust for the battle. And God did not forget him; as the king slept, He sent him an angel from heaven” (10925-33).

⁴⁸ “Atant li angle s’en parti./ Li reis s’esveille, mult s’esjoi. / Mult par matin s’en est levé./Dreit a la porte est puis alé” (10945-8). “Then the angel left. The king woke up and rejoiced greatly. He rose very early in the morning and went straight to the gate” (10945-8).

Tomorwe go to the north gate ful swithe,
A pilgrim thou schalt se com bilive
When thou hast a while stond.
Bid him for Seynt Charité
That he take the batayl for thee
And he it wil nim on hond. (2914-19)

The angel, called Michael, addresses Guy by his name and asks him if he is sleeping.⁴⁹ Guy also converses with the angel:

When Gii was waked of that drem
Of an angel he seighe a glem.
"What artow?" than seyde he.
The angel answerd, "Fram Heven Y cam,
Mighel is mi right nam.
God sent me to thee
To bid thee make thee redi way,⁵³
Bi the eightenday thou schalt day. (3413-20)

The physicality of the otherworldly beings is connected in this tale to the nature of Guy's transformation. As a representation of the arational phenomena that cannot be grasped by human reason, the supernatural in *Stanzaic Guy* is related to the nature of Guy's penance as an affective experience. In its constant focus on Guy's transformation, the poem repeatedly represents the senses as the faculties that heighten Guy's affections and sustain his desire to continue his journey towards God. Accordingly, the poem portrays the supernatural as a phenomenon that moves the senses, not the intellect, and amplifies Guy's love for God. The

⁴⁹ The name of the angel and the nature of Guy's recent action can all give us an idea about the association the audience would make between Guy's deeds and the Archangel Michael's deeds of fighting evil forces, such as the dragon, and how this would assure the virtue of Guy as a defender of justices against evil.

physicality of the angels and the ermine imply something about the elements that have guided Guy in this phase of his life. It suggests again that this transformation is an act of the will triggered by a desire which is constantly stimulated by Guy's sensory perception of the different elements of his material world.

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