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METAPHORICAL EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL IN MIDDLE ENGLISH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

Abstract: The paper presents an analysis of various kinds of circuitous metaphorical expressions related to deities and devils in Middle English with special reference to *The Canterbury Tales*. In other words, the subject of the study will be taboo areas and euphemistic expressions that pertained to God, Saints, angels, Heaven, but also to their opposites, namely to devils and Hell. The paper will approach in detail the lexemes from various categories that contributed to the emergence of new, indirect expressions, such as LIGHT, DARKNESS, DARK PLACES, PLACES, ANIMALS, and TITLES. One of the analyzed categories will be the category of LIGHT. The words that will be viewed as the building blocks for the range of euphemisms will be *light, bright* and *fair*. The paper will show that the lexemes from the category of LIGHT created euphemisms for the divinity, as well as oxymora for the imminent evil. The euphemistic expressions associated with LIGHT will be also discussed in detail with regard to their metaphorical status. Moreover, the aim of the analytical part will be also to focus on a variety of euphemisms, the detailed cognitive study of the metaphorical concepts that constituted euphemisms, as well as on the beliefs that constituted the foundation for the emergence of such indirect expressions.

Key words: metaphor, euphemism, taboo, concept

Introduction

The present study aims at presenting a cognitive analysis of various kinds of euphemistic, circuitous metaphorical expressions related to deities and devils. The subject of the study will be euphemistic expressions that pertained to God, Saints, angels, Heaven, but also to their opposites, namely to devil and Hell. In Middle English, people preferred to use circuitous way

to talk about religious concepts as they evoked the feeling of admiration, respect, but also of unavoidable fear and intimidation. Though initially these expressions may have sounded metaphorical, they soon lost their metaphorical status, and started to be perceived as conventional, linguistic expressions used on everyday basis. The aim of the present study is to analyze these euphemistic expressions cognitively. The paper will approach in detail the lexemes from the categories of LIGHT/DARKNESS, PLACES, DARK PLACES, ANIMALS, and TITLES in order to show that they contributed to the emergence of new, indirect expressions. Within the category of LIGHT, the words that will be the subject of the analysis for the range of euphemisms will be *light, bright and fair*. The paper will show that the lexemes from the category of LIGHT created not only the euphemisms for the divinity, but also paradoxically for the imminent evil.

Secondly, the analysis will show that in the category of LIGHT few metaphorical models will be distinguished. For this reason, euphemistic expressions constituted by LIGHT will be discussed with regard to their metaphorical status; as metaphorical expressions, or as metaphors with a metonymic basis. Additionally, however, both models can be characterized with reference to the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light. As for the metaphorical expressions with the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light, the distinction will be drawn between expressions in which the link with the literal light is easily retrievable, and the expressions in which this link is hard to retrieve. Moreover, the study will also show that though initially euphemistic expressions may have sounded metaphorical, they soon lost their metaphorical status, and started to be perceived as conventional, linguistic expressions used on everyday basis.

Thirdly, instead of maintaining a distinct division between metaphor and metonymy, the paper will highlight the interaction between the two tropes. The analytical part will focus on the detailed contextual study of the cognitive metaphorical concepts. The perspective on metaphor and metonymy continuum will be applied in the paper in the analysis of the euphemistic expressions.

The analysis utilizes Caxton's *The Canterbury Tales*: The British Library Copies (ed. by Barbara Bordalejo), which is a CD-ROM containing the first full-colour facsimiles of all copies of William Caxton's first and second editions of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. This is also the first-ever electronic publication of the full text of all copies of the Caxton editions. The study is also based on three dictionaries, namely *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1898) edited by Joseph Bosworth and Northcote Toller; Oxford online *English Dictionary*, as well as by the online *Middle English Dictionary* [*MED*].

Euphemistic expressions from the category of LIGHT

The concept of LIGHT associated with holiness evoked not only divine properties, but it was perceived literally as the light surrounding deities (halo) or metaphorically in terms of values this light projected. Such was the concept of LIGHT in sacred texts, where it elicited such associations as glory, splendour and magnificence. Dyszak (1999: 14) maintains that LIGHT was initially identified with God, while the divinity of the physical world stemmed from the similarity to its Creator. The medieval society was largely preoccupied with the concept of LIGHT and believed that LIGHT showed the right perspective, or created the right vision. Consequently, the concept of LIGHT was imbued with religious values. Religion and religious values permeated the everyday life of medieval society. In other words, religious values constituted core values, which were reflected in a diversity of collocations related to divinity. LIGHT was a basic concept for the medieval society. To use the terminology by Wierzbicka (2006: 1992), LIGHT was a *key word* for the medieval society and a reference point for the conceptualization of other abstract concepts such as wisdom, vision and love (Wawrzyniak 2016). For the purpose of the present study, the subject of the analysis will be *bright*, *light*, and *fair*, which can be conceived as building blocks for the variety of euphemisms. The analysis is based on *The Canterbury Tales Project* edited by Barbara Bordalejo and on the online *Middle English Dictionary*.

Euphemistic expressions related to *bright*

The euphemistic expressions that encode *bright* can be exemplified by the collocations as follows:

> *armies of brightness* (*The Second Nun's Tale 383*) 'armies of brightness'
> *lady bright* (*The Man of Law's Tale 752; The Knight's Tale 1373*) 'lady bright'
> *owre lord bryȝt* (*As Reson Rywlyde Rwl C. 85*) 'our lord bright'
> *bryght maide* (*A Middle English translation of Macer Floridus de Viribus Herbarum 10.91*) 'bright maid'
> *bright sterre of the day* (*The Man of Law's Tale 754*) 'bright star of the day'
> *bright and shene* (*English Lyrics of the XIII century 13.210*) 'bright and shining'

These expressions highlight the attribute of divinity in the conceptual framework of *bright*. They imply angels, Virgin Mary and God. Angels could be referred to as *armies of brightness*; God could be addressed as *owre lord bryȝt*, whereas Virgin Mary was often called *lady bright*, *bryght maide*, or even *bright sterre of the day*. In other words, *bright* could co-occur with *star* to imply Virgin Mary. Moreover, following online *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*, sv. *sterre*), the

lexeme *sterre* was applied as an epithet for the Virgin Mary, as in the expressions *sterre of day* (*The Man of Law's Tale 754*) *sterre of the se* (*The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS 13.192*), or *quene of sterres* (*Speculum Sacerdotale 2.V.317*). Additionally, *bright* co-occurred with *shene* (*bright and shene*) to refer in a circuitous way to Christ and Virgin Mary (*MED*, sv. *shene*). These expressions functioned as euphemisms for the deities. People preferred to use circuitous way to refer to religious concepts than to speak about them in a direct way. In this way, they aimed to show respect. Moreover, people not only respected God, Saints but also feared them. By using indirect, circuitous expressions, it was possible for people to talk about divinity and to imply respect. Gradually, such expressions started to be used on an every-day basis. Though such collocations initially might have sounded metaphorical, they gradually lost their metaphorical status and became conventionalized expressions.

The concept of the *lady bright* is brought to notice in the following context:

(1) Thy blisful yen saw al this turnment
Than is ther no comparison between
Thyn wo and my wo that man may sustene
Thou saw thy child slayn a fore thyn yen
And yet now lieueth my child perfay
Now *lady bright* to whom ale women crien
Thou glorye of whomanhed thou faire may
Thou heuen of refut bright sterre of day
Rewe on my child (*The Man of Law's Tale 747- 755*)

(Your blissful eyes saw all this torment; there is no comparison between your suffering and mine; you saw your child slain before your eyes; and yet my child lives by my faith; now the *Lady bright* to whom all women cry; you are the glory of womanhood, fair may; you are the refuge heaven, the bright star of the day; have pity on my child).

Here, Constance is praying to the Virgin Mary (*lady bright*). She constructs her discourse with the view to asking the Virgin Mary to have pity on her child. In her discourse, she refers to the Virgin Mary as *lady bright*, but also as *fair may*, *glory of womanhood*, *refuge heaven*, and as the *bright star of the day*. Constance primes the epithet *bright* to refer to the light that was emanating from her and to imply that she was magnificent and glorious. Moreover, the etymological background of *bright* reflects a possible mode of interpretation underlying the lexeme. Namely, *bright* stemmed from OE *beorht*, which meant 'bright, splendid, beautiful, divine' (*BT*, sv. *beorht*). *Bright* originated from PG **bertha* – 'bright'. Its PIE base was **bhereg*, which denoted 'to gleam, white'. In other words, from an etymological point of view, *bright* is strictly connected with 'gleam' and the colour 'white'. Consequently, the expression *lady bright* can be perceived as a metaphor, which, however can have a more literal reading. Lady

is surrounded by light. The Saints had halos above their heads, and light was emanating from them. Therefore, *bright* was not only a metaphorical colouring, or an epithet evoking respect, but also a conceptual element which aided the visualization of the Mother of God. The literal aspect of brightness acted as a basis for the metaphorical rendition of the entire structure. In other words, structures that codify *bright* can be conceived as *metaphorical expressions with the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light*. Hence, the literal "gleam" was the source domain in the process of conceptualizing abstract qualities associated with LIGHT, namely glory, splendour, magnificence or uniqueness, which were the attributes directly linked with divinity.

Euphemistic expressions related to *light*

The euphemistic expressions that encode *light* can be exemplified by the collocations as follows:

> *leoht berend* - 'the one who carries light' – Lucifer (*Early English Homilies Vsp D. 14: 1/28*)
> *fader of light*- 'father of light'- God (*Wycliffite Bible 1.B.6: 1.17*)
> *lord of light* - 'lord of light'- God (*The Assembly of God: 3.19.1393*)
> *light and lemene fader* - 'light father'- God (*The Ormulum printed from MS Lambeth 783*)
> *contre of light* - 'centre of light' - heaven (*Folk's Prayer Dd. 11.82: 55*)
> *lanterne of light*- 'lantern of light' - Virgin (*The Castle of Perserverence: Folg V.a. 345: 5*)
> *piler of light* 'the one who piles up light'- Saint Peter (*Ludus Coventriae: Vsp. D.8. 363*)
> *child (son) of light* 'child/son of light' - the faithful, the righteous'; the believer (*The Concordance of The Wycliffite Bible: Roy 17. B.1: 88a*).

As for the etymology of *light*, (*OED*, sv. *light*), *light* is related to West Germanic *leukham* (O.Fris. *liacht*, M. Du *lucht*, Ger. *liht*), which in turn originated from PIE **leuk*, rendered as 'light, brightness'. The juxtaposition of *light* and *bright* shows that their roots were semantically related, as both **leuk* and **bhereg* shared the aspect of glistening. An analysis of the above expressions containing the lexeme *light* reflects different levels of metaphoricity. The expressions – *leoht berend*, *fader of light*, *lord of light*, *light and lemene fader*, *piler of light* are similar to *lady bright*. They are metaphorical expressions with the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light. They are truly light. As for *contre of light*, the expression can be considered as a metaphor based on metonymy. The metonymic basis that constitutes the basis for the metaphorization is one attribute of Heaven, that is light, that stands for the whole, thereby giving rise to the metonymy THE PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE. Moreover, it is viewed as a symbolic place of happiness, joy and life with God. The epithet *lanterne of light* also constitutes metaphors with the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light, yet this expression is more figurative than *lady bright*. The epithet *lady bright* evokes the concept of the lady, whereas in the euphemism

lanterne of light, the Virgin is compared to a lantern that gives light. In the expression *child(son) of light*, the literal link with light is not retrievable. The person referred to as *a child* or *son of light* is not a saintly person, but a person that follows religious values and principles. In other words, there is no light emanating from him. As mentioned in the euphemism linked with saints, the presence of the literal light is retrievable because of halos that the saints possess, and also because they are frequently conceived in terms of light. In the expression *child/son of light*, light is viewed here only in terms of values linked with light, which render this phrase metaphorical. The expression is thus different than *fader of light*, who is truly light. Moreover, the person cannot be the son or child of light. It can be then assumed that *light* here performs the function of a metonymy that stands for God and the values associated with God. Hence, the expression is a metaphor based on metonymy and it is not based on the literal perception of light.

Moreover, the analysis also showed that paradoxically *light* could be also the part of indirect expressions associated with the imminent evil, which can be noticed in the euphemism *leoht berend* 'the one who carries light' (Lucifer), and in the collocation *the dark light* (*The Parson's Tale 108*), which is far from the general conception of LIGHT. Namely, this oxymoron is associated with annihilating qualities of fire in Hell, which can be exemplified in the following context:

(2) For that in helle that defaute of light naturel
For certes *the derk light* that shal come out of the fyre
That euer shall brenne and shal torne hem al to peyne that be in hell (*The Parson's Tale 107-109)*
(For there is a lack of natural light in hell; certainly *the dark light* that will come out of the fire that ever will burn and will turn them all to pain who are in Hell).

In this context, *light* (modified by *dark*) evokes the sense of unbearable, everlasting pain and fear. Projected as destructive fire, *dark light* is associated with a deserved punishment and annihilation.

Euphemistic expressions related to *fair*

Fair also referred to divinity in a more circuitous way. As for the etymology, *fair* stems from Old English *fæger* 'beautiful, lively, pleasant' (*BT*, sv. *fæger*). The lexeme originated from PG **fagraz* 'beautiful', and Goth. *fagrs* 'fit'. Hence, contrary to *bright* and *light*, *fair* is etymologically rendered as 'beautiful' rather than as 'gleam' or 'light'. Moreover, as the *Middle English Dictionary* states (*MED*, sv. *fair*), *fair* was the common epithet of angels and the Virgin Mary. In such contexts, *fair* ceased to be only an attribute related to external beauty or

attractiveness, but it reflected inner, immaculate and ever-lasting good, which all together made the object described beautiful. In other words, *fair* covered a range of attributes, such as purity, spotless and the highest moral good.

The euphemistic expressions that encode *fair* can be exemplified by the collocations as follows:

> *fairesete of faire* (*Adam and Eve (2), 220-27*) 'the most beautiful of the beautiful ones'
> *faire may* (*The Man of Law's Tale 753*) 'beautiful maid'
> *fair Venus* (*The Knight's Tale 1526; 1805*) 'beautiful goddess'

It seems that *bright* and *fair* could be compared with a view to highlighting similarities and differences between them. To begin with, both were common epithets for angels and divinities. Nevertheless, *bright* and *fair* reflect different etymological backgrounds and, consequently, divergent semantic paths, which casts light on the mode of interpretation underlying the analyzed lexemes. As mentioned, *bright* is strictly connected with 'gleam' and the colour 'white'. Contrary to *bright*, *fair* is etymologically rendered as 'beautiful' rather than as 'gleam' or 'white'. Therefore, the expression *bright lady* can be perceived as a metaphor, which can have a more literal reading. As for *fair Venus*, it is a conventional expression that reflects esteem, and is not coloured by the literal perception of light. *Fair* is not etymologically related with light, but with beauty. In other words, the concept of FAIR does not rely on the attribute of 'gleam' via which metaphorical associations reflecting LIGHT could be built. Yet, *fair*, by being an epithet for Saints, implies the attributes metaphorically evoked by LIGHT. In other words, *fair Venus* is spotless, magnificent and represents the highest moral good, which makes her beautiful.

Euphemistic expressions linked with the category of A DARK PLACE

Dark projected negative connotations and was associated mostly with the concept of Hell, which can be exemplified by the following euphemistic expressions:

> *derke house* (*The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac (2). 25*) 'dark house'
> *the derkeste hous* (*The Man of Law's Tale 206*) 'the darkest house'
> *derk region* (*The Knight's Tale 1567*) 'dark region'
> *derk chambre* (*Troilus and Criseyde 16*) 'dark chamber'
> *down in the botom derk* (*Geoffrey Chaucer; Legend of Good Women 100*) 'down in the dark bottom'
> *derk erthe* (*The Parson's Tale 102*) 'dark earth'
> *the land of darkness* (*The Parson's Tale 103*) 'the land of darkness'
> *from thens that most derk is* (*The Second Nun's Prologue 66*) 'from the place that the most dark is'.

Hell was perceived as a taboo subject. Therefore, speakers avoided talking about Hell openly and used a wide range of indirect expressions. The concept of *dark*

functioned as a part of descriptive phrases that referred to Hell indirectly. In Middle English, *dark* could co-occur with a variety of places, such as *house*, *region*, *chamber*, *bottom*, *earth*, *land*, or *place*. The analysis shows that neutral place names or even place names that evoke positive connotations, if preceded by *dark*, were linked with Hell. Thus, the words such as *house*, or *chamber*, which were positively loaded and connected with household, evoked the state of misery and grief, if accompanied by *dark*. Moreover, geographical place-names, such as *region*, or *land*, were also frequently used to refer to Hell indirectly. Furthermore, broader place-names associated with the world, e.g. *earth*, could as well be attributed to Hell. Finally, the general concept of A PLACE, which is however devoid of light, could also structure the concept of Hell. Additionally, *dark bottom*, which was spatially oriented, was also evocative of the dark and miserable Hell. Thus, the range of place-names varies from the most specific to the most general. Moreover, all of these place-names are used on every day basis, which suggests that the medieval community was highly preoccupied with the concept of sin and with the subsequent punishment, that is with the Hell. Nevertheless, for fear that they might attract evil powers, they preferred to refer to Hell in a circuitous way. Such expressions did not sound odd to speakers of Medieval English and constituted a set of neutral and agreeable expressions related to Hell. Furthermore, the concepts of LIGHT and DARK constitute *the fundamental dualism*, which reflects human tendency to conceptualize the world. Hertz (1960) refers to the varieties of fundamental dualism:

> *All the oppositions presented by nature exhibit this fundamental dualism. Light and dark, day and night, east and south in opposition to west and north, represent an imagery and localize in space the two contrary classes of supernatural powers: on one side life shines forth and rises, on the other it descends and it extinguishes. The same with the contrast between high and low, sky and earth... The same contrast appears if we consider the meaning of the words 'right' and 'left'. The former is used to express ideas of physical strength and 'dexterity', of intellectual 'rectitude' and good judgement, of 'uprightness' and moral integrity, of good fortune and beauty, of juridical norm; while the word 'left' evokes most of the ideas contrary to these* (Hertz 1960: 96-99).

All in all, Hell was visualized as a dark place devoid of light. Nevertheless, *dark* did not project a place that is merely literally devoid of light, but it evoked religious connotations associated with the lack of light, namely an atmosphere of sin, pain, depravity and torture. In other words, the literal absence of light acted as a base for the further associations with Hell. Cognitively speaking, expressions such as *dark earth* or *dark land* can be considered as metaphors based on metonymy rather than as pure metaphors. The metonymic basis that constitutes the basis for metaphorization is one attribute of Hell, hence the part ('lack of light') that stands for the entire concept associated with Hell. Moreover, the link with the literal 'darkness', hence with the 'lack of light' is still preserved. In other words,

dark was not only a descriptive element, but it referred to Hell, which was literally dark, but also imbued with values associated with the lack of light.

Euphemistic expressions linked with the category of A PLACE

The aim of this section is to refer to euphemisms linked with the general category of A PLACE that is not preceded by *dark* or *light*. Hence, *other place*, *that high place* or *the place* could refer to Heaven. Some of these expressions can be exemplified by the contexts as follows:

> (3) But there is bettir life *in other place* (*The Nun's Tale 323*)
> (But there is better life in *the other place*).
> (4) O thou that art so fair and ful of grace
> Be my aduocate in *that high place* (*The Nun's Tale 67-68*)
> (You that are so beautiful and graceful; be my supporter in *that high place*).

As for heaven, the following euphemisms that contain *house* can be noticed:

> *heigh house* (*Wycliffite Bible*: Bod 959) 'high house'
> *holy house* (*Patience A.10*) 'holy house'
> *hous of my fadir* (*Wycliffite Bible (1)2.52*) 'house of my Father'
> *faders hous* (*The Clark's Tale 809*) 'Father's house'
>
> (5) For folk þou lihtest from þe heȝe hous (*Wycliffite Bible: Bod 959*)
> (You send light to people from the *high house*).

As for Hell, it could be referred to as *loþ hous* 'horrible, hideous house' (*The Harley Lyrics 2253*), or *thirde hous* 'third house' (*The Man of Law's Tale 206*). The concept of Hell projected via the notion of a house, is viewed as horrible, unwanted place and often as the place for enemies, which can be exemplified by the context:

> (6) Shild us from þe *loþe hous* þat to fend is wurhte (*The Harley Lyrics 2253*)
> (Protect us from the horrible house that is made for enemies).

The analysis shows that both *place* and *house* were frequently applied to refer to Heaven and Hell.

To recapitulate, *other place, that high place, the place, high house, holy house* as well as *house of my father* expressed the concept of Heaven. Additionally, taking into account the concept of light, the notion of *centre* was also adopted as a part of a euphemistic expression related to Heaven. Namely, the expression *contre of light* ('centre of light') stood for Heaven.

As for the concept of Hell, *loþ hous* 'horrible house', and *thirde hous* 'third house' expressed the eternal idea of punishment. Moreover, the concept of

darkness was central in euphemistic expressions related to Hell, namely *derke house* ('dark house'), *the derkeste hous* ('the darkest house'), *derk region* (dark region), *derk chambre* ('dark chamber'), *botom derk* ('dark bottom'), *derk erthe* ('dark earth'), *the land of darkness* ('the land of darkness'). Similarly, the whole phrase *from thens that most derk is,* was evocative of the concept of Hell. The whole expression could be rendered as 'from that place that is the most dark'. Therefore, the range of expressions referring to Hell and projected by *dark* was rich and varied. Furthermore, the amount of expressions linked with *dark* that applied to Hell was far greater than the amount of expressions linked with *light* that applied to Heaven. The concept of light applied mostly to divinities. Hence, the frequency and the quantity of the euphemistic expressions used by the medieval community reflected the belief system and the values of that community. It seems that the medieval community was highly preoccupied with the idea of punishment for their sins. Therefore, the concept of Hell conceived as the inevitable punishment for sins accompanied their everyday life and was reflected in the language used by that society. It seems that the medieval community was preoccupied more with the misery and the potential punishment, rather than with joy and a faraway reward in Heaven. In other words, the concept of sin was related to the belief that if you make sins, you must be punished for your wrongdoings. In contrast, the concept of Heaven was more distant and remote. It was conceived as a reward for the noble, virtuous people who were also ardent believers. The medieval society was, however, humble and submissive. Therefore, they did not expect reward, but rather did their utmost to avoid severe punishment in Hell. As already mentioned, the concept of Hell evoked fear and pain, but it was also an everyday central concept that was a part of their belief system. Consequently, the medieval society used a broad range of expressions to refer to that concept. Moreover, *dark,* when applied to the taboo sphere, did not refer to DEVIL, but it was rather juxtaposed with PLACE. As for *light*, it applied more to the divinities, rather than to the 'blessed place'. The medieval society were devoted Christians and felt respect for the Saints, therefore they avoided addressing them directly.

Euphemistic expressions linked with the category of animal

The analysis also records the application of animals to refer to Jesus and Devil. Namely, *whyte lamb* ('white lamb') (*The Man of Law's Tale 360*), and the *clene shepe* ('clean sheep') (*The General Prologue 506*) were used with reference to Jesus. Devil, however, was indirectly referred to as *scorpion* ('scorpio') (*The Man of Law's Tale 306*), *serpent* 'serpent' (The Summoner's Tale 286), and *olde snake* 'old snake' (*Lydgate's Tray Book 97*). *Clene shepe* and *whyte lamb* were symbolically associated with innocence, purity, goodness and magnanimity. As

for *scorpion*, *snake* and serpent, they stood for treachery and evil. The treacherous character of the *serpent* can be exemplified by the following context:

> (7) Ware fro the *serpent* that so slily crepith undir the gras and styngeth ful subtily (*The Summoner's Tale 286- 287).*
> (Be aware of the serpent that so craftily creeps under the grass and stings subtly).

Euphemistic expressions linked with the category of HIGH RANK TITLES

High rank titles were also used with reference to God, Virgin Mary and angels. Namely, Virgin Mary could be referred to as *lady*, and to be precise as:

> *lady bright* (*The Man of Law's Tale 752*) 'lady bright'
> *our lady* (*The Prioress Tale 91*) 'our lady'
> *swete lady* (*South English Legendary 2. V. 1104*) 'sweet lady'

Additionally, she was also addressed as *queen* in the address terms, such as: *heuyn queen* (*The Merchant's Tale 1090*) 'heaven queen', *blissful quene* (*The Prioress' Tale 29*) 'blissful queen', or *quene of sterres* (*Speculum Sacerdotale 2.V.307)* 'queen of stars'. As for God, the analysis shows that He was called *lord* or *king* as in:

> *lord of fortune* (*The Man of Law's Prologue 360*) 'lord of fortune'
> *that lord* (*The Shipman's Tale 178*) 'that lord'
> swete louerd (*South English Legendary 2. V. 1106*) 'sweet lord'
> *lord of light* (*The Assembly of God: 3.19.1393*) 'lord of light'
> our lord bryʒt (*As Reson Rywlyde Rwl C. 85*) 'our lord bright'
> the kyng of *heuen* (*The Man of Law's Tale 360) 'the king of heaven'*
> *our* heuyn kyng (*The Shipman's Tale 393*) 'our king of heaven'

Regarding angels, they were addressed as *knights*, which can be exemplified by the following contexts:

> (8) Ðer wurþ Lucifer þæt ear was *knight* (*The Middle English Genesis and Exodus 2. IV.1*)
> (There was Lucifer that earlier was a knight/angel).
> (9) Now cristis owen knyghtis leef and deer
> Cast away the workis of derknesse (*The Nun's Tale 382-383*)
> Now, Christ's own knights cast away the works of darkness).

Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to present a cognitive analysis of various kinds of euphemistic, circuitous, metaphorical expressions related to deities and devils, but also to Heaven and Hell in Middle English with special reference to *The Canterbury Tales*. The analysis showed that lexemes associated with categories

of LIGHT, DARKNESS, DARK PLACES, PLACES, ANIMALS and TITLES were frequently applies as euphemistic expressions that referred to Heaven and Hell, and to be precise to divinities and devils. Within the concept of LIGHT, different models were distinguished, such as metaphorical expressions, or as metaphors with a metonymic basis. Additionally, however, both models were described and characterized with reference to the inbuilt model of the literal perception of light. In the analysis, two sub-models were distinguished, that is sub-models that rely on the literal perception of light, and the sub-models in which the literal perception of light is hard to retrieve. Moreover, the paper showed that in some contexts *light* could also evoke the associations of imminent evil and Hell. Furthermore, the aim was also to emphasize that the frequency and the quantity of the euphemistic expressions used by the medieval community reflected the belief system and the values of that community.

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