

ENGL 3400 Homework (due 11/23/2023)

How “English” is the scene below? To what extent does Chaucer resort to his knowledge of French and Latin to enhance his poetry, and what percentage of these words do we still use today? Finally, how does this scene reflect changes in the grammar of the language from the transition from Old English to Middle English?

Begin by reading the passage to get a sense for the narrative. You can find the summaries of the tale online. Once you know what the story is about, generally, begin to examine the language of the passage carefully. How “English” is it? At the same time, you should begin to consider how the language of the passage differed from Old English. What about the passage exemplifies the linguistic changes we have discussed in class? You must print out a copy of the passage and mark it up: underline things, circle them, make notes, write questions, etc. You must submit this marked up page (scan or photo) along with your actual paper.

Once you’ve given the language of the passage some consideration, go to a dictionary. Your best resource will be the *OED*. Begin looking up words, such as honor and look at the etymology of the word(s). In the case of honor, here’s what you’d find:

Pronunciation: Brit. [honour#_gb_1.mp3](#) /ˈɒnə/, U.S. [honour#_us_1.mp3](#) /ˈɑnər/

Forms: ME *honere*, ME *honneur*, ME *honowur*, ME *onnere*, ME *onour*, ME *onoure*, ME ...

Frequency (in current use): Etymology: Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from French. Partly a borrowing from Latin.

Etymons: French *honore*; Latin *honor*.

< (i) Anglo-Norman *honore*, *honoure*, *honure*, *honneure*, *oner*, Anglo-Norman and Old French *honor*, *honur*, *onur*, *onour*, Anglo-Norman and Old French, Middle French *honour*, Anglo-Norman and Middle French *honneur*, *honeur*, *onneur*, *honnour* (French *honneur*) mark of esteem (10th cent.), office, responsibility (10th cent.), esteem, respect, repute, renown (11th cent.), domain, feudal possession (c1100), dignity, dignified conduct (especially of a woman) (12th cent.), and its etymon (ii) classical Latin *honor* (also *honōs*) esteem, respect, mark of esteem, privilege, public or political office, holding of office, dignity, grace, in post-classical Latin also as a title (6th cent.), benefice, fief (9th cent.), seignior, group of fiefs (frequently from 11th cent. in British and continental sources), of unknown origin. Compare Old Occitan *onor*, Catalan *honor* (14th cent.), Spanish *honor* (10th cent. as *honore*), Portuguese *honor* (13th cent.), Italian *onore* (13th cent.).

Spelling history. Like many other nouns of condition with ultimate etymons in Latin ending in *-or*, *honour* came increasingly often to be spelt with *-or* in early modern English (compare general discussion at [-or suffix](#)). The form *honour* is generally preferred in British dictionaries from the mid 17th cent., although a notable exception is Ash 1775 (who describes *honor* as ‘a modern but correct spelling, from the Lat[in]’). For comment on 18th-cent. usage compare: The form *honor* was preferred by Noah Webster, and today *honour* shows the same pattern as a number of other nouns of condition showing [-or suffix](#), with the spelling *honour* generally being preferred in Britain, but *honor* in the United States. In modern British English the spelling of derivative formations and other related words varies between *honour-* and *honor-*, with spellings in *honor-* generally being used for those words where the connection with a Latin etymon or model is more evident, and spellings in *honour-* for those words where the derivative relationship with *honour* is most obvious; compare e.g. *honoured*, *honourable*, *honourless*, beside e.g. *honorary*, *honorific*, *honorand*. Johnson 1755 likewise has *honourable* beside *honorary*, but there is much more variation among his contemporaries.

So, the *OED* tells you that this word is French in origin and that it entered English via Old French and not Latin. You will not, therefore, find the word in Old English, which means that it’s associated with post-1066 England and, therefore, representative of the changing and developing English lexicon after the Conquest.

Once you’ve looked up a host of words—enough to get a sense of the whole passage—you should turn your attention to grammar. You don’t have to look up every single word, but the more words you do look up the more accurate your conclusions will be. What about the passage is characteristic of Middle English, based on our discussion of the transition from OE to ME, and what are the vestiges of Old English? How much as the grammar changed from 1066 to 1400?

You can present your findings any way you wish in a paper of approximately 1,000 words (4-5 pages). It may be easiest to provide a series of sectional headings and deal with each part individually, but you may also come up with a short essay. I leave it up to you, as long as you’re thorough. Submit your paper through the D2L assignments dropbox.

1033	This passeth yeer by yeer and day by day, This passes year by year and day by day,	1060	Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal Was just next to the garden wall
1034	Till it fil ones, in a morwe of May, Until it befell once, in a morning of May,	1061	Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyynge. Where this Emelye took her pleasure.
1035	That Emelye, that fairer was to sene That Emelye, who was fairer to be seen	1062	Bright was the sonne and cleer that morwenynge, The sun was bright and clear that morning,
1036	Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene, Than is the lily upon its green stalk,	1063	And Palamoun, this woful prisoner, And Palamon, this woeful prisoner,
1037	And fressher than the May with floures newe -- And fresher than the May with new flowers --	1064	As was his wone, by leve of his gayler, As was his custom, by permission of his jailer,
1038	For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe, For her hue vied with color of the rose,	1065	Was risen and romed in a chambre an heigh, Had risen and roamed in a chamber on high,
1039	I noot which was the fyner of hem two -- I do not know which was the finer of them two --	1066	In which he al the noble citee seigh, In which he saw all the noble city,
1040	Er it were day, as was hir wone to do, Before it was day, as was her custom to do,	1067	And eek the gardyn, ful of braunches grene, And also the garden, full of green branches,
1041	She was arisen and al redy dight, She was arisen and all ready prepared,	1068	Ther as this fresshe Emelye the shene Where this fresh Emelye the bright
1042	For May wole have no slogardie anyght. For May will have no laziness at night.	1069	Was in hire walk, and romed up and down. Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.
1043	The sesoun priketh every gentil herte, The season urges on every gentle heart,	1070	This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun, This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon,
1044	And maketh it out of his slep to sterte, And makes it out of its sleep to awake suddenly,	1071	Goth in the chambre romynge to and fro Goes in the chamber roaming to and fro
1045	And seith "Arys, and do thyn observaunce." And says "Arise, and do thy observance."	1072	And to hymself compleynynge of his wo. And to himself lamenting his woe.
1046	This maked Emelye have remembraunce This made Emelye remember	1073	That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, "allas!" That he was born, full often he said, "alas!"
1047	To doon honour to May, and for to ryse. To do honor to May, and to rise.	1074	And so bifel, by aventure or cas, And so it happened, by chance or accident,
1048	Yclothed was she fressh, for to devyse: She was gaily clothed, so to say:	1075	That thurgh a wyndow, thikke of many a barre That through a window, thickly set with many a bar
1049	Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse Her yellow hair was braided in a tress	1076	Of iren greet and square as any sparre, Of iron, great and square as any beam,
1050	Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse. Behind her back, a yard long, I guess.	1077	He cast his eye upon Emelya, He cast his eye upon Emelye,
1051	And in the gardyn, at the sonne upriste, And in the garden, at the rising of the sun,	1078	And therwithal he bleynte and cride, "A!" And with that he turned pale and cried, "A!"
1052	She walketh up and down, and as hire liste She walks up and down, and as she pleases		
1053	She gadereth floures, party white and rede, She gathers flowers, mixed white and red,		
1054	To make a subtil gerland for hire hede; To make an intricate garland for her head;		
1055	And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong. And she sang (as) heavenly as an angel.		
1056	The grete tour, that was so thikke and stroong, The great tower, that was so thick and strong,		
1057	Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun Which was the main fortification of the castle		
1058	(Ther as the knyghtes weren in prisoun (Where the knights were in prison		
1059	Of which I tolde yow and tellen shal), Of which I told yow and shall tell),		