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Language Change in Early Modern English

How Print and Printers Reflected Evolving Language

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Introduction

The written word has been around for many a year, granting historians of all trades insight into the past through the perusal of carefully written and documented histories. However, despite the name of the written word, it has been the advent of technology that lessened the amount of writing done that has done the most to promote writing. In modern times, one might think of how computers have simplified several aspects of life, yet the advent of the computer was not the first time that writing was promoted and at the same time of decreased importance. That honour would have to go to the printing press.

The printing press with movable type was invented around 1450 in Mainz, Germany, by Johannes Gutenberg (Dittmar, 1133-1134), at a time when texts and manuscripts were still written by hand, mostly by clerks and monks. The fact that everything had to be written by hand meant that any writing was costly in terms of time and manpower: a monk could only copy one manuscript at a time, for example. The invention of the printing press offered, for the first time, a somewhat automated process of copying manuscripts and texts. It created a new set of jobs: the printers who would operate the presses and who would sell their copies of books to the public. Most importantly, however, the printing press cut down on the time required to copy something by orders of magnitude.

Instead of relying on human handwriting, a printer would only have to arrange the blocks with letters in the order needed to stamp the ink onto the parchment. Additionally, handwriting was limited to one copy at a time, whereas a printer could make the press print a dozen identical pages before moving on to the next page, which meant that more books were able to be printed and sold to the public. In addition, the price dropped, on average by two-thirds (Dittmar, 1133). This meant that the book changed from a rare item of luxury to something that was eventually generally available (Raven, 9).

Additionally, the advent of the printing press coincides with the generally established point at which Middle English ends and Early Modern English starts. The *Cambridge History of the English Language* uses 1476 as a cut off point to divide the two, which is the same year the England was introduced to its own printing press. However, language changes over time and texts from around the tipping point from one era to the next often still employ a great amount of older grammar and lexicon.

This thesis seeks to establish the way in which the language changed between 1476 and 1530, using analysis of three texts printed within that timeframe by two of the most successful printers of that time: William Caxton (b. ca. 1420[1] – d. 1492) and Wynkyn de Worde (d. 1535). Though much is known of the differences between Late Middle English and Early Modern English, comparative analysis is relatively rare, and those analyses often use a larger timescale. For example, Markus analyses how the increase in letter writing that happened in this era affects several syntactic aspects, as well as analysing if male or female writers were more likely to forego, for example, verb-noun agreement or proper word order (182-183). Additionally, Boggel's *Metadiscourse in Middle English and Early Modern English Religious Texts: A Corpus-based Study* seeks to establish the evolving role and form of the writers of religious texts from the thirteenth century until the eighteenth century (Peter Lang). However, a smaller analysis of texts that are comparatively close together, right at the tipping point from one era to the other, should be able to establish data about the speed with which the language changed, which is what this thesis sets out to do. The research herein will be chiefly philological, attained through close reading of the texts involved.

[1] N.F. Blake in *William Caxton* makes use of several documents to narrow the scope of when Caxton was born to 1415-1424, but "a more accurate dating is not possible" (8).

Methodology

This thesis will contain analyses of the first few pages or leaves of works printed by the two early printers mentioned in the introduction. Analyses will be done of consistency of spelling, morphology, phonology and syntax, both between different texts and internally within one text. The texts chosen are as follows:

Printer	Title	Year of printing
William Caxton	The Book of Curteseye	1477-1478
Wynkyn de Worde	The Temple of Glas	1495
Wynkyn de Worde	The payne and sorowe of evyll maryage	1530

The goal of this analysis is to find out how some aspects of language changed as the Middle English (ca. 1066 – 1476) period came to an end and the Early Modern English (ca. 1476 – 1750) period started. When the first text was published, no real standard for speech or writing existed in England (Salmon, Volume III, 15). In addition, the internal consistency allows one to hypothesise about any standard that was used, much like the Chancery Standard and modern day spelling and grammatical rules. It is the expectation that gradual change towards Modern English will occur, primarily for morphology and grammar.

William Caxton

The printing press was invented around 1450, but it was not until 1476 (Raven, 11) that the press was successfully imported into England. The printer responsible for this was William Caxton (b. ca. 1420 – d. 1492), a merchant originally from Kent (Blake, 8), though by the time he imported the printing press, he had spent many years on the Continent. He had encountered the printing press there; and he learned the craft of printing whilst staying in Cologne from July 1471 until approximately December 1472 (Blake, 18). He also acquired a printing press, and used it to publish a translation of the French *Le recueil des histoires de Troyes,* which itself was a translation from a Latin book (Blake, 19), in 1473/74. By this time, printing was becoming increasingly popular on the Continent; books in Latin were especially prevalent, owing to the status of the Church and the status of Latin as the lingua franca of the upper layers of society: the clergy, the universities, the courts. Blake suggests that the diversity and supply of books in Latin were responsible for Caxton's choice to print primarily in English; it was a niche he could make a profit in as a printer utilizing English (Blake, 39), which was becoming increasingly important as local governments and aristocracy began using it more. One such example is of Caxton printing various indulgences for the local clergy (Blake, 34). Additionally, the upper middle class, such as merchants and clerics, as well as the lower gentry, started to take an interest in books in English (Raven, 11).

Though Caxton was but one of many printers, he was one of the most successful in England at the time. Blake suggests that this is due to Caxton being a merchant primarily (39): though other printers were artisans in their own right, they lacked the financial acumen that Caxton had. Caxton himself never saw himself as a printer, but as a merchant. He wrote in the prologue to *Caton*, a 1483 book, that he was a sworn member of the London Mercer's Guild (Blake, 33). Despite this, Caxton's influence on the field of literature, as the one to bring the

printing press to the English public, was substantial, albeit less direct than great writers or playwrights of any given era.

The Book of Curteseye is a morality text, often employed to indicate how one should behave in certain situations. It is addressed to ‘Little John’, and it is one of Caxton’s earlier printed works, dating back to 1477 and 1478; a mere three years after he returned to England with his printing press.

The Book of Curtesye

The first three stanzas of Caxton’s text use the southern conjugation of weak verbs in London at the time: -eth in *stondeth*, *resseyueth, lerneth*, though Lass mentions the modern-day –s ending, then still primarily from more northern dialects, was in use in London from 1370 onwards (Lass, Volume 2, 139). However, Lass also notes that Caxton, unlike Lydgate (c. 1370 – c. 1451) only uses the –s conjugation rarely. The reason for this is likely that –s had not made it into the vernacular grammar yet. As such, Caxton likely catered to the majority of what he heard, as well as his own knowledge, leading to –eth. The –eth ending is to be expected throughout the text, and only exceptions will be pointed out from here on. Middle English in the late Middle Ages, which is when Caxton’s work was published, was largely stable regarding conjugation of verbs. Tense was the most important, Lass notes in Volume 2 of *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, with person being second to tense for the singular only (139). This resembles modern English. The conjugation of the verb *to be* as is known in modern English, however, does not yet exist: it is alternately used as *be* or *ben.* The third stanza’s use of *be* for singular would suggest that there is minor conjugation: *be* for singular and *ben* for plural. This is somewhat contradictory to what Lass notes, as he mentions similar conjugation to modern English for the singular indicative of *to be* from the late fourteenth century onward in the southeast Midlands (Volume 2, 140-141).

Regarding phonology, Caxton does use a rhythm to structure his stanzas, similar to what other tales, such as the Old English *Beowulf* and the Middle English *Canterbury Tales* did. However, Caxton utilised not the AABBCC-scheme that Chaucer did, but rather an ABABBCC scheme, as seen in the first stanza below:

Lytyl Iohn syth your tendre enfancye

Stondeth as yet vnder / in difference

To vice or vertu to meuyn or applye

And in suche age ther is no prouidence

Ne comenly no sad-e Intelligence

But as waxe resseyueth prynte or figure

So children ben disposed-e of nature

Later stanzas follow the same rhythm with regards to rhyming, and the amount of syllables per syllable remains the same as well: each line appears to have ten syllables, and Caxton actively used extra syllables to make that happen. For example, the use of –e appears to be indicating that there should be a different pronunciation, most likely the addition of a spoken e-syllable at the end. Lass, in his article for Volume III for *The Cambridge History of the English Language* mentions that final, unstressed vowels in late Middle English are either absent completely or are incorporated into the preceding consonant, barring exceptions such as the use of proper names (135-136). This is most apparent in *prouidence* or *intelligence*. The third stanza's first two lines suggest a marked difference between two instances of modern day *and*: "Take hede therfore / and herkne what I saye // And-e guye therto / your good-e aduertence". Another word to note is good-e and the lack of final e in *ther*, further supporting the case that Lass makes and the hypothesis that this is due to some pronunciation necessity, such as keeping the meter correct.

The first stanza features multiple negation in the form of "ne comenly no". According to Rissanen, "multiple negation was still accepted" in the later part of Middle English (Development, 125), which is essentially what the text is in, though Fischer contends that the exact form of *ne ... not* is more specifically based in south-eastern texts in Chaucer's time (Volume 2, 281). Using just an unsupported *ne* for a negative was also still used in those same texts, though both the switch from *ne… not* to modern *not* meant that the unsupported *ne* was not used any more soon after (Fischer, Volume 2, 282).

Barring the u-v, i-y and j-i swaps that are found, the most interesting addition to the spelling of words in general in the first three stanzas is the addition of final e in stressed syllables or in monosyllabic words. Additionally, Caxton's use of the Midlands *ther* over Northern *yer*, and his spelling of *lytyl* give clues as to which dialect of English, if any, he preferred. The online version of *A Linguistic Atlas of* Late *Mediaeval English,* or LALME for short, gives *ther* as occurring mostly in texts found in Norfolk, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. The first three are counties in the Eastern Midlands and the latter is in the Western Midlands. Likewise, *lytyl* is found mainly in Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire; all Eastern Midlands counties. Moreover, *newe* is mainly found in texts from Norfolk and Lincolnshire, though there are fewer ways of spelling that differently when compared to the earlier examples. From the first leaf then, it becomes rather clear that, despite Caxton's presence in Westminster, and despite being born in Kent, he was utilising a variety of English that was more familiar to Midlanders, mainly East Anglians.

The second leaf, comprising stanzas four through nine, showcases another feature of Late Middle English: the imperative ending in –e. This is actually a holdover of Old English (Lass, Volume 2, 134) that is not present in Modern English. Examples in the text are *kembe*, *loke* and *kepe* from the first line of the sixth stanza, amongst others. Caxton also uses the older *hem* instead of the more modern *them* when referring back to *naylis* in the second line of the seventh stanza. The Scandinavian-influenced *them* came from the North, and Caxton used both forms in writing, though the older *hem* was predominant (Lass, Volume 2, 120). Somewhat incongruently, Caxton also uses *they*, but that is normal in fifteenth-century English (Lass, Volume 2, 121).

Caxton plays around with the word order, particularly the placing of the verbs, in these stanzas. Examples are "ye vp rise" or "noman in it see" in stanzas four and six respectively. The reason for this is most likely the rhyming scheme that Caxton had adopted, though it is

possible for this inversion to be the norm in late Middle English. Caxton uses both the inversion and the word order present in Modern English, without apparent reasons to choose one over the other barring instances such as the preceding. An example of this is the line "youre hondes wesshe / it is an holsom thing-e", which has inversion without apparent reason for it. Yet the line "kepe you klene / and lose not your gere" does not have the imperative change place. Similarly, the use of the negative becomes equally idiosyncratic, though multiple or single negation does influence the meter of the line. Compare "lose not your gere" with "ne suffre not hem / to be too longe growing", where both negatives are translated into Modern English as *do not*.

The second stanza is when the distinction between *shal* and *wil* shows up. Notably, *shal* occurs when the text is speaking of what should be done in order to be proper, and *wil* occurs once on this leaf in the predicting sense that modern *will* also has. This is further confirmed by Fischer, who states that "*shal* is more frequent […] in contexts in which a sense of obligation is present" whereas *wil* is present mainly in wishes or promises (Fischer, Volume 2, 264). *Shal*, according to Fischer, is also present mainly in the third person, with *wil* more oriented towards the first person, but *The Book of Curtesye* has only used *shal* for second person *ye* and *wil* after third person plural *they* at this point.

The third leaf, consisting of stanzas ten through fifteen, sheds further light on the exact syntactic use of *ne.* For example: "Caste no styck ne stone at fowle ne beest" and "in felde ne in vilage" have *ne* performing the same role as present day *nor*, which makes the word dependent on context for its meaning at this time, seeing as it can be both *nor* and a generic negative, though Caxton does not use *ne* as an unsupported negative in his text.

Spelling in the third leaf is not at all congruent with the previous stanzas. Firstly, there is *fro(m),* with *from* being used in the first and third leaf and *fro* in the second leaf. Secondly,

the spelling of *child(e)* suffers a similar fate with the final e, which should be present on account of *child* being monosyllabic and therefore inherently stressed, dropping off at the end of the first line of the eleventh stanza. There is, however, a reason for this incongruence: there simply was not enough space to print the extra letters. Lotte Hellinga puts it thusly in the third volume of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain:* "Mistakes were made [in printing], due to space limitation, but compositors had become adept in coping with them, […] using variations in spelling, abbreviation and contraction, or even introducing variations in the text" (81). Close perusal of the lines with *fro* and *child* do show that the lines are quite lengthy, and the alternate spelling of *litil* also shows up in the latter line. The i in Caxton's typeface takes up less space than the y, which makes *litil* another sensible change if one wanted to conserve space. However, a lack of space cannot explain away all alternate spellings, such as *lityl,* as the last line of the thirteenth stanza does not lack for space at all. *Lityl* is a rarer version of *lytyl,* according to LALME, occurring mainly in Norfolk. Another indication for Caxton mainly writing for the Midlands area shows up in the spelling of *chirche*, which is found primarily in the entire Midlands. Northern spelling would have been *kyrk* or *kirk*, influenced by Scandinavian languages, whilst the southern spelling is the same or similar to the Midlands spelling.

On the whole, Caxton's lexicon is most likely heavily drawing upon Midland influences, whilst his grammar is slightly more tailored towards his native south-eastern dialect, albeit not by a lot. As it stands, only those conclusions can be tentatively drawn. Given that London is situated right at the edge of where the eastern Midlands, the south-eastern Kentish and the south-western dialects meet, any combination of the three would be expected to show up in writing, with Caxton's native Kentish dialect being the most likely of the three. That it is the Midlands dialect that is most easily apparent signifies that there was demand for that dialect to be used.

Wynkyn De Worde

Wynkyn de Worde (d. 1535) was a Dutch foreman at Caxton's printing shop. Upon the latter's death in ca. 1492, de Worde took over the shop (Raven, 14) and proved himself to be a worthy successor to Caxton, printing many books over his lifetime. De Worde's acumen showed in that he, along with another printer by the name of Richard Pynson, recognized the value of using a "heraldic or pictorial device" (Raven, 55) to make printers recognizable at a single glance. Likewise, the use of an explicit title page is an innovation ascribed to the two and this era (Raven, 55), though again, it was only used to make works recognizable.

De Worde's career as a printer lasted many years until he finally died in 1535 (Blake, 46). Whereas Caxton's era was the last vestige of the Middle Ages, de Worde's time saw many religious, social and cultural changes, such as the Reformation and the Renaissance. As such, it seems appropriate to include two books that he printed, one from the beginning of his career and one closer to his death, as the difference of the years is thus best displayed.

The first text is a print of *The Temple of Glas* by John Lydgate. De Worde printed this in approximately 1495, which makes it one of his earlier works, though he was not, like Caxton before him, a complete newcomer to the trade at that time. *The Temple of Glas* is a text that "takes the form of an elusive and suspenseful dream vision" (Mitchell, 3rd par), which makes it markedly different from Caxton's morality book. Lydgate was a monk in Suffolk (Mitchell, 2nd par), which means that an eastern Midlands dialect is to be expected. However, there are several decades between Lydgate writing the poem and de Worde printing it and it is likely that de Worde made edits to the text before printing it.

The second text is another Lydgate text, titled *The payne and sorowe of euyll maryage.* This was printed around 1530. There are some superficial similarities with *The Book of*

Curtesye as both texts are about what to do or what not to do in certain situations, though stylistic similarities will be more likely to occur with *The Temple of Glas*.

The Temple of Glas

The first leaf of *The Temple of Glas* shows several similarities to Caxton's work, for example with regards to the use of *be* for use in the indicative, such as "Ther be kalendes of the new yere" (line 7). Even if de Worde is copying Lydgate's work word by word, the conjugation is still, as described by Lass (Volume 2, 140-141), not the most recent. The future does use *be(n)* (Lass, Volume 2, 140), or the northern *are(n),* but unlike Caxton's work, which is about how one should behave in the future, *The Temple of Glas* is nothing like that. The first page alone has several verbs in the past tense, *wente, founded, began* to name but three. Considering Mitchell's analysis of the work as being a dream vision (Mitchell, 3rd par), it seems unlikely for the text to be oriented towards the future in the same way that *The Book of Curtesye* was. The use of *be* is therefore an anomaly, especially when the past tense *was* is conjugated as Lass listed in the third person (Volume 2, 141). However, de Worde uses *I wex astoyned,* with the auxiliary form of *wex.* From this, no clear rule on how to conjugate to be can be established, though it is clearly unlike Lass' assertions. Like Caxton, however, de Worde used the Midlands pronouns with *I* and *her.* Severely unlike Caxton is the use of *ise ifrore*. The i- prefix had "virtually died out" by the later part of the fifteenth century, even in the south, where it was seen as a "Chaucerism" by that time. (Lass, Volume 2, 146).

The Temple of Glas does not use the stanzas that *The Book of Curtesye* used. It is more akin to the way that Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* were set up, in both rhyming and structure. The rhyming scheme is a simple AABBCC and the structure is such that the tale is only interrupted by the end of a page. However, a major difference with the Caxton text is that not all lines appear to be ten syllables. Most of the lines do consist of ten syllables, such as "Had her beames under a mysty cloude // With in my bed for cold I gan me shroude", but other lines do not. "Ther be kalendes of the new yere" has only nine syllables, unless an extra –e sound, as described before, is added to *new*. However, de Worde does not add those –e

markers at all in his print, or at least in this version, and it is up to the one pronouncing it to add it, should one want to keep the meter. This is an addition that de Worde presumably made: the text on Mitchell's website, which is based on a 1446 manuscript primarily, does have the extra –e required in the above sentence, as in other sentences, though it is not marked as Caxton did. This is not to say that de Worde does not use the extra –e at all, if one is inclined to try and stick to a ten syllable meter. The last line on the first page is ten syllables if the final e in *parte* is pronounced: "On euery parte where that I gan gone". However, given that there is no presence of the extra –e in several sentences and given that multiple lines are not ten syllables, the case for de Worde setting out to keep the meter is thin.

De Worde's vocabulary appears to be largely the same as Caxton's in terms of where it is from. *Dred* in *dredfull* is a typically southern or south-Midlands feature according to LALME, but as it is a conjunction, it is only peripherally relevant. *New* is typically Midlands, which is understandable as it is a variation of the *newe* Caxton used. Spelling-wise, the similarities to Caxton's text are numerous. The final –e in *ther* is still absent and various letter swaps are still present with the i/y most prevalent of them all. De Worde elects to use *to and fro* in his text, presumably not for space-related reasons as the line is average of length. One bigger change is that de Worde uses capitalisation in a way that resembles modern English, as he appears to only use capital letters for the start of proper sentences and *I,* though sentences can only start at the beginning of a line. In addition, the capital *I* at the start of a sentence is different from the capital *I* used in the middle of a sentence. However, on the whole, changes are few. Given that only approximately two decades have passed since Caxton started printing in England and less than that since he published *The Book of Curtesye,* few changes are expected.

The first page of the second leaf uses several instances of compound adverbs. Rissanen mentions a study by Österman stating that the frequency of those compound

adverbs, such as modern *therefore* and de Worde's *wherto* and *tofore* increases from Old English until the seventeenth century (Rissanen, 126). *For to* also occurs, though not in a compound form. De Worde also uses the multiple negation *ne … no,* indicating further similarities to Caxton's text, not to modern English. Oddly, he uses *no thyng* in that sentence, yet he printed *nothyng* on the first leaf. Internal consistency is generally present, but not completely so. There is an instance of *myn* instead of *my* and of *within* on the second leaf and *with in* on the first leaf. If anything, this, along with the compound adverb example and the final –e example, shows that, though there were unwritten standards regarding consistency to keep, there was no complete consistency just yet. De Worde was, however, consistent in marking plurals of nouns: he uses *skyes, bulles* but also *colours.* At this point, it seems likely that the use of –es or –s depends on whether or not a vowel preceded the last letter of the word.

Phonologically speaking, the second page has some diacritic marks that were wholly absent in Caxton's text, as well as in modern speech. The mark that de Worde uses is normally used to indicate that a sound should be lengthened, such as ā in *stāde.* Likewise, the same diacritic shows up over the m in *som*, which would indicate that the nasal is supposed to be lengthened.

The second page of the second leaf has a few inversions in word order again. Like Caxton, de Worde's inversions appear arbitrary, with *was* once following the participle *deceyued,* and *sawe* once preceding *I.* It is possible for this to have been Lydgate's choice, not de Worde's, as Mitchell's text shows the same inversions (lines 58, 67), but it is yet another reminder that there is no real consistency.

Though Lass does not list it as a recognized grammatical form for the feminine possessive pronoun (Volume 2, 120), De Worde uses *hyr* instead of *her* at one point. Later, he

does revert back to *her*. He also uses *she,* which is as expected. Both *hyr* and *her* are primarily Midlands forms according to LALME, with no real case to be made for a further subdivision. *Hym* instead of *him* is grammatically expected, as well spelling-wise due to the i/y swap, but *hyr* is a small anomaly.

De Worde also proves that he uses capitalization in a more modern manner than Caxton, as he actually capitalizes all first letters of proper nouns, whereas Caxton was not consistent regarding that. Caxton wrote *Iohn,* but *god* and *maria,* and de Worde capitalises every name from Greek mythology that shows up. Another spelling oddity is *trewe*, which appears to be related to modern *true,* yet also *trouth,* which is likely related to *truth.*

De Worde exchanges *also* with *eke* from time to time, though it only happens a few times in total: “There saw I wreton eke the whole tale” on the fourth page (line 97), for example. *Eke* sounds closer to modern Dutch *ook,* modern German *auch* and Chaucer’s *eek* (Riverside Chaucer, line 871), than to modern *also*, which is used predominantly within both de Worde’s and Caxton’s texts. Another example of the resemblance to other modern Germanic languages can be found in *eyen* on the second page, which looks more like Dutch *eigen* or German *eigene* than English *own.* There is also *alas* and *allas* as far as spelling inconsistencies go, as well as some proper names, such as *philomene* and a*chilles* lacking proper capitalisation, but the general consistency remains high, though not perfect. Lastly, the plural –es shows up again in *walles.*

The i- prefix is present on this page again in “How philomene [sic] in to a nyghtingale // Iturned was”, though it is again a rarity to see. There is limited proof on the page that de Worde still used the –eth third person singular form for verbs as he uses “as Chaucer telleth us”, as opposed to modern *tells.* It is only the first time of a third person singular form in the text, and as such it is not conclusive evidence either way. Something that is slightly unusual is

wreton, when Lass mentions that Caxton used both *writen* and *wreten* (Volume 2, 131) earlier in the century.

On the whole, de Worde’s text appears to be closer to the Modern English than Caxton’s text. This was to be expected, though the exact details are perhaps not what was expected. For instance, the spelling and grammar of the text is largely identical to Caxton’s text, and perhaps even more oriented towards Middle English than towards Modern English, with the i- prefix and the multiple negation being decidedly Middle English. Additionally, de Worde uses more words that have less of a connection to modern English and more of one to other Germanic languages, though that might have been caused by many things: his own heritage or Lydgate originally using those forms chief among them.

The differences, however, lie in the decreased use of the voiced –e addition at the end of words, as well as the steps taken towards what modern English recognizes as punctuation. Compared to Caxton’s text, there are far less mid-line sentence breaks, which are indicated by ⁄ and more sentences that start and end at the start and end of a line. Additionally, capitalization is essentially the same as used in Modern English. The change did not come in the expected area of lexis and syntax, but it did happen.

The payne and sorowe of an evyil maryage

This text is, logically, the text of the three that appears to be most similar to modern English. An example of a morphological feature that modern readers would recognize, even if it is barely used in modern English, is the use of *thy, thyne* and *thou* on the first page. This form of the second person singular (Lass, Volume III, 146-147) is typical of London from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, though the earlier texts show no indication of using it. Something that did not survive, but which has been touched upon is the imperative –e in *lerne* and *thynke.* The text also has the first *whome* that has been seen up to now; though Fischer mentions that it has been in the language since the twelfth and thirteenth century (Volume 2, 296-297), and it is also the first time that the reflexive *themselfe* appears in one of the texts, which also serves as a confirmation that it is *them* and not, as it was in Caxton's text, *hem,* any more.

The spelling, though similar at some points, has diverged as well. One example is yet another spelling of modern *little,* this time printed as *lytell*, and another example of a marked difference when compared to *The Temple of Glas* is that there is final e in a great amount of words that lacked or would have lacked it in the earlier printed text. The use of the final e is similar to what can be found in *The Book of Curtesye*, though no letters are, presumably, cut off due to a lack of space. One thing that does show up in both of de Worde's texts is the use of capitalization and sentences in a more modern sense, though *god* still does not have a capital letter and punctuation has yet to be invented. De Worde also uses *full* instead of *ful* in both of his texts, though all uses of *full* are in compounds such as *dredfull* or *woofull.*

Phonologically, there is more similarity to Caxton's text again, as opposed to de Worde's earlier text. One reason for this is that the text is structured in the same way of seven lines per stanza, but all lines also appear to conform to the ten syllable meter, which is rather

different from *The Temple of Glas.* De Worde's print of the text threw away that meter unless one added explicit pronunciation of several unmarked instances of final e, as well as adding some final e completely. From the rhyming scheme of ABABBCC, we can also conclude that *retourne, soiourne* and *mourne* are pronounced using the same vowel for the *ou* vowel cluster.

It appears that the use of *ne* will not be present in this text, as both *not* and *nor* appear within the text, as opposed to *ne … no* or single *ne.* The regular –ed for weak verbs in a past form is also present in the text for both the past simple and the present perfect. It appears that the past participle has yet to be standardized as the text uses *have me take*, as opposed to leaving *me* out, as would be expected when there is but one rule on how to form a past participle.

Despite –s endings being present in London, even in Caxton's time, de Worde does not use it, though the only source of a third person singular verb on the second page of the first leaf is *god hath*, which modern readers would not find odd at all, merely archaic. Conjugation of *to be* has also not yet become a part of the language, though it is *wyues be*, without the *n* that marked a plural conjugation of *to be* in earlier texts. The past tense conjugations remain essentially modern, making this lack of conjugation a near anachronism as Lass's findings are now well over a century old (Volume 2, 141).

The general use of relative pronouns, such as *whome* or *whiche,* is markedly higher in this text, as more instances of those words are present in the first two pages of this text than there are instances of them in all the analysed parts of the previous texts combined. This would seem to indicate that the language might be starting to shift to include more references to what was said previously. Another example of that would be the increased focus on the compound adverbs, which have a similar function in that they provide a more compact form of "cohesive reference" (Risanen, 127) for writers of, for example, law texts to use.

The second leaf gives solid evidence that the use of –s hadn't caught on yet for de Worde, though there is merit in Lass's idea that "-s was probably informal, and –th neutral and/or elevated" (Volume III, 164) at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He mentions that the preference had flipped to –s by 1580, but as this text is half a century earlier, it is likely that the neutral or more formal –th forms are more appropriate to use in a book or poem that is meant to be sold. *To be* has inconsistent conjugations, with *wyues ben* and *they be,* though the third person singular does get modern *is* instead of Middle English *be* as a conjugation.

De Worde uses *true* as opposed to the *trewe* that he used in the previous text. However, he also uses the Caxton *newe,* though that may be explained away by the fact that many words that are able to end in –e also do just that. That a lot of words end that way might also explain why many plurals end in –es. De Worde also changes the spelling of *whole* to the modern version: the other texts have *hole* or *holsome*. There are very few words spelled differently throughout the poem: this is clearly one area where consistency did become quite important in the past years.

There are several instances throughout the poem that do not have the regular expected word order of either Middle or Modern English: "And Salomon sayth there be thynges thre // Shrewde wyues / rayne / and smokes blake // Make husbandes ofte theyr houses to forsake" for example. However, most of those word order anomalies can be adequately explained by virtue of the rhyming scheme that was used, like Caxton's text and less like the previous de Worde text. From the same stanza, the fourteenth in total and the second on the fourth page, comes that *meyne* should rhyme with *the* and *thre* for the sake of keeping the rhyme, which is a stark contrast to what is expected from modern English. There are, of course, more than just the examples that have been pointed out, but these are the more egregious examples within the text. The spelling might be similar to modern English, but the pronunciation is at times counter-intuitive and at times more logical. One example of the latter shows up a fair amount

of times in both of de Worde's works: the –cy- in *facyon, proteccyon* or *confyrmacyon.* The modern pronunciation of what once was the –cy- cluster, though the letters are completely different, do resemble each other still, as is reflected in the similarities in spelling in these late Middle English and early Modern English texts.

Unlike the previous text, which was printed approximately thirty-five years before this one, this text is more ambiguous as to which era it resembles more. It is true that the spelling of some words is becoming increasingly modern, and a novice reading the text would find a great amount of words resembling the modern language. However, the text is also more reminiscent of Caxton's work with regards to pronunciation of final –e. In addition, the style is more reminiscent of Caxton's text as well, though that might be due to the structure, as noted before. Grammar, however, is consistently more modern than it was in either of the previous texts. Several features are present that are simply absent in the texts printed before the turn of the century and the sentences themselves would not look too out of place in modern poems, if one adjusted the words for modern usage.

Conclusion

The printing press was undoubtedly one of the chief catalysts of the increased trade in and production of books in late medieval, early renaissance Europe, and the printers that worked the presses were instrumental in making the press a successful endeavour. With increased trade in books came an increased need for language to stabilise and standardise, as people from different dialects will read a book and the market is simply bigger if more people are able to read it. In this respect, the texts that were analysed do show that the language changed and became more similar to what is now known as Modern English.

Though Caxton's text was essentially an amalgam of Late Middle English and the earliest advent of Early Modern English, it was also a text that erred on the side of the former more than that of the latter. Several grammatical and morphological aspects resemble the medieval form of the language more, and some of those aspects are carried over even to the final text by de Worde. Despite that, Caxton did draw heavily upon a set of dialects that was most appropriate for the region he was in: a mix of Midlands and Southern influences, and he was by and large internally consistent in doing so.

De Worde's first text is less internally consistent, but even so, the language has clearly evolved by this time. Capitalisation and a system of punctuation that is more similar to modern English were the two things that stood out in this text. It is an oddity that de Worde elects to use, more than in his other text, anachronistic grammar and words that are unlike modern English, but that do have a modern English equivalent that has been used. However, on the whole, a great deal of change has been wrought in the time that has lapsed since Caxton's text.

The third text is close to passing as a modern text if one does not focus on the words, but on the underlying grammar. In addition, the lexis is turning more recognizable as well,

though the addition of many an extra e at the end of words is something that is more reminiscent of the Caxton text. Though it is still a work in progress, as some forms that de Worde uses are not present in texts that are dated closer to the end of the sixteenth century, there has been change towards the standard English that we now use and that the playwrights of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century used.

Analysing texts that were printed approximately half a millennium ago always risks a misinterpretation of the finesses of a text, and the limited scope of the analysis means that no strong conclusion can be drawn from any of it. However, what has been seen is sufficient to state that the changes were actually less gradual and more sudden in some regards, owing to the differences between *The Book of Curtesye* and *The Temple of Glas,* as well as the sharp contrast in the usage of certain morphological terms in general. For syntax and lexis, however, the change is somewhat more of a gradual change, as much as one can say that with a limited set of data. More analysis could be done, though smaller gaps in time between texts, as well as a larger selection of texts would be highly recommended.

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