The Linguistic Development (in English)
of the Parable of *The Prodigal Son*

A Comparison of the Old English and Middle English (Wyclif) Versions

Differences in Meaning

The Wyclif version of the parable of the Prodigal Son appears different from the anonymous Old English translation in two general ways. First, Wyclif made an effort to vary his vocabulary. He used *porcioun* and *departide* to represent the noun and verb forms of sharing, while the Old English used *deal* for both. Wyclif also used *hoggis* and *swyn* in contrast to the Old English's exclusive use of *swyn*, and *catel* and *goodis* instead of the Old English *aehte* used in both cases.

Secondly, his vocabulary connoted a much stronger personality in the prodigal son than did the Old English. Wyclif has the son going on *pilgrymage* (is this a poke at the medieval custom?) and living lecherously, while the Old English simply says he went to a distant kingdom and lived in luxury. In the Old English, his things were *amyrrede* (our modern verb enmired), but in Wyclif they were *endid*.

The son, in Wyclif, covets the swine's cods, while in the Old English, he would willingly eat them. In Wyclif the son speaks of the plenty in his father's house, while the Old English's father has merely enough. In Wyclif he perishes, in the Old English he unbecomes. The Old English version uses the word for farmers, *yrthlingum*, but Wyclif calls the serfs hired men. The father, in Wyclif falls on his son's neck, stirred by mercy, a much more active kind of forgiveness than the Old English rendering: *mild-heortnesse* and embracing. Even the son, in Wyclif, turns against himself, while the Old English son bethinks himself. His son's I shall rise up implies more power than the Old English descriptive I arise. Contributing to this effect is the redundancy implicit in rise up.

Wyclif's use of the word *clepid* instead of *genemned* is especially interesting. *Clepid* comes from the Old English, meaning to cry out. So we see the father as someone of importance, whose son is announced in relation to him. The Old English *genemned* is the only passive voice verb in the language and has no additional meaning besides the condition of being named. Another emphasis of the father's position in Wyclif is his use of first, instead of the Old English best, to describe the garments he wants his son clothed in. The word *stoole*, which Wyclif uses, derives from the Latin root *stol*, meaning a long robe in Middle English. Again we have Wyclif using more specific terminology than exists in the Old English.

Twice in the Wyclif version the adverb *forth* qualifies a verb: *wente forth* and *brynge ye forth*. Forth was an extant Old English word, but wasn't used in that version. It lends a sense of dynamism to the Wyclif version which is absent in the Old English. Clearly, the vocabulary implies an active father and son and strengthens the difference between the prodigal and the reformed personality.

French Influence

Latinate Vocabulary

The vocabulary in the two versions diverges widely. The vast majority of the 61 new words or expressions in the Wyclif version are of Old English extraction. Their choice seems to reflect a difference in meaning or a complexity of sentence structure. For example, Wyclif uses the word say consistently for quoth, although the Old English combined both *cwaeth* and *secge*. Again, Wyclif uses *gyve*, from the Old English root *giefan*, rather than *syle*, both of which seem to have the same meaning, at least in Old English. The increased hypotaxis in Wyclif is demonstrated in the use of *whanne* (from the old English *hwenne*) and *aftir* (Old English *aefter*). Wyclif also employs the phrase 'not many' instead of the Old English *feawe*, although both concepts were available to both periods. And Wyclif introduces both the passive voice and the reflexive: the former in *weren gederid togider*, *was maad*, *was stirrid*, the *was deed* and *is foundun* parallels and the latter in *he turnede ayen to hym silf*. Finally, the explicit future tense appears in *Y schal rise up...and Y schal seie to hym*. in contrast to the present indicative used in the Old English.

A total of 15 words in the Wyclif version of the story are of Old French or Old Norman French etymology and would have entered the English language since the Norman invasion. In most cases they replaced a word used in the West Saxon version which was still in use in Middle English, although frequently the meaning of the older word had changed enough that it was no longer appropriate to the story. The latinate words are:

- *porcioun*, which replaced *dael*, meaning to share or divide in both Old and Middle English
- *catel*, which replaced *aehte*, meaning possessions in Old English and obligations in Middle English
- *departide*, also replacing *daelde*, but as a verb this time
- *pilgrymage*, replacing *wraeclice*, meaning foreignly in Old English
- *cuntre*, replacing *rice*, meaning kingdom in Old English, which evolved to *riche* in Middle English
- *lecherously*, replacing *gaelsan*, meaning luxury in Old English
- *citesyns*, replacing *buhrsittendum*, meaning city-residing in Old English
- *mercy*, replacing *mild-heortnesse*, although both mild and heart were both available to Middle English
- *seruauntis*, replacing *theowum*, meaning servants in Old English
- *perische*, replacing *forwurthe*, meaning unbecome in Old English
- *coueitide*, replacing *gewilnode*, meaning willingly in Old English and available as *willen* in Middle English
- *wastide*, replacing *forspilde* which had evolved to mean kill in Middle English
- *turnede*, which, in conjunction with *ayen*, replaced *bethohte*, meaning to think again
- *plenty*, replacing *genohne*, meaning enough and available to both Old and Middle English

- *feeste*, replacing *gewist-fullian* meaning to eat until one is full in Old English and, like *mild-heortnesse*, a compound word in the German style
- *stoole*, replacing *gegyrelan*, meaning garment; *stoole* evidently came into Old English as *stol* from the Latin root; in Middle English it refers to a long robe, while in modern English it specifically describes a garment worn by priests and women

Although only 25% of the words which differ between the Old and Middle English versions are clearly latinate, the particular words are those which strongly influence the meaning of the Wyclif version. Additionally, several Latin words may originally have influenced Old English in this selection. They are:

Latin	Old English	Wyclif	Modern English
pater	faeder	fadir	father
me or mihi	me or minne	me or my	me or my
dies	dagum	daies	day
congregatis	gegaderude	gederid togider	gathered together
regionem	rice		region
ventrem	wambe	wombe	womb
unum	anne	oon	one
tuus	thin	thi	your
iam non	ne eom	am not	am not

Considering these, the latinate vocabulary in the Wyclif is nearly triple that of the Old English.

French Phraseology

Several instances of word order and phrasal construction in the Wyclif version simulate the modern French constructions rather than those found in the Old English version. For example:

- comparative adjective + preposition + pronoun (corresponding to the French *plus ... de ...*)
  - *yonger of hem*
- preposition + that construction (such as *apresque, puisque, quoique*)
  - *aftir that he hadde endid*
- negative preceding the phrase (the *ne* construction in French)
  - *not aftir many days*
  - *noo man gaf hym*
- adverb, noun, verb construction, a reversal from the Old English word order which coupled the adverb and verb
  - *there he wastid*
- reflexive construction
  - *turnede ayen to hym silf*
- the addition of the preposition to in a phrase (similar to French *a*)
  - *coueitide to fille his wombe*
  - *began to have need*
- verb, indirect object, direct object construction where Old English would typically use pronouns, Middle English uses prepositions, articles and nouns
  - *gyve me the portion of catel*
  - *departide to hym the catel*

♦ the use of prepositions in and by in a way not used in Old English (similar to the prepositions *en* and *dans* in French)

> *in pilgrymage*
> *in lyuynge lecherously*
> *ryng in his hoond*
> *stirrid bi mercy*

♦ the use of the verb and personal pronouns for the imperative instead of the Old English simple imperative

> *brynge ye*
> *clothe ye*
> *give ye*
> *sle ye*
> *ete we*
> *make we*

Analysis of Word Order

The Old English tends to invert the subject + verb + object word order that modern English uses, so that the verb comes either at the beginning of the clause or at the end. This would tend to emphasize the action in the sentence. In sentences where pronouns are used for subjects, possessives or objects, this results in a string of pronouns: *syle me minne dael*, for example, or *Tha daelde he him his aehta*, *tha sende he hine*, *haet ic thin sunu beo genemned*. The verb, in fact, becomes so important that the subject is often implied in the parataxis. *Se gingra sunu* is the implied subject of two sentences: one beginning with *and ferde*, the other with *and forspilde*.

Old English adjectives and adverbs are closely tied to the nouns and verbs they modify. In modern English we do the same with adjectives but our adverbs are freer to float around in the sentences. Examples of the Old English verb + adverb juxtapositions are: *ferde wraeclice*, *forspilde thar*, *bringath rathe*. An extreme example of this is the phrase *wearth mid mild-heortnesse astyrod*, where *wearth astyrod* is the verbal phrase interrupted by the adverbial phrase mid *mild-heortnesse*.

The corresponding phrases in Wyclif reflect a more modern word order through elimination of some pronouns and through freedom of adverbial placement. The Old English *syle me minne dael* becomes *gyue me the porcioun of catel*; *daelde he him his aehte* becomes *he departide to hym the catel*; *sende he hine* inverts to *he sente hym*; *ic thin sunu beo genemned* transforms to *Y...be clepid thi sone*.

The adverbs in Wyclif often become more phrasal. For example, *ferde wraeclice* in Wyclif is *wente forth in pilgrymage*, so that we have, in fact, an adverb describing how the son went as well as an adverbial phrase describing where he went. Likewise, and *ferde...and forspilde thar*, which in Old English have implied subjects, turns into *the yonger sone wente forth...and there he wastide*. The imperative *bringath rathe* becomes *swithe brynge ye*, with an explicit subject given to all of the verbs in this lengthy command of the father's. Wyclif doesn't always insert the subject in his

imperatives, though. In the son's speeches (both actual and imagined) to his father he says *gyue me* and *make me*. Perhaps Wyclif is here contrasting the demanding nature of the son with the humbler nature of the father. Wyclif uses *was stirrid bi mercy* rather than the Old English construction which would have resulted in *was bi mercy stirrid*.

In a comparison between these passages, I would say that the Old English translator used word order to activate the story, whereas Wyclif relied on his explicit vocabulary. Wyclif employed quite a lot of passive voice, which was virtually unavailable to the Old English. However, he used a varied vocabulary to connote strong responses in the reader to the father and his prodigal son.

Analysis of Function Words

The Old English had very few prepositions, due to its reliance on case inflections. There are only 18 prepositions (restricted to on, of, to and against) in the Old English, as opposed to 41 in Wyclif. Since the Old English contained so much parataxis, it has 32 occurrences of conjunctions (*tha*, *and*) as opposed to Wyclif's 52. Only 9 articles (*the*, *se*, *an*, *thaet*) occur in the Old English, while 17 occur in Wyclif. The Old English has an increased number of pronouns: 65 instead of 58 in Wyclif. This too, I think is a result of the importance of cases, as Middle and modern English replaced strings of three pronouns with two pronouns and an article.

Overall, the Old English version contains 42% function words and the Wyclif 51%. However, there is a 10% increase in total number of words in the Wyclif version. In fact, the Wyclif and Revised Standard Versions match almost exactly in number of words and ratio of function words. The RSV has slightly fewer, as a result of modern compounding of such prepositions and pronouns in to and hym silf. Wyclif required 35% more function words to express the same story as did the Old English writer.

Differences in Diction

There are numerous differences in word choice between the Old English and Wyclif versions. This could reflect the wider variety of words available to Wyclif. A number of these words are latinate, but most are of Old English derivation and were therefore presumably available to that translator. I think that in some cases the Old English translator chose the tradition of compounding words, as in *yrthlingum* and *biencoddun*, rather than using phrases like Wyclif's *hirid men*.

A specific list of the differences in diction between the two versions follows.

Old English	Meaning	Wyclif	Derivation
cwaeth	quoth (said he)	seide	ME sayen < OE secgan
syle	give	gyve	ME given < OE giefan
dael	share	porcioun	OFr < Latin
aehte	ought, own	catel	NFr < Latin capitale
gebyreth	belong to	fallith	ME fallen < OE feallen
daelde	to share	departide	OFr departir < Latin
feawe	few	not many	ME < OE manig
		whanne	ME < OE hwenne
		togider	ME < togaedere
		forth	ME < OE forth
wraeclice	foreignly	in pilgrymage	OFr < Latin *foreigner*
rice	kingdom	cuntre	OFr < Latin *opposite*
forspilde	waste	wastide	ONFr < Latin *make empty*
aehte	ought, own	goodis	ME < OE
gaelsan	luxury	lecherously	OFr *live in debauchery*
tha	then	aftir	ME < OE aefter
amyrrede	enmired < ON myrr	endid	ME < OE
		thingis	ME < OE thing
mycel	great	strong	ME < OE strang
wearth	become	maad	ME maken < OE
		began	ME < OE
waedla	destitute	need	ME < OE
folgude	follow	drough	ME *draw* or *pull*
ferde	travel or wander	wente	OE wendan: *proceed along*
buhrsittendum	city-residing	citeseyns	OFr cite
heolde	ME holden, to hold	fede	ME < OE fedan: *feed*
gewilnode	willingly	coueitide	OFr < Latin *desire*
sealde	gave	gaf	ME < OE giefan
bethohte	bethought	turnede	OFr tourner
		ayen	ME < OE ongegn: *against*
		silf	ME < OE silf (pronoun)
fela	many	many	ME < OE manig
yrthlinga	farmers	hirid men	ME < OE hyrian
genohne	enough	plenty	OFr plente < Latin
hlaf	loaf	looues	ME lof < OE hlaf
forwurthe	unbecome	perische	OFr perir < Latin *go away*
on	by	thorough	ME < OE thuruh
		schal	ME < OE sceal
fare	travel	go	ME gon < OE gan
on	in	in to	ME < OE in + to
the ic beo	that I be	to be	

Old English	Meaning	Wyclif	Derivation
genehmed	named	clepid	ME < OE *cried out*
do to	do to	make	ME maken < OE
aras	arise	roos vp	ME < OE risan + OE uppe
		whanne	ME < OE hwenne
mid	with	by	ME < OE bi
mild-heortnesse	milde + heorte	mercy	OFr < Latin
agen	towards		
beclypte	embraced	fel on his neck	OE fallen + OE hnecca
theowum	servants	seruantis	OFr servire (past participle)
rathe	rather	swithe	swift < OE
selestan	best	firste	ME < OE fyrst
gegyrelan	garment	stoole	ME < OE stol < Latin
scrydath	dress	clothe	ME < OE clathian
syllath	give	give	ME < OE giefan
styric	steer	calf	ME < OE cealf
gewist-fullian	feast	feeste	OFr < Latin
geedcucode	restored to life	lyued agen	ME < OE libban
gemet	met	foundun	ME < OE findan
hig	those	alle men	
gewistlaecan		ete	OE etan

Spelling Changes

Even in the words which remained the same in both the Old and Middle English translations, the majority underwent spelling changes. A total of 71 words (counting the variations of case) are spelled differently. For the most part, the Middle English spellings are closer to the modern English, with the notable exceptions of thing/*thingis*, hand/*hoond* and dead/*deed*.

The most common changes were to verb endings (-an became -en) and internal vowels. The *aesch* transformed to -a in the instances of *haefde/hadde*, *aefter/aftir*, *faeder/fadir*, *faett/fat* and *waes/was*. Similarly, the dipthong -eo transformed to -e or –a in *feorlen/fer*, *feorr/afer*, *heofenas/heuene*, *beo/be* and *eom/am*. A few examples of the dipthong -ea in the Old English show a shift, but not as consisent a one: *ealle/alle*, *gesean/saiy*, *ofsleath/sle*, and *dead/deed*. In general, words terminating in -er or -re in Old English changed to -ir in Middle English: *aefter/aftir*, *faeder/fadir*, *hungre/hungir*. Another shift of -e to -i is evident in *beforan/bifor*. In all cases, modern English returned to -e's for spelling and the schwa pronunciation we give to vowels in unaccented syllables. Also in general, the internal -i was modified to -y in Middle English: *him/hym*, *min/my*, *ic/y*, *bringath/brynge*, *hring/ryng*. Old English -y

sometimes remained in Middle English (*syngode/synned*, *lybbende/lyuynge*), sometimes changed to -i or –o (*gefyllan/fille*, *wyrth/worthi*, *gyt/yit*, *astyrod/stirrid*, *cyste/kisside* and *gescy/schoon*).

Simple vowels seem sometimes to have been swapped. For example, the -a and -o shifted in some words: *wambe/wombe*, *hlaf/looues*, *anne/oon*, *com/cam*, *hand/hoond*. The -u moved to -ou in *hu/hou*, *huse/hous* and *nu/nou*.

Consonant shifts include internal -f to -v (*hlaf/looues* and *heofenas/heuene*), -g to -y (*gingra/yonger*, *gyt/yit* and *dagum/daies*; *twegen/twei* and *secge/seie*, where the -ei dipthong represents the –y sound). Other consonant shifts are represented by words whose spelling reversed itself (*swa/as* and *arn/ran*), prefixes like –ge were dropped (*gegaderude/gederid*, *gefyllan/fille*, *gesean/saiy*, *gescy/schoon* and *ofsleath/slè*). Occasional consonants were dropped completely in the simplification of case and tense: *haefde/hadde*, *twegen/twei*, *dagum/daies*, *feorlen/fer*, *habbath/han* and *fotum/feet*. The –d and -t consonants swapped a bit, as in *cyste/kisside* and *sende/sente*.

Articles underwent a spelling transformation as well: *se/the*, *an/a*, *thes/this* and *ne/noo* or *not*.

A list of the words whose spellings changed follows.

Old English	Wyclif's Version	Old English	Wyclif's Version
haefde	hadde	twegen	twei
suna/sunu	sones/sone	gingra	yonger
aefter	aftir	dagum	daies
ealle	alle	thing	thingis
gegaderude	gederid	feorlen	fer
his	hise	lybbende	lyuynge
sende	sente	hine/him	hym
gefyllan	fille	wambe	wombe
coddum	coddis	aeton/etan	eeten/ete
ne	noo	hu	hou
mines/minum/min	my	faeder	fadir
huse	hous	habbath	han
hlaf	looues	her	here
hungre	hungir	ic	y
arise/aras	rise vp/roos vp	secge	seie
syngode	synned	heofenas/heofon	heuene
beforan/beforn	bifor	the	thee
nu	now	neom/ne eom	am not
wyrth	worthi	beo	be
thin/thinum	thi/thin	swa	as
anne	oon	com	cam
gyt	yit	feorr	afer
gesean	saiy	astyrod	stirrid
arn	ran	cyste	kisside
se	the	bringath	brynge
hring	ryng	hand	hoond
gescy	schoon	fotum	feet
an	a	faett	fat
ofsleath	sle	thes	this
waes	was	dead	deed
ongunnon	bigunnen		

A Comparison of the Wyclif, Tyndale, Geneva, Rheims and King James Versions

Differences in Meaning

As much as the Wyclif version uses stronger and more precise vocabulary than the Old English, Tyndale's version is yet again as strong. He also employs alternate terms for the same object, so where we had *swyn/hoggis, feeste/ete* and *departide/porcioun* in Wyclif we have *goods/substance*, *merie/cheare*, *countre/londe* and *farme/feelde* in Tyndale. The son says alternately, *"I have synned agaynst heven and before the; Nowe am I not worthy to be called thy sonne,"* and *"I have synned agaynst heven, and in thy sight; neither am I worty hence forthe to be called thy sonne."*

Tyndale is the first to alter Wyclif's womb to belly and loaves to bread, in both cases adding a precision which is carried through to the seventeenth century translations. Tyndale departs from the other translators in using the word lovers instead of friends and keep instead of feed, regarding the swine. Tyndale refers to a *derth* arising in the foreign country rather than a *hunger* or *famine*. As a part of the general lack, the son begins to lack. Wyclif, Douai-Rheims and King James imply that the father's servants have excess (*plente/aboundance/inough and to spare*), while Tyndale and Geneva simply say they have *ynough*.

Tyndale counters Wyclif's *lyynge lecherously* and *horis* with *royetous livinge* and *harloottes* (which originally meant vagabonds). Whereas Wyclif implies the prodigal son's sin is sexual, Tyndale depicts him rather as dissipated.

Tyndale describes the celebration at the son's return as one of dancing, and his music is of minstrels, the most specific of all the terms used (*symphony*, *minstrelcy*, *melody* or *music*). He adds the *and sound* to Wyclif's *safe* and introduces *angry*, *merry* and *glad* as states of mind in place of Wyclif's *wrath*, *feasting* and *joy*. Tyndale uses the verb *belong* rather than *fall* to describe the son's inheritance; his is a more active and directed son.

French Influence

Latinate Vocabulary

The vocabulary in these versions is somewhat divergent. The Wyclif version contains 24 latinate words, which entered the language through Old French or Old Norman French. The Tyndale contains an additional 16 words, plus 9 of the words Wyclif uses. The Geneva uses 4 new latinate words and 20 of Wyclif's or Tyndale's words. The Douai-Rheims translation has 9 new latinate words and 20 of the previous words. The King James Version has only 1 new latinate word and 25 of the originals. All versions are about equal, then, with between 24 and 29 latinate words, for a ratio of 15% to the total number of words in the selection.

Although many of the words are consistent throughout the five versions, some words change. For example, Wyclif and the Douai-Rheims use whore (*horis/whoores*), while Tyndale, Geneva and the KJV use harlots (*harloottes/harlots/harlots*). Whore is of Old English extraction but harlot comes from Old French and originally meant vagabond. Similarly, Tyndale and the Geneva use dearth (*derth/dearth*) while the Douai-Rheims and KJV use *famine*. Dearth is Old English and has the general meaning of lack. Famine came from Latin via Old French and is specific to a lack of food, or hunger, which was the word Wyclif and the Old English used.

The Wyclif uses *wombe* for stomach, while all the other versions use the Old English belly (*bely/bellie/bellie/belly*). Wyclif and Tyndale use cods (*coddis/coddes*) and the others use the Old English husks (*huskes/huskes/huskes*). Wyclif has *plente*, Tyndale and Geneva *ynough*, Douai-Rheims *aboundance* and the KJV *inough and to spare*. Enough derives from Old English, while plenty and abundance come from Old French. Wyclif's *looves* are bread in all the other versions (*breed/bread/bread/bread*). Both loaf and bread are Old English words.

There's an interesting development of the concept of celebration in the five versions, whose words generally derive from Old French. In Wyclif we have *symfonye* and *croude*, in Tyndale *minstrelcy* and *daunsyng*, in Geneva we have *melodie* and *dauncing*, in the Douai-Rheims and KJV *musicke* and *dauncing*. *Symfonye* comes from the Greek word for harmony, through Latin and Old French to Middle English. *Minstrelcy* comes from the Latin word for minister through the Old French *menestral*. *Melodie* originates in the Latin word meaning a choral song and comes to Middle English through Old French. And *musicke* comes once again, originally from Greek through Latin and Old French. Wyclif uses *croude*, a word which came into Middle English from the Welsh *crwth*. This is an ancient stringed and bowed instrument, possibly used to accompany dance. All the other versions use *daunsyng* or *dauncing*, which comes form the Old French verb *danser*.

Of the fifty latinate words in these versions, two are adjectives (*certain* and *riotous*) and two are adverbs (*safe* and *lecherously*). Riotous and lecherously clearly have noun, adjective and adverb forms, and so probably came into Middle English first as nouns. Twenty-seven latinate nouns appear. This number is not surprising, as nouns are typically borrowed to describe new objects and to give alternate names to existing objects. The number of latinate verbs (nineteen) is surprising. This indicates that Old English had either few or non-specific verbs. In fact, a number of the latinate nouns also have verb forms (journey, commandment, servant, abundance and indignation), which were likely to be used in Middle English, augmenting the total number of verbs borrowed.

A chart of the common and divergent latinate vocabulary among the five versions follows.

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
	certayne	certeine	certaine	certaine
porcioun	parte	portion	portion	portion
catel				
	substaunce	substance	substance	substance
departide				
	devided	devided	devided	diuided
pilgrymage				
	jorney	jorney		journey
cuntre	countre	countrey	countrie	countrey
wastide	wasted	wasted	wasted	waster
lecherously				
	royetous	riotous	riotously	riotous
citeseyns	citezens	citizens	citizens	citizens
	spent	spent	spent	spent
mercy			mercie	
	compassion	compassion		compassion
seuauntis	service	servants	servants	seruants
	necessitie			
		famine		famine
	farme	farme	farme	
perische		perish		perish
coueitide				
	pleasure			
turnede			returning	
plenty				
			aboundance	
	remembred			
		moved		
feeste				
stoole			stole	
	garment			
		robe		robe
ioye	glad	glad	glad	glad
			revived	
symfonye				
	minstrelcy			
		melodie		
			musicke	musicke
	daunsyng	dancing	dauncing	dauncing
	cheare			
			indignation	

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
resseyuede	receaved		received	received
saaf	safe	safe	safe	safe
preye				
	entreated	entreated		intreated
			desire	
		transgressed	transgressed	
commaundement	commaundment	commandement	commaundement	commandement
deuourid	devoured	devoured	devoured	devoured
	harloottes	harlots		harlots
			joyned	

French Phraseology

Several of the French phrases that Wyclif used were modified in the later versions. Wyclif has the initial French negative in *not aftir many daies*. Tyndale and Geneva substitute long for many days and invert the preposition after, to *not long after*. Douai-Rheims and King James retain many days, but still invert the preposition, to *not many dayes after*. Wyclif's *after that* construction translates either to *when* or, simply, *after* in the other versions. Wyclif has *aftir that he hadde endid alle thingis*; while Tyndale, Geneva and King James choose *when he had spent all*, and Douai-Rheims *after he had spent all*. Here and in other places all versions use the pluperfect tense, a favorite of the French.

There's a great variety in the prepositions used, indicating the divergence from the limited ones available to the French. Tyndale, Geneva and King James substitute with for of in *of the coddis/with the huskes*. Douai-Rheims and King James add the preposition unto, turning an indirect object into a prepositional phrase in *noo man gave hym/no man gave unto him*. Wyclif uses *thorough*, Tyndale, Geneva and Douai-Rheims *for* and King James *with*, in *I perish/dye...hunger/famine*. In the same sentence, Wyclif and Douai-Rheims insert an adverb in the French fashion: *I perische here thorough hungir/I here perish for famine*. Wyclif uses *in to* in the son's confession, *I haue synned in to heuene,* while the others use against: *I have sinned against heaven*. Wyclif's *in lyuynge lecherously*, transforms to the preposition *with* in every version except Douai-Rheims. Douai-Rheims omits the preposition completely; the others have *with riotous living*. Wyclif's *in that cuntre* is repeated in Douai-Rheims and King James; Tyndale and Geneva use *throughout all that (same) land*.

Analysis of Word Order

There is an increased hypotaxis as the versions become more modern. Wyclif uses the conjunctions *and*, *when* and *then* to simulate time, as well as the future tense and passive voice. Tyndale makes frequent use of an implied subject, as well as passive voice, future and perfect tenses. Geneva uses conjunctions heavily to tie the story together. Often these conjunctions contain a sense of time: now, then, when, so. The Douai-Rheims has several occurrences of adverbial phrases instead of the parallel constructions which the other versions employ. This gives a sense of time as well as adding to the complexity of the sentences. Like the Geneva and Tyndale, Douai-Rheims varies the tenses to include both perfect and future. Douai-Rheims also has more occurrences of passive voice than the others. The King James Version seems to have the most conservative word order of the five versions. It relies almost solely on parallel construction. In cases where other versions interrupt the subject-verb-object construction with prepositional phrases or relative clauses, the King James version plays it straight: *thy sonne was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots* rather than Wyclif's or Douai-Rheims's *thy sonne, this that hath devoured his substance with whoores, is come*; or *thou hast killed for him the fatted calf*, instead of Geneva's *thou hast for his pleasure killed the fatted caulfe*; and *am no more worthy to be called thy sonne*, or Tyndale's *neither am I worthy hence forthe to be called thy sonne*.

All five versions use the reflexive to describe the son's change of heart. The Wyclif has *turnede ayen to hym silf*, the Tyndale *remembred hym selfe*, the Douai-Rheims *returning to him self*, and the Geneva and King James *came to himselfe*. Wyclif and King James have an additional reflexive construction not found in the others: *he wente and drough hym/ he went and ioyned himselfe*. The other versions use the transitive verb *cleave* instead.

Wyclif is the only one to use explicit pronouns in his imperatives. His *brynge ye...clothe ye...give ye...brynge ye...sle ye...ete we...make we* becomes *bring...put...put...bring...kill...let us eate and make merie* in all the other versions.

The possessive takes on a more modern form beginning with Tyndale. Wyclif has *in my fadir hous*. Tyndale and Geneva use the preposition at, while Douai-Rheims and King James use of, but all use the -s ending to indicate the possessive in *my fathers*.

The various uses of the passive voice are interesting. Wyclif chooses it where no one else does in *whanne all thingis weren gederid togider*. The other versions specify the younger son as doing the gathering. Again, Wyclif has *a strong hungre was maad in that cuntre* while the others say *there arose* or *there fel a dearth or famine*. Wyclif and Douai-Rheims use the passive *was stirrid bi mercy/ was moved with mercie* while the others say *had compassion*. All combine a negative and passive in one instance, but each in a different way. Wyclif has *now Y am not worthi to be clepid thi sone*. Tyndale inverts the negative with *neither am I worthy hence forth to be called thy sonne*. Geneva and King James use *no*

more instead of not, with *and am no more worthy to be called thy sone* and Douai-Rheims returns to not, with *I am not now worthie to be called thy sonne*. The two sections of passive parallel construction also vary. In Wyclif only two of the four verbs are in passive voice. In Douai-Rheims all four are passive and in the others three of the four are passive.

The section which describes the son's return home is done in parallel construction in all but Douai-Rheims, which has an adverbial phrase: *and running to him, fell on his necke and kissed him*. The Douai-Rheims proclivity for these adverbial phrases shows up throughout:

> *the yonger sonne gathering al his things together went from home*
> *there he wasted his substance, living riotously*
> *returning to him self he said*
> *rising up he came to his father*
> *running to him fel upon his necke*
> *going forth began to desire him*, and
> *he answering said to his father.*

In the passage where the elder son complains to his father, all but Wyclif use an inversion of the noun-verb structure. They write *have I done…brake I…gavest thou me.*

Analysis of Function Words

In all five versions approximately 50% of the passage is composed of function words. However, there is a shift starting with Tyndale to replace many of the articles with personal pronouns, so the proportion of pronouns increases and the number of articles decreases. Wyclif uses the conjunctions and, when and then frequently, but the Geneva version expands the use of conjunctions to for, but, so, now, and, when and then, such that nearly every sentence begins with a conjunction. Douai-Rheims introduces a number of adverbial phrases, which increases the number of prepositions in that version. And the King James Version relies almost exclusively on and to connect its long, parallel constructions, so it, too has a high percentage of conjunctions.

Differences in Diction

There are numerous differences in word choice among the five versions. Many of these occur with the Tyndale and are carried forward, such as bread, divided, riotous, substance, dancing, merry, glad and kill. With the exception of bread, glad and kill, these are all Latinate words. Bread and kill replaced other Old English words, but glad replaced the latinate joy. One change in diction took place in the early seventeenth century versions: husks. The other changes alternated between versions, such as *behoove/meet, whore/harlot, country/land, plenty/enough* (meaning rather than diction), *far/great way, safe/safe and sound, swift/forth* (again meaning rather than diction), *first/best* and *mercy/compassion,* where the Douai-Rheims matches the Wyclif while the Geneva and King James match the Tyndale. In a few cases, three different words are shared among the five versions: *hunger/dearth/famine,*

town/field/farm, *stole/garment/robe*, *turn/remember/come* and *pilgrimage/journey/from home*. Additionally, sometimes one text will disagree with the others: Tyndale with lovers instead of friends and part instead of portion, or Douai-Rheims with revived instead of alive again, no bodie instead of no man.

Wyclif had introduced the idea of the future with shall (*I schal arise...*). All the other versions use will instead of shall. Interestingly, all versions use shall exclusively in the **Sermon on the Mount** passage but only Wyclif uses shall in the **Prodigal Son**. The language seems to have isolated the word shall to intention or obligation, rather than simply the future tense. In a way, modern English has reversed this trend, prescribing the use of shall as the auxiliary verb for the first person and will for the second and third persons. Clearly, from Tyndale on, the language uses will for the future tense for all persons.

Other auxiliary verbs, to have, to be and to do are used variously in the five versions. For example, Wyclif has he *bigan to have nede*, Geneva *he began to be in necessitie*, Douai-Rheims *he began to be in neede*, and King James *he beganne to be in want*. Only Tyndale omits the auxiliary verb completely here with *he began to lacke*. Elsewhere, we have Wyclif with *he coueitide to fille*, and all the rest with *he would faine have filled*. The Douai-Rheims has *doe it on hym* for clothe or put it on. The Tyndale, Geneva and Douai-Rheims all have *hath killed* and *hath received*, making the tense perfect instead of simple past. Wyclif alone has *that I with my freendis schulde have ete*, while all the others have some variation of *might make merry with my friends*.

A specific list of differences in diction follows.

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
many daies	longe	long	many daies	many dayes
looves	breed	bread	bread	bread
coddis	coddes	huskes	huskes	huskes
neighede	drewe nye	drewe nere	drew nigh	drew nigh
horis	harloottes	harlots	whoores	harlots
behofte	mete	mete	behoved	meete
porcioun	parte	portion	portion	portion
fallith	belongeth	falleth	belongeth	falleth
departide	devided	devided	devided	diuided
hungre	derth	dearth	famine	famine
lecherously	royetous	riotous	riotously	riotous
goodis	substaunce	substaunce	substance	substance
pilgrymage	jorney	jorney	from home	iourney
cuntre	londe	land	countrie	land
toun	felde	farme	farme	fields
nede	lacke	necessitie	neede	want
plente	ynough	ynough	aboundance	inough and to spare
perische	dye	dye	perish	perish
turnede agen	remembred	came to	returning to	came to
clepide	called	called	called	called
noo man	noo man	no man	no bodie	no man
afer	greate waye	great way	farre	great way
swithe	forth	forthe	quickely	foorth
firste	best	best	first	best
stoole	garment	robe	stole	robe
saaf	safe and sounde	safe and sounde	safe	safe and sound
wrooth	angry	angre	indignation	angry
croode	daunsyng	dancing	dauncing	dauncing
feeste	mery	merie	merie	merrie
ioye	glad	glad	glad	glad
mercy	compassion	compassion	mercie	compassion
symfonye	minstrelcy	melodie	musicke	musicke
freendis	lovers	friends	frendes	friends
sle	kyll	kil	kil	kill
liued agen	alive againe	alive againe	revived	alive againe
drough	clave	clave	cleaved	ioyned
fede	kepe	feede	feede	feed
schal	will	wil	wil	will

Spelling Changes

Two words spelled consistently throughout the five versions which have different modern spellings are *necke* and *yonger*. Many words took on a modern spelling in Tyndale or Geneva and carried it through. A few reverted from a modern spelling to a more archaic in the King James Version.

In general, the spelling in the Tyndale carried through into the early seventeenth century translations, and in general these match our modern spellings. Exceptions are: *sonnes, farre, selfe, goe, feete, calfe, eate, againe, loe, goe, doe, yeeres, commandement, meete, faine, certaine, merrie, tooke and dauncing*. Of these, all except *dauncing* have extraneous terminal –e's, which presumably affected the pronunciation of the internal vowels. *Dauncing* demonstrates an *au* dipthong that is modernized to *a,* again, probably an attempt to simulate the continental pronunciation of latinate borrowings, as it is found in Tyndale's variations of commandment, servant and substance, as well.

Again, internal –y's tended to shift to –i's, as in *lyuynge/living, swyne/swine, hyred/hired, ryse/rise, gyve/give, Y/I, kyssed/kissed, brynge/bring, ryng/ring, royetous/riotous, ynough/inough and daunsyng/dancing*. Internal –i's also transformed to schwa –e's: *fadir/father, togider/tigether, aftir/after, wastide/wasted, coddis/coddes, silf/self, hirid/hyred, hungir/hunger, bifor/before, yit/yet, kisside/kissed, bigunnen/began, axide/asked, horis/whoores, fallith/falleth and bihofte/behoved*.

Internal -e vowels changed to the -ea dipthong, as in *herde/heard* and *heuene/heaven*. Internal -o vowels became double -o dipthongs: *horis/whoores* and *toke/tooke*.

Internal -u vowels tended to shift to the -ou dipthong: *schulde/should* and *cuntre/countrie*. The existing –ou dipthongs were stable except for *hou/how*.

The -ei dipthong in *seide* altered to -ay and then –ai, while in *twei* it changed to -o and in *neighide* to -ye. The double vowels -ee, -oo and -aa often turned into single vowels, sometimes with a terminal silent –e: *eeten/ate, oon/one, saaf/safe, hoond/hand and schoon/shoes*, or they transformed to alternate dipthongs: *breed/bread, deed/dead, feeld/field* or *freendis/friends*.

The internal consonant -d became a voiced -th, or thorn: fadir/*father, gaddered/gathered, hidder/hither* and *togider/together*. Initial and terminal –d's, including those followed by a plural or case ending, were not affected: *devided/divided, hadde/had*, etc.

There was a certain amount of volatility between the -v and -u symbols, but otherwise, the consonants didn't change in spelling.

A list of the words whose spellings changed follows.

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
seide/seie	sayde/saye	said	said	said
hadde	had	had	had	had
twei	two	two	two	two
sones	sonnes	sonnes	sonnes	sonnes
hem	them	them	them	them
fadir	father	father	father	father
gyue	geve	give	give	giue
of	off	of	of	of
goodis	goodes		goods	goods
aftir	after		after	
gederid	gaddered	gathered	gathering	gathered
togider	to gedder	together	together	altogether
	hidder			hither
fer	farre	farre	farre	farre
cuntre	countre	countrey	countrie	countrey
wastide	wasted	wasted	wasted	wasted
lyuynge	livinge	living	living	liuing
whanne	when	when		when
wente	went	went	went	went
citeseyns	citesyn	citizen	citizen	citizen
sente	sent	sent	sent	sent
swyn	swyne	swine	swine	swine
coddis	coddes			
eeten	ate	ate		
gaf	gave	gave	gave	gaue
silf	selfe	self	self	selfe
hou	howe	how		how
hirid	hyred	hired	hirelings	hired
hungir	honger	hunger		hunger
rise	ryse	rise	arise	arise
go	goo	go	goe	goe
heuene	heven	heaven	heaven	heauen
bifor	before	before	before	before
the	the	thee	thee	thee
now	nowe		now	

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
Y	I	I	I	I
worthi	worthy	worthie	worthie	worthy
yit	yett	yet	yet	yet
saiy	sawe	sawe	saw	saw
fel	fell	fel	fel	fell
kisside	kyssed	kissed	kissed	kissed
seruauntis	servauntes	servants	servants	seruants
hise	his	his	his	his
brynge	bringe	bring	bring	bring
ryng	rynge	ring	ring	ring
hoond	honde	hand	hand	hand
schoon	shewes	shoes	shoes	shooes
feet	fete	feete	feete	feete
calf	caulfe	calf	calfe	calfe
fat	fatted	fat	fatted	fatted
ete	eate	eat	eate	eate
agen	agayne	againe		againe
is	ys	is	is	is
foundu	founde	founde	found	found
bigunnen/bigan	began	began	began	beganne
eldere	elder	elder	elder	elder
feeld/feelde	felde	field	field	field
neighede	drewe nye	drewe nere	drew nigh	drew nigh
hous	housse	house	house	house
oon	one	one	one	one
axide	axed	asked	asked	asked
these	thoose	those	these	these
thingis	thynges	things	thinges	things
thi	thy	thy	thy	thy
comun	come	come	come	come
resseyude	receaved	received	received	received
saaf	safe	safe	safe	safe
answerde	answered	answered	answering	answering
his	hys	his	his	his
lo	loo	lo		loe
yeeris	yeares	yeres	yeres	yeeres
serue	serve	serve	serve	serue
commaundement	commaundment	commandement	commaundement	commandement
kidde	kyd	kid	kidde	kid
deuourid	devoured	devoured	devoured	deuoured
horis			whoores	

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
with	wyth	with	with	with
hast	haste	haste	hast	have
euer	ever	ever		euer
alle	all	all	al	all
bihofte			behoved	
	mete	mete		meete
schulde	shulde	shoulde		should
	harloottes	harlots		harlots
	certayne	certeine	certaine	certaine
porcioun		portion	portion	
fallith		falleth		falleth
	devided	devided	devided	diuided
	substaunce	substaunce	substance	substance
	jorney	jorney		iourney
	royetous	riotous	riotously	riotous
	derth		dearth	
	thorow out	throughout		
	londe	land		land
	fayne	faine	faine	faine
	bely	bellie	bellie	belly
	ynough	ynough		inough
	greate	great		
	waye	way		
	sounde	sounde		sound
	angry	angre		angry
	daunsyng	dancing	dauncing	dauncing
	mery	merie	merie	merrie
perische			perish	perish
will	will	wil	wil	will
		kil	kil	kill
deed	deed	deed	dead	dead
go	go	go	goe	goe
do	do	do	doe	doe
freendis		friends	frendes	friends
	breed	bread	bread	bread
therfor		therefore	therefore	therefore
	eny	anie		any
	soo	so		
forth	forth	forthe	forth	foorth
herde	herde	heard	heard	heard
	kyll	kil	kil	kill

Wyclif	Tyndale	Geneva	Douai-Rheims	King James
	toke	toke	toke	tooke
noo	noo	no	no	no
ran	ran	ran	running	ranne