

### Translation Exercise

**Content:** pick a 30-line passage from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and translate the passage into modern prose English, which means that you don't imitate the form of Chaucer's poetry; instead you render the passage in the English you would use for an analytical paper. Furthermore, write a 2-page evaluative commentary on your own translation, noting especially linguistic difficulties you have encountered, such as semantic or lexical tough spots. Justify why you translated certain things the way you did. In your commentary, pay special attention to linguistic and poetic detail, meter and verse, literary effect, and larger poetic context. This assignment is designed to make you interact with Chaucer's Middle English more in depth and to hone your close reading skills. You might want to use the Chaucer glossary online or the *Middle English Dictionary* (all linked on the class website).

I understand that modern English translations of Chaucer's works exist and I have even linked some on the website. While you can check translations to assist you, be forewarned that they are too superficial or not always very accurate. Any translation implies an interpretation and so will yours. I am interested in your take on it, not one that already exists.

**Format:** In your paper, first type the original Middle English Chaucer text, then your prose translation, then your commentary. In order to foster crosspollination, I am asking that you pick a partner for this assignment and thus you turn in one paper for the two of you, with both your names on it. I will then assign one grade for both of you. Although some of you may prefer to work alone, it is my experience that translations done by two people often appear more thoughtful and polished.

Please follow the guidelines outlined in the *Guide to Style* (link on class website) containing the format guidelines of the *MLA*. Double-space the paper, identify the text passage you are working from, and supply a works cited of all materials used or consulted. Review documentation procedures and follow the distinctions outlined for poetry as well as shorter and longer quotations. Failure to provide the correct format will result in lower grades. An explanation of grade rubrics can be found on my website under Engl. 351. I have added several examples of this exercise to the Sample Paper file on the class website. You can access the file with your UNM netid and password.

I encourage you to edit, revise, and proofread your papers, striving for coherence, grammatical correctness, and good transitions.

**Due Date:** Thursday, 2.26.2009.