

Interpreting the Differences in Signification among Historically-Based Dictionaries of English

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When the history of a particular word is under investigation, the first tool to be consulted is the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*). Spelling variants in historical and typological classification, etymology with the appropriate length of additional explanation, significations according to historical principles with minutely subdivided shades of meaning, dates of the first and the last (in the case of obsolete words) quotations, phrases, and compounds — all this information is given under a headword. The *Middle English Dictionary* (hereafter *MED*) has a somewhat different presentation of information; some headwords are not identical with modern forms, and some of the first quotations under each headword or each signification predate those in the *OED*. Quotations of Middle English documents are, of course, enriched by way of the variety of manuscript variants of the text quoted. The *Dictionary of Old English* (hereafter *DOE*) shows quite a different disciplinary approach. Its uniqueness lies in providing significations which emphasize phrasal expressions and glosses on Latin words. Though a comparison among the three dictionaries is feasible only for headwords from *A* to *G* at this stage, it seems worth trying, particularly when another historical tool, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *HTOED*), based on the categories proposed by the *Thesaurus of Old English* (*TOE*) and the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (*HTE*), has been available since autumn 2009.¹ The aim of this paper, then, is to make a comparison among the significations

¹ I am grateful to Christian Kay, Professor Emeritus, University of Glasgow, who advised me with respect to the *HTOED* and graciously allowed me to use her website for this paper.

of *OED*, *MED*, and *DOE*, in particular using quotations which exemplify the subdivided senses. On the one hand, we may hope to learn to use these dictionaries properly, with a sufficient knowledge of both their individual merits and peculiarities and their shared proclivities. On the other, it may also be possible to suggest some better ways of structuring the significations, particularly for those headwords which undergo significant change in the transition from Old English to Middle English. The examples for this study are mainly taken from among the words of emotion, which I have been working with for some years,² in the *DOE* fascicles for *A* to *G*, in order to keep the comparisons clear. The examples will be presented alphabetically, since that seems the most coherent method of organizing the relevant evidence and assessing the differences among the dictionaries for the significations of the relevant headwords. If the ideal is to gain a sense of the whole history of a given word by “simply pushing a button of your PC,”³ then the three diachronically based dictionaries need to work from a common basis of understanding, especially with respect to signification.

Awe

The *OED* signification of *awe sb.*¹ is divided into two parts: “I. As a subjective emotion,” and “II. As an objective fact.” This headword corresponds to two in *MED*, *awe* (n.) and *eie* (n. (2)). Senses 1 and 2 of both *awe* and *eie* mostly correspond to I. and II. of *OED awe*, though such phrases as *to stand in awe of* are included in I.4. in *OED*, *awe* 3. and *eie* 1. in *MED*. *DOE* uses a somewhat different division of signification; it divides 1. fear and 2. awe and discusses phrases in 3., but collocations, phrases, and glosses are subdivided minutely.

For example, *Genesis* 9.2 in example (1) below is cited in *DOE* under 1.b. in an alliterative collocation, as an instance of *ege and oga* ‘fear and terror.’ The same example appears in *OED* II. 5., but the two words & *oga* are omitted, and thus the trace of an alliterative pair disappears. Readers of Old English who are concerned with the poetic tradition will be grateful to the *DOE* for its care in providing the full citation and will appreciate the care with the signification here.⁴

2 See Ogura, “Words of EMOTION” and “Words of Emotion.”

3 This is the expression Professor Antonette diPaolo Healey used in private communication.

4 Old English texts are cited by the short-titles employed in publications of The Dictionary of Old English Project; full bibliographical details may be found on the website of the Project, at <<http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/st/index.html>>. Modern translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

- (1) Gen 9.2 (*DOE ege* m. 1.b.; *OED awe sb.*¹ II.5.)

& beo eower **ege** & oga ofer ealle nytenu & fugelas & ofer ealle ða ðingc ðe on eorðan styriað (cf. Gn: *et terror vester ac tremor sit super cuncta animalia terrae*).

[And the fear and terror of you shall be over all beasts and birds and over all those things which move on earth.]

A relevant instance of *ege* occurs in the Psalms at verse 90.5. Example (2) is cited in *OED* under †7, which reads, “Something which inspires fear; a cause of dread; a restraint.” *OED* quotes the *Vespasian* gloss, and here I add the *Lambeth* and *Paris Psalters* to show the variants; *DOE* does not provide this signification in this entry, but the word *nihtegsa* ‘night-terror’ will no doubt be included in fascicle *N*.

- (2) Ps 90.5 (*PsGLA* in *OED awe sb.*¹ †7)

(*Non timebis a timore nocturno.*)

A: Ne ondredes ðu ðe from **e3e** næhtlicum.

I: þu ne ondrætst fram nihtlicum **ege**.

[Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night.]

Cf. P: ne ðu þe **nihtegsan** nede ondrædest.

In addition, an example from *Cursor Mundi* is found in *OED* under †7 and *MED aue* 2.: *Cursor* 1773 *þat sorou to see was ful gret au* (cf. (Fairfax) *þat sorrow to se was ful grete aghe* [it was very great terror to see the sorrow]). For *awe*, then, the *MED* and *OED* correspond in their division of the entry into significations and quotations, but the *DOE*’s different division offers students of Old English a clearer sense of the word in its earliest English usage.

Bliss

Bliss shows a morpho-phonological and semantic blending with *bless* in both nouns and verbs. *Metres of Boethius* 2.14 in example (3) is cited in *OED bliss sb.* under †1, which reads, “Blitheness of aspect toward others, kindness of manner; ‘light of one’s countenance,’ ‘smile.’ (Only in OE).” However, the same example is found under 2. in *DOE bliss, bliþs* ‘benevolence, favour.’ Here the prose part has no corresponding section from which to draw a conclusion about the exact meaning of the word in this context. The sense †1 in *OED* may be influenced by Latin, which I quote in (3) below, even though the quotation is from the *Metres*, where direct Latin

influence is debatable.⁵ The use of *blisse* here in this *Metre* seems to be a result of the constraints of alliteration. I see no reason why the sense given in *DOE* should be rejected in favour of that offered in *OED*.

(3) Met 2.14 (*DOE bliss*, *blīps* f. 2; *OED bliss sb.* †1)

hi [woruldsælða] me to wendon heora bacu bitere, and heora **blisse**
from [they turned their bitter backs on me and [took] from [me]
their favour]. (trans. in *DOE*)

Cf. Bo 2. 8.11-12

þa wendon hi me heora bæc to, 7 me mid ealle from gewitan
[Then they [worldly prosperities] turned their back to me, and
entirely departed from me.]

Cf. Bo Bk.I, Met I, 17-20

Dum levibus male fida bonis fortuna faveret, / Paene caput tristis
merserat hora meum. / Nunc quia fallacem mutavit nubila vultum, /
Protrahit ingratas impia vita moras.

[While fortune favoured me — / How wrong to count on swiftly-
fading joys — / Such an hour of bitterness might have bowed my
head. / Now that her clouded, cheating face is changed / My cursed
life drags on its long, unwanted days.⁶]

Another example from *Boethius*, this time from the prose, is given under 2 in *DOE*, immediately after the example cited in (3); there is again no corresponding part in *Metres*: Bo 35.102.25 *Ða ongon he biddan heora blisse* (B *miltse*; cf. BOETH. Cons.Phil.metr. 3.12.27 *ueniam* [Then he began to ask their favour]). The fact that MS. B has a variant *miltse* is an important indicator of the semantic rivalry among these synonyms in the early medieval period.

DOE bliss, *blīps* 3. rendering *gloria* ‘glory’ corresponds to *OED bliss sb.* †3. “Glory.” The first example in *OED* is taken from the *Trinity Homilies*, which is one of the examples also offered by *DOE* (*TrinHom* (Morris 19) 115.21).⁷ *DOE* has, however, another twelfth-century example from *HomU 1* (Bodley 343, ed. Belfour), which has a reference to *Matthew* in Latin (I note here that the relevant Old English word in the gloss texts, as listed here, is *wuldor*). All three instances follow in example (4):

5 Concerning the debate, see Szarmach, “An Apologia for the *Meters of Boethius*,” 107-36.

6 Translation from *Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester.

7 Twelfth- and thirteenth-century texts like the *Peterborough Chronicle*, *Lambeth Homilies*, and *Trinity Homilies* are in the data of both *DOE* and *MED*. All manuscripts from the transitional period included in the *DOE Corpus* are enumerated, with permission of the *DOE* staff, in Ogura, “Late OE and Early ME.”

- (4) HomU 1 and TrinHom (*DOE bliss*, **blīps** f. 3; TrinHom 115.21 in *OED bliss sb.* †3)

HomU 1 118

eft þe deofel . . . sceawede him [þam Hælende] alles middæne-
eardeas rice and his blisse (Mt. 4:8 *omnia regna mundi et gloriam*
eorum) (Li. *wuldur*; Ru1&WS *wuldor*)

[Again the devil . . . showed him [the Lord] the kingdom of all the
world and its glory.]

TrinHom (Morris 19) 115.17

inrabit rex gloriæ . . . þe king of blisse þe wile faren herin.
[the king of glory who wishes to come herein]

TrinHom (Morris 19) 115.21

quis est iste rex glorie hwæt is þis blissene king? . . . *dominus uirtutum*
ipse est rex glorie he þe is alre mihtene louerd he is alre blissene king.
[What is this king of glories? . . . he who is the Lord of all powers, he
is the king of all glories.]

The development of *bliss* as a translation for Latin *gloriam*, and with a meaning more akin to modern English ‘glory,’ seems likely to be a feature of the transitional period.

The verbs *bliss* and *bless* illustrate more obvious blending than the associated nouns. The fact of blending is clearly stated in the etymology to *OED bliss v.*, which notes that, for signification 2., the blending occurred in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. *OED bless v.* is classified according to three major senses: “I. To make sacred, consecrate, hallow; II. To hold or call holy; to extol as holy, divine, gracious; III. To declare to be supernaturally favoured; to pronounce or make happy.” Example (5) from *Genesis A* comes from III. 7., which reads, “To confer well-being upon; to make happy; to prosper, make successful.” *DOE* cites the same example in *bletsian* 1.a., meaning ‘to bestow divine favour.’ Also relevant in this respect is a comparison between *Genesis A* line 2354 and the *Hexateuch* text at *Genesis* 17.20, which *DOE* quotes in Latin in parentheses and for which I add the Old English text in (5) below. Here, the subjunctive form is used by contrast to *GenA*, where the infinitive should bear alliteration. As the explanatory definition under 7. in *OED* demonstrates, a “divine blessing” must bring success or happiness. Thus, we can see the early evidence for the later semantic merger of *bless* and *bliss*.⁸

⁸ *OED bless v.*¹, III. 7: “*orig.* said of God; in later use also of men and things, but generally with an implication of their conferring instrumentally a divine blessing. (Here the association of *bless* with *bliss* becomes apparent.)” In *MED* both *blissen* and *blesse*n should be consulted; the merger can be seen in *blesse*n, especially under 3. (a) “To make (sb.) fortunate or happy, be a blessing to.”

- (5) GenA 2354 (*DOE* **bletsian** 1.a.; *OED* **bless** *v.*¹ III 7)
 ece drihten andswarode . . . ic Ismael estum wille **bletsian** nu
 (cf. Gn 17:20 [*ecce benedicam ei*] efne ic hine **bletsige**)

[The eternal Lord answered . . . I am now willing to bless Ishmael.]

Example (6) PsGJ 94.1 is cited in *DOE* under **bletsian** 3.a.i., which reads, “*bletsian* ‘to extol, praise’ loosely glossing *exsultare* ‘to rejoice,’ perhaps because the word is superficially close to *blissian*.” Example (7) PsGJ 48.14 is cited under 4., glossing *complacere*, here ‘to be pleased.’ Both examples are taken from the *Arundel Psalter*, which suggests that a further comparison among the glosses should be made. D-type glosses other than J use *blissian* in contexts similar to that in example (6), which shows dialectal contrast with A-type *gefeon*. In example (7), *bletsian* appears in ABCDE, translating *benedicere* of the Roman text, and in FGIJ translating *complacere* of the Gallican text. In F and J, *bletsian* is used, but G and I choose the renderings *geliciað* and *gecwemde*, respectively. The detail in which the *DOE* lays out this material, providing all the psalter glosses for comparison against the chosen sample gloss, suggests a very careful approach to determining the significations.

- (6) PsGJ 94.1 (*PsGJ* in *DOE* **bletsian** 3.a.i.)
 cumaþ uton **bletsian** drihtne uton dreman Gode hælende urum
uenite exultemus domino iubilemus deo salutari nostro (DFGHIK
blissian, ABC forms of *gefeon*, E to *gedremene*).

[Come, let us praise the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Saviour.]

- (7) PsGJ 48.14 (*PsGJ* in *DOE* **bletsian** 4.)
 þes weg heora æswic ƿ wroht biþ him & æfter þon on muþe heora
 hi **bletsiaþ** *haec uia illorum scandalum ipsis et postea in ore suo
 complacebunt* (F *bletsiað*, G *geliciað*, I *gecwemde* ƿ *hig geliciaþ*
 glossing forms of *complacere*; BD *bletsiað*, E *bletsiaþ*, AC *bledsiað*
 glossing *benedict*).

[This way of theirs is an offence for them and afterwards they will be pleased in their mouth.]

Care

A semantic change of the word *care* from ‘sorrow’ to ‘care’ is evident in the Middle English phrase *withoute(n) care*. In *OED care sb.*¹ under 2. we read, “Burdened state of mind arising from fear, doubt, or concern about anything; solicitude, anxiety, mental perturbation; . . . †*withouten care*: without doubt.” In *MED cāre* (n. (1)) under 4., we read, “(a) Fear, dread; *withouten* ~, without fear; (b) *withouten* ~, without doubt, truly.” The only example for (b) in *MED* is the same as that found in *OED* under 2.: *Castle Love* (1) 1509 *O God hit is, wiþ-outen care, Of alle schaftes schuppare*. Example (8) is an early thirteenth-century example of *care* ‘fear’; MS. B has *bute care* but T *wiðute care*.

- (8) HMaid (B) 30/497 (MS. B in *MED cāre* n. (1) 4 (a))
 Nis ha neuwer bute care [(T) 507: wiðute care] leaste hit misfeare.
 [She is never without fear lest it go wrong.]

The sense ‘fear’ is well attested by other examples under 4.(a), as in *WPal.* 288 *þe couherd comsed to quake for kare & for drede* and *Cursor* (F) 5090 *Make 3ou redy wiþ-oute mare and dose 3ou hame wiþ-out care*. As these contexts indicate, *care* seems to have had a wider range of senses in Old and Middle English. *DOE* demonstrates this peculiarity with its focus on phrases and collocations. Example (9) shows *caru* ‘sorrow’ used in *cearum cwipþan* (from *DOE caru* 1.b.) and example (10) *don care* ‘to take care’ in the gloss (under 2.a.):

- (9) ChristC 889 (*DOE caru* f. 1.b.)
 þær mon mæg sorgende folc gehyran hygegeomor, hearde gefysed,
cearum cwipþende cwicra gewyrhtu, forhte afærde.
 [There one can hear people crying, sad in mind, greatly disquieted,
 bewailing with sorrows the deeds of a lifetime, terrified, being afraid.]
- (10) LibSc 45.27 (*DOE caru* f. 2.a.)
 (*sic debemus agere curam nostram ut non neglegamus curam proximi.*)
 swa we scylon don care ure þæt we na forgyman care nehstan.
 [We must take care of us so that we may not neglect the neighbour’s care.]

Doubt

A loan word, *doubt* shared its semantic field with the native *dread* and was used synonymously in Middle English.⁹ *Doubt* in the sense of ‘fear’ is seen in *OED doubt sb.* under †3.a. “Apprehension, dread, fear,” which corresponds to *MED dōut(e* n. 3. (a) “Anxiety; fear, fright,” the common example being *St. Juliana 28 for dute of deaðe* ‘for fear of death.’ In *OED dread sb.* under †3. “Doubt, risk of the thing proving otherwise,” we find examples from 1340 (*Ayenbit of Inwit*) to 1556, including phrases like *without (but out of) dread* ‘without doubt, doubtless’ or *no dread* ‘no fear, no doubt,’ a signification which corresponds to *MED drēde* n. 4. (a)(b). The verb forms also show semantic overlap. Example (11) illustrates manuscript variants in *Cursor Mundi* (Trinity in *OED* and Göttingen in *MED*, with Cotton and Fairfax from Richard Morris’s EETS edition):¹⁰

- (11) *Cursor* 21870 (MS. T in *OED doubt v.* †8 *intr.*; *MED dōuten v.* 2 (e))
 C: Mani man sal dei for dute.
 G: Mani man sall drede and dute.
 F: mani man sal sorou for doute
 T: Mony mon erof shal doute.

Example (12) again shows manuscript variants. *MED drēden v.* 5. “To be in doubt, followed by a *whether*-clause” is exemplified by *MPPsalter*, which has a variant *douten*, which I quote from Karl Bülbring’s EETS edition:¹¹

- (12) *MPPsalter* 76.15 (*MED drēden v.* 5)
 Pe wicked ben trubled, **dredand** wheþer þou be God oþer non.
 Cf. *Trin. Coll. Dublin, A.4.4: . . . douted wheþer þou wer Godd or noʒt.*

We sometimes have to examine variant forms other than those quoted in *OED* and *MED* in order to confirm the breadth of the semantic fields of a particular word and its synonyms.

9 For the rivalry which developed between these words in the Middle English period, see Ogura, “ME *douten* and *dreden*,” 117-30.

10 *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Morris, EETS, o.s. 66.

11 *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, ed. Bülbring, EETS, o.s. 97.

Dream

Dream meant ‘joy’ throughout the Old English period, according to the extant written records. *Dream* was still used in this sense in early Middle English, as seen in example (13), but the sense ‘dream’ began to appear in *Genesis & Exodus* in the mid-thirteenth century (*OED dream sb.*², 1.a.), often as a manuscript variant, as seen in example (14):

- (13) La3 14285-6 (*OED dream sb.*¹; *MED drēm n.* (1) (e))
 C: heo æten heo drunken: **dræm** wes i burh3en.
 O: hii eoten hii drongken: **blisse** was a-mang heom.
- (14) Gen 41.22 (*OED dream sb.*² 1.a.; *MED drēm n.* (2), 1. (b))
 WycEV: I saw3 a **sweuen**
 WycLV: and Y sei3 a **dreem**

DOE drēam has three major senses: 1. ‘joy, bliss,’ 2. ‘frenzy, delirium, madness, demonic possession,’ and 3. ‘sound, music, noise.’ Example (15) is taken from sense 2., with reference to *Matthew*, the Latin of which is cited from *DOE*, and I add here a West Saxon translation. Another citation I add here is from the *Vitellius Psalter*, which uses *wod-dream* glossing *demonia*, in order to show my own speculation that this sense of *wod-dream* or *on wodum dream* might be one of the triggers of the semantic change of OE *dream* from ‘joy’ to ‘dream’ through ‘demons.’

- (15) ÆCHom II, 3 27.262 (*DOE drēam m.* 2)
 Sum wif wæs ðe com to criste. and bæd for hire dehter þe læg on
wódum dreame.
- [A woman was who came to Christ and prayed for her daughter
 who lay in a demonic possession.]
- Cf. Mt(WSCp) 15.22
 (*filia mea male a daemónio vexatur*) min dohtor ys yfle mid **deofle**
 gedreht.
- Cf. Ps 95.5 (*DOE woddream m.*)
 (*Quoniam omnis dii gentium demonia dominus autem celos fecit.*)
 G: forþam þe ealle godas þeoda **woddreamas** † <demonia> drihten
 soðlice heofenas dyde † worhte (A *ðioful*, B *deoful*, C *deofol*,
 E *diofla*, FI *deofla*, J *demonia*, DHK *woddreamas*).

The *DOE* offers hints of the semantic change to come, hints which can be investigated both in later dictionaries and in the *DOE Corpus*.

Fear

The phrase *for fear* needs a comment on the choice of variants, *for doute* and *for drede*, particularly since we have already examined elements of doubt and dread in this semantic range. In *OED fear sb.* under 3.b. we find *Cursor Mundi* (Trin.) as the first citation of this phrase, which is example (16) below. In *MED fēr* n. (1) under 1.(b), after the example with a dubious spelling *wiðutan fore* in *Lambeth Homilies* (which is nevertheless cited under 2.a. in *OED* as the first citation of the sense ‘the emotion of pain or uneasiness’), taken from the *South English Legendary* and cited with a variant, which is example (17) below. *DOE fǣr* gives a citation of the phrase from *Ælfric’s Grammar* of the thirteenth-century reading of the Tremulous Hand, with the choice of *ege* in the Old English version, as seen in example (18) below.

- (16) *Cursor* 1908 (MS. T in *OED fear sb.* 3.b.; *MED fēr* 1. (b))
 C: **for doute** if any demmyng brest
 G: **For drede** if ani damising brest
 T: **For fere** lest any damning brest
- (17) *S. Leg. Chris.* (Hrl) 162 (*MED fēr* 1. (b))
 For fere [Ld: drede] he ful to grounde anon.
- (18) *ÆGram* (W) 272.8 (*DOE fǣr* m. 2)
 (*pre timore non audeo*) **for fore** ic ne <dear> (*ÆGram ege*)

These three examples indicate (i) that OE *fǣr* was mainly used in the sense ‘sudden or unexpected danger; peril, calamity,’ as the signification in *DOE fǣr* m. 1 shows, and that the sense of ‘fear’ was a later development, and (ii) that the three dictionaries disagree with respect to the earliest occurrence of the phrase *for fear*, with the *OED* citing *Cursor Mundi*, the *MED* the *Lambeth Homilies*, and the *DOE* a copy of *Ælfric’s Grammar*.

As to the verbs, I here give an example from *Deuteronomy*, which is cited in both *DOE* and *OED*; the reference to the Wycliffite versions is my addition:

- (19) *Deut* 1.28 (*DOE fǣran* 1; *OED fear* v. 1.1.)
 ða bodan us **færdon**, and cwædon: ðær is micel folc & maran men
 ðonne we (cf. Dt: *nuntii terruerunt cor nostrum dicentes maxima
 multitudo est et nobis in statura procerior*).
 [Then the messengers frightened us and said, there are greater
 people and more men than we.]

- Cf. WycEV: the messengeris **han feerde** oure hertis.
 WycLV: the messengeris **maken aferd** oure herte.

Here the sense clearly has to do with fear, and not with unexpected peril, in the *DOE* as well as in later references.

Forgive

I include one prefixed verb in my comparison of the significations of the three dictionaries, because the prefix *for-*, unlike *ge-* and *a-*, tends both to survive the centuries and to preserve its meaning. *Forgive* is one of those prefixed verbs that have survived lexically and can be easily identified as a headword in the three dictionaries. Example (20) can be regarded as syntactically ambiguous. It may be one of the earliest examples of a personal passive construction, since the verb can take the accusative and thus the passive is possible in the sense ‘to give, grant.’ On the other hand, some scholars such as Willem van der Gaaf maintain that the person should be in the dative and that the construction results from a contamination of the personal, active sentence with an ‘impersonal’ passive.¹² *DOE* places this example under A.1.d. “to give, grant something acc. to someone / a city dat.” The sense ‘to give, grant’ is listed under A. in *DOE for-gyfan*, 5. in *MED foryēven*, and in *OED* †1 *forgive*.

- (20) *ÆLS* (Lucy) 136 (*DOE for-gyfan* A.1.d.)
 swa ic eom **forgifen**. fram þam ælmihtigan gode nu þyssere byrig.
 siracusanan. eow to gepingienne.
 [So I am granted, by Almighty God, now in this city of Syracuse,
 to intercede for you.]

Examples (21) and (22), taken from the *Lambeth Psalter*, illustrate alternatives: (21) under A.1.c., the verb denoting ‘to give,’ and (22) under A.7., the verb meaning ‘to give back.’ Variants in other Psalters show differences in word choice, which reflect differences in the Latin source texts.

- (21) *PsGII* 1.3 (*DOE for-gyfan* A.1.c.)
 & he bið swa swa treow þe geplantod is † þæt ðe geset is wið rynas
 wætera þæt þe westm his selð † **forgifō** on his tide *et erit tamquam*

¹² Van der Gaaf, “The Conversion of the Indirect Personal Object,” 62-63. For a detailed discussion of this construction, and references, see Ogura, *Old English ‘Impersonal’ Verbs and Expressions*, 185-86.

lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo. (E *giuan*, CDGHJPPs[prose] forms of *sellan*)

[And he shall be like a tree planted by the course of water that shall give the fruit in his time.]

- (22) PsGII 50.14 (*DOE for-gyfan* A.7.)

Ageld ġ **forgyf** me blisse halwendan þines & mid ealdorlicum gaste getrym me *redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui et spiritu principali confirma me.* (DEFGH forms of *agyldan* only, ABCJL forms of *agyfan*)

[Give me back the joy of thy salvation and comfort me with excellent spirit.]

The *Lambeth Psalter* stands alone in its use of *forgifan* in these contexts.

Example (23) is taken from *Piers Plowman*, but the same example is quoted from the *Piers B*-text in *OED* under 1. and from the *Piers C*-text in *MED* under 5.(a).

- (23) PPl. B (*OED forgive* v. †1. *trans.*), PPl. C (*MED foryēven* v. 5. (a))

B 18.76: For he was knyȝte & kynges sone kynde **forȝaf** þat tyme [*vr. throwe*], / þat non harlot were so hardy to leyne hands vpon hym.

C (Hnt) 21.79: Kynde **forȝaf** þat tyme / þat no boye hadde hardnesse hym to touche.

The sense ‘to forgive’ is provided in *OED* under 3. “To remit (a debt); to give up resentment or claim to requital for, pardon (an offence).” Under *OED* 3.b. we find the earlier part of the *Pater noster* in *Matthew* 6.12 as an example “with the thing in the acc. and the person in the dat.” in Old English and under 3.c. the latter part as an example of “indirect object only” from an early version of the Wycliffite Gospel. Example (24) below shows these two usages, together with Latin and other versions. (In some versions of *WycEV*, *to* appears after the first *forȝeue* but is omitted in others.)

- (24) Mt 6.12 (*OED forgive* v. 3. b. (*Ags.Gosp.*) and c. (1382 Wyclif))

(*et demitte nobis debita nostra sicut nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*)

Li: 7 **forgef** us scylda usra suæ uoe **forgef**on scyldgum usum

Ru1: 7 **forlet** us ure scylde swa swa we éc **forleten** þæm þe scyldigat (*sic*) wið us

- WSCP: 7 **forgyf** us úre gyltas swa swa wé **forgyfað** úrum gyltendum
 and **forʒeue** (to) vs oure dettis, as we **forʒeue** to oure
 dettours
- WycEV: and **forʒyue** to vs oure dettis, as we **forʒyuen** to oure det-
 touris

Moreover, under 5. absolute use in *OED*, we find *Luke 6.37 Forgyfaþ & eow byð forgyfen*. It is curious to see that *DOE* does not choose these well-known sentences as examples. *DOE* is unique in giving, under D. (to forgive, 3.f.ii.b. of judgement, punishment: tolerable, not hard, forgiving), four examples of the *Lindisfarne Gospel* version, two from *Matthew* and two from *Luke*, which manifest one of the priorities of this dictionary — its emphasis on glosses.

These examples, extracted from different entry structures in the three historical dictionaries of English, show hints of the modern meanings of the verb ‘forgive,’ and its connotations, through the centuries. In these references, the *DOE* in particular demonstrates the discipline of its approach.

Game

In the Old English period, *game* basically had the three meanings ‘joy,’ ‘jest,’ and ‘amusement,’ though the sense ‘jest, joke’ gradually became obsolete. Example (25) illustrates the sense ‘jest, joke’ as given in *DOE gamen* under 2., which seems to be a translation of the Latin *subsannabo* ‘I will mock.’ An example from *Laʒamon* (*Caligula* manuscript), taken from *MED*, follows in (26) below; the variant reading from the *Otho* manuscript is my addition. The first citation in example (27) is taken from *OED* under 2.†a.:

- (25) CP 36.247.23 (*DOE gamen* n. 2)

Hwæt sceal ic ðonne buton hliehchan ðæs, ðonne ge to lose weorðað, & habban me ðæt to **gamene**, ðonne eow ðæt yfel on becymð ðæt ge eow ær ondredon? (Cf. (GREG.MAG. Reg.past. 3.12.17 *ego quoque in interitu uestro ridebo, et subsannabo, cum uobis quod timebatis aduenerit* [Prov. 1:26].)

[What have I to do, then, but laugh at it, when you come to destruction, and have to scoff at it, when the evil that you had feared comes upon you?]

- (26) La3 21007-8 (MS. C in *MED gāme* n. 4)

C: heora 3elp & heore **gome**: ilomp heom seoluen to scame.

O: heore 3eolp and hire **game**: ful 3am seolue to grame.

[Their boast and their jest fell back on themselves to shame (grief).]

- (27) Gen & Ex 3498 (*OED game sb.* 2.†a.; *MED gāme* n. 4. (b))

Tac ðu nogt in idel min name, Ne swer it les to fele in **gamen**.

[Take not my name in vain; swear it not falsely too much in jest.]

The only signification in which the first example goes back to Old English is given by *OED* under *game sb.* in I.1. “amusement, delight, fun, mirth, sport,” which corresponds to *DOE gamen* 1. “amusement, merriment, mirth, joy.” Could this be a significant difference in semantic classification, given that *DOE* has some examples of ‘jest, joke’ as seen in (24)?

As for the verb *game*, *OED* clearly separates intransitive from transitive use, though both are obsolete. Example (28) is taken from the prose *Genesis*, which is cited in both *OED game v.* 1. *intr.* and *DOE gamenian*; the latter is quoted below, together with Latin and manuscript variants and with my addition of the Wycliffite version. Examples of *MED gāmen* are classified according to three syntactic constructions: (a) intransitive, (b) impersonal, and (c) transitive. Example (29) is from (c), denoting ‘to give pleasure to (someone), amuse (someone, oneself)’ with a variant *gladian*.

- (28) Gen 19.14 (*OED game v.* 1. *intr.*; *DOE gamenian*)

Loð þa eode to hys twam aðumum, þe woldon wifian on hys twam dohtrum, & cwæð him to: arisað & farað of þissere stowe, for þan ðe God wyle adylegian þas burh; þa wæs him geðuht swylce he **gamenigende** spræce (*Z gamnigende*, *L gamiende*; cf. Gn: *et visus est eis quasi ludens loqui*).

[Then Loth went to his two sons-in-law, who wished to marry his two daughters, and said to them, Arise and go out of this place, for God intends to destroy the city; then it seemed to them as if he spoke jokingly.]

- Cf. WycEV: And he was seen to hem as **pleiynge** to speke.

(29) S. Leg. ProL. CV (Ashm) 60 (*MED* *gāmen* v. (c))

Here mone was deol to ihure; ne *gamede* [*vr. gladede*] hem no gle.

[Their mourning was sorrowful to hear; no amusement entertained them.]

These examples demonstrate the lost history of the verb ‘to game,’ and their predecessors have taken the lingering sense of *gamen* as a ‘jest’ or ‘joke,’ not just as ‘delight’ or ‘glee.’ With the other case studies given here, they demonstrate the ways in which comparative study of the three historical dictionaries of English clarifies past and present meanings, and especially syntactic usages, of the words for emotions over the centuries. As further letters of the *DOE* emerge, so too can this work develop further.

Those who use the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (*HTE*) may simply remember the sections and categories used in *TOE* and find which words had been synonymous before, during, or after a particular period of time. The thesaurus is particularly enlightening for the words studied here: synonyms of *awe* can be found under the categories *anger*, *esteem*, *regard*, *fear*, etc.; *bliss* under *pleasure* and *enjoyment*, and *bless* under their subcategory *happiness*; *care* under *mental pain* and *suffering*; *doubt* under *the mind* or *fear*; *dream* under *sleeping*, *pleasure*, and *enjoyment*; *fear* under the very category of *fear*; *forgive* under *forgiveness* and *giving*; *game* under *pleasure*, *enjoyment*, *amusement*, *entertainment*, and *sport*. The dates of the first and last quotations in *OED* are used in *HTE* to show when a particular word enters and departs from a particular category of synonyms. This means that the dates and significations used in *OED* become the master key to the *Thesaurus*, which offers scholars another link in the chain to a fuller understanding of these words and their usages.

We have seen here some examples of words whose significations may or may not differ in *OED*, *MED*, and *DOE*. Generally speaking, *OED* is to be consulted first, as long as the word in question is recorded. When the word is included in a quotation, *MED* and *DOE* should be consulted to see if the quotation is classified under the same or a similar sense of the word. *MED* is, of course, specifically concerned with Middle English texts and might also be expected to update the first example of each sense of the word in *OED*, as long as the sense is attested in the Middle English period. *DOE* might also be expected to update *OED* in some meanings of the word if the particular sense appeared in Old English contexts. Since the materials of *DOE* include texts from the transitional period and transcriptions of later hands (for instance, example (4) above), greater precision in the significations is possible. A particular

advantage of *DOE* lies in its treatment of phrasal expressions and alliterating word pairs (as in example (1)); another lies in its separate signification for the glosses. The cross-references to *OED* and *MED* found at the end of the definitions of each word in *DOE* are indispensable. At times, the same quotation may be defined differently (as in example (3)) or the dictionaries may give different first quotations to support a specific definition (as in examples (16)-(18) and (25)-(27)). When the word in question is native and included in the corpus of *DOE*, quotations under the headword should be carefully chosen, since in most cases they are the representatives of each sense. That said, there are times when as scholars we must go back to the *DOE Corpus* and check all the examples of a particular word ourselves. The *DOE* makes this work easy for letters from *A* to *G*, since all attested spellings are provided. For this useful tool — especially for syntacticians who always want more attestations and more evidence — and for the significations in general, we hope for the completion of *DOE* in the very near future.

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