THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 149: BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 149: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do. In this episode, we're going to look at the events that led to the split between the Church of England and the Catholic Church in Rome. It was messy break-up that was triggered by a messy divorce. The marriage of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon finally came to a bitter end. Meanwhile, the fractures that were appearing with the Church led religious scholars to ignore the prohibition against vernacular translations of the Bible. An English translation of the New Testament soon appeared, and it gave the people of England access to the Scriptures in their own language. And the popularity of that Bible had a significant influence on the English language going forward. So this time, we're going to look at how a couple of break-ups in the early 1500s shaped the English language.

But before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can sign up to support the podcast and get bonus episodes and transcripts at Patreon.com/historyofenglish.

Now last time, we looked at the impact of marital unions on the history of English. So it's probably appropriate that this time we're going to do the opposite and look at break-ups. As we saw last time, Martin Luther published a series of criticisms against the Catholic Church in 1517, and that led to a period of division and divorce throughout much of Europe as well. Of course, there was a fundamental religious division as the Protestant movement broke away from the established Church in Rome. There were also political divisions as many well-established alliances began to fracture. And of course, there was a major divorce as Henry VIII sought to end his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. As we'll see, all of these events were interconnected.

We should probably begin with the Protestant Reformation because it was an issue that consumed much of Europe during this period and would continue to do for a long time thereafter. Over the course of this podcast series, we've encountered many instances where clerics and scholars and writers were critical of certain aspects of the Church.

Most of these criticisms, and the tensions that stemmed from these criticisms, were rooted in the fact that the Church authorities made the rules based on their interpretation of the Bible, but they didn't allow the average person to have access to the Bible. The Bible used by the Church was written in Latin, and only the trained clergy were allowed to interpret it for the laity. People's lives were regulated by Scripture, but there was no way for most of those people to read it for themselves. So they were really dependent on the interpretations rendered by Church authorities. In an earlier time, people tended to see the priesthood and the clergy as the ones holding the keys to salvation. But now, those authorities were increasingly seen as obstacles and barriers that needed to be removed. Thanks to the printing press and the availability of cheap books, and the increasing literacy rates, more and more people wanted to have their own copy of the Bible in their native language so they could read it for themselves. They no longer wanted or trusted the Church authorities to interpret it for them.

This tension fueled the Protestant Reformation as it spread across northern Europe over the course of the 1500s. In an earlier episode, we saw that John Wycliffe had composed an English version of the Bible in the late 1300s. But his Bible was met with fierce opposition by the Church. Wycliffe himself was protected by prominent people who supported his efforts – like John of Gaunt, but when Wycliffe died, the Church cracked down and outlawed his translation. His followers were deemed to be heretics, and many of them were burned at the stake. And in 1408, all English translations of the Bible were banned unless they were authorized by the Church, and the Church wasn't authorizing any translations. Anyone caught with an English Bible could be tried for heresy. The effect was chilling. And more than a century passed without any further attempts to render the Bible in English.

But change was in the air with the arrival of the Renaissance and the Humanist learning associated with the Renaissance. The Humanist scholars were interested in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and they were interested in reading those works in their original languages. One of those scholars was the Dutch writer and religious professor named Erasmus who I mentioned in the last episode. Henry VIII had invited him to England shortly after Henry became king. Last time, I mentioned an early work of his called 'Praise of Folly.' But a few years later in 1516, he completed another very important project. He compiled and published a copy of the New Testament in its original language – Greek.

The Greek version was composed alongside a Latin translation. In the Preface he wrote that the Bible should be made available to all persons, not just the educated. He said that Christ spoke to the common people, not just theologians. And he said that the Bible should be translated into every language, with farmers singing scripture as they plow, and weavers humming the Bible as they move the shuttle back-and-forth across the threads as they weave.

That passage reflects a mindset that was becoming more and more popular across Europe.

Erasmus's Greek Bible was published a year before Martin Luther effectively launched the Protestant Reformation in Wittenberg, Germany. As I noted at the end of the last episode, Luther objected to many practices of the Church, but his biggest criticism was reserved for the sale of indulgences. Luther soon became a bit of a folk hero across the region. Unlike the efforts of earlier reformers like John Wycliffe, Luther had access to the printing press. He was able to spread his sermons and pamphlets across the German-speaking parts of Europe. And they were then translated into other languages and distributed to other parts of Europe. The power of Luther's message was aided by the fact that he happened to be a very effective and persuasive writer. His works were not just produced by the thousands; they were produced by the hundreds of thousands. [*SOURCE: The Written World, Martin Puchner, p. 164-5.*] Meanwhile, the Church struggled to come to grips with this new technology. It was very difficult to silence a critic who could appeal to people in their own language and had access to a printing press.

One of the key tenets of Luther's message was that Christians could experience salvation through faith alone. They didn't need the Pope or the priesthood to serve as intermediaries. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 27.*] But that implied that Christians needed to be able access the Scriptures on their own. They needed a Bible in their own language. Luther intended to provide

his followers with a German translation of the Bible, but before he could prepare one, he had to deal with a counter-attack by Church officials. In 1520, the Pope condemned Luther's writings and declared him to be a heretic. Luther responded by burning the papal declaration in public. Meanwhile, the Church banned Luther's books. And the following year, English officials burned Luther's books at a massive book-burning in London. Another book-burning was held in Cambridge a few weeks later. Antwerp in Belgium also held its first public book-burnings. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 133.*] And around the same time, France passed its first formal legislation on censorship – also aimed at Luther's writings. [*SOURCE: Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance, Lisa Jardine, p. 174.*]

Book-burnings weren't an entirely new phenomenon, but they had been relatively rare in Europe before this point. Now, in the early 1520s, they started to become commonplace. And most of the time, they were aimed at destroying the books that promoted Protestant ideas. The timing here is notable because massive book-burnings weren't really necessary in an era when books were rare and expensive and most people couldn't read. But now, thanks to the printing press, books were cheap and plentiful, and lots more people could read. So book-burnings became a common way to attack controversial ideas that were being promoted in those books. They were one of the first ways that Church officials pushed back against the power of the printing press. But again, those officials underestimated the power of the press. As soon as one batch of books was burned, another batch rolled off the presses. And in many cases, the books became even more enticing when people were told not to read them. [*SOURCE: The Written World, Martin Puchner, p. 166.*]

Frustrated by Luther's growing popularity, the Habsburg Emperor Charles V called Luther to special assembly or 'diet' of the Holy Roman Empire at the city of Worms in modern-day Germany. Charles presided over the assembly, and when Luther refused to renounce his religious views, Charles banned those views within the empire. He also banned Luther's writings and declared him to be an outlaw. Luther had already been excommunicated by the Pope, so he was now a marked man. But as I noted in the last episode, the Holy Roman Empire was a collection of states that enjoyed a fair amount of independence. And Luther had the backing of the local ruler in his home state of Saxony – known as Frederick the Wise. Frederick protected Luther – and saved him from being burned as a heretic. [*SOURCE: A History of Civilization,: Prehistory to 1715, Crane Brinton et al., p. 320.*]

This was an important development in the early reign of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V. As I noted last time, Charles had been the beneficiary of several different marriage alliances, which left him as the sole heir to several different realms. He had inherited the Low Countries and Burgundy from this father, Austria and the Holy Roman Empire from paternal grandfather Maximilian I, and Spain and all of its New World territories from his maternal grandfather Ferdinand of Spain. So he was the most powerful political leader in Europe at this time with an empire that stretched across western Europe, and even stretched across the Atlantic Ocean.

In the three year period leading up the Diet of Worms, there had been several important developments in the Spanish New World, which was now part of Charles's Habsburg empire. In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan had sailed from Spain on an expedition to sail all the way around the

world. His ships headed westward, reached South America and sailed around the southern tip, then continued westward across the Pacific and finally reached the Philippines. Around the time of the Diet of Worms, Magellan was killed in a battle with the indigenous people of the Philippines. At that time, no one in Europe knew what had happened to the expedition, but Magellan's crew continued westward after he was killed. They sailed around southeast Asia and India, eventually made their way around the southern tip of Africa and reached Spain the following year. About 250 of the original 270 crewmen died along the way, but the handful of men who made it back to Spain became the first people to circumnavigate the globe.

It's probably worth mentioning that the words ***discovery*** and ***explore*** are first recorded in the English language within a decade or so after Magellan's famous expedition.

Around the same time that Magellan's crew were sailing around the world for the first time, Spain was also in the process of conquering the Aztec civilization in modern-day Mexico. The brutal conquest was led by Hernan Cortes. The Aztec emperor Montezuma was taken prisoner in 1519. And within a few years, Spain completed the conquest and added a large portion of modern-day Mexico to its realm.

Also during this period, Spain began importing African slaves to the New World. They were brought in to replace the native or indigenous people whose populations were quickly dwindling due to the disease, warfare and slavery brought by the Europeans.

So Charles V's massive realm continued to expand during this period, but the fallout from the Diet of Worms exposed some serious fractures back at home. Some parts of the Holy Roman Empire like Saxony were already siding with Martin Luther against the wishes of the Charles and against the wishes of the Pope. And that was a trend that would continue over the course of the century. By this point, the Protestant Reformation had also taken hold in Switzerland. These religious fractures in central Europe would soon turn into deep political fractures.

Around 1521, with Luther enjoying the protection of the local Saxon leader, he finally set about translating the Bible into German. He worked mainly from the Greek Bible composed by Erasmus a few years earlier. And in September of 1522, his translation was finally completed. [*SOURCE: 'A History of Civilization,: Prehistory to 1715,' Crane Brinton et al., p. 321. and 'The Written World, Martin Puchner', p. 168.*] Even after his German New Testament was published, Luther continued to revise and update it. And he added the Old Testament about a decade later, thereby producing the entire Bible in German.

While Luther worked on his German translation of the Bible, the authorities back in England were starting to take Luther's message much more seriously.

As I noted a moment ago, English authorities conducted large book-burnings in London and Cambridge in 1521 to combat the growing influence of Luther's writings. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 20.*] Those efforts were largely organized by the king's Chancellor Thomas Wolsey, who by this point had been designated as a Cardinal in the Catholic Church, so he is usually referred to as Cardinal Wolsey. He was also the Archbishop of York.

And he was Henry VIII's right-hand-man. He was the person largely responsible for the day-to-day government of England while Henry was enjoying the life of a king. And he and Henry were both strongly opposed to the Protestant ideas that Luther was advocating. Wolsey had banned the import of Luther's works into England, but they were routinely smuggled in anyway. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 81.*]

Around the time that Luther was working on his German translation of the New Testament, Henry composed and published a document attacking Luther and defending the Church. Some historians think Henry had the assistance of religious scholars, but regardless, the work was produced under Henry's name. It was composed in Latin and called 'Assertio septem sacramentorum,' literally 'In Defense of the Seven Sacraments.' The Pope loved the work, and he gave Henry the title 'Fidei defensor,' literally 'Defender of the Faith.' That title would become a bit ironic when Henry broke with the Catholic Church a few years later, but Henry kept the title anyway. And so did all subsequent English monarchs. That's why the British pound coin still bears the letters 'F.D.,' which are the initials of that Latin title meaning 'Defender of the Faith.'

A copy of Henry's treatise soon reached Martin Luther himself, and Luther was not impressed with it. He penned his own response in which he called Henry 'the king of lies' and referred to the English king as a "damnable and rotten worm.' [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 29.*]

Henry didn't tend to take criticism very well, so he brought in Thomas More to prepare a reply to Luther. You might remember from the last episode that More was the person who wrote Utopia a few years before. He was still serving in Henry's government, and he was also a devout Catholic, so he had a lot of words for Luther – none of them very nice. In Latin, he described Luther as 'merda,' 'stercus,' 'lutum' and 'coenum' – literally crap, dung, filth and excrement. And I cleaned up those translations a little so I didn't have to mark this episode for obscene language. He also described Luther as 'a drunkard,' 'a liar' and 'an ape.' And in a crowning flourish, he said that Luther was 'arsehole vomited onto earth by the Antichrist.' [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 29.*] If you think debates devolving into personal insults is a product of social media and the internet, it's not. The most revered scholars in Europe were doing the exact same thing exactly five centuries ago. And More's knack for handing out invective and insults was put to great use over the following decade.

Now during the period when Martin Luther and Thomas More were handing out insults, King Henry was busy getting England involved in another war with France. As we saw last time, England maintained an alliance with the Habsburgs, in large part due to their common enemy in France. Also keep in mind that the Habsburg emperor Charles V was the nephew of Henry's wife Catherine of Aragon. So there was a close family connection as well. Together, Henry and Charles planned to launch a joint invasion of France.

Between 1523 and 1525, England waged a disorganized and haphazard war in France. The whole effort was hampered by rain, mud and disease. The English troops burned and pillaged a few villages in northern France, but the effort didn't accomplish very much other than to spend a lot of Henry's money and drain his coffers. [*SOURCE: A History of England, Volume 1: Prehistory to 1714, Clayton and David Roberts, p. 246, and Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 38.*]

At one point during the conflict, Henry's forces were engaged in southern France along the border with Italy. It was in a mountainous region in the Alps, and the English troops had trouble maneuvering through the mountains. Henry's ambassador to the Holy Roman Empire was named Richard Pace, and he accompanied the English forces in the region. In 1524, he wrote a letter to Henry back in England describing the state of the expedition. And it contained the following passage:

> "Pleasith hyt your Hignes to bee advertisid, that upon the 21st of July wee entred the montens, named Le Colle de Tenda, so upright to ascend and stand, that in many places it made us creep of al four: and so proclive in descence, that without great forcemeant to go bolt up, wee could not avoide to fal down headlyng..." [*SOURCE: Ecclesiastical Memorials Relating Chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of It, and the Emergencies of the Church of England, Under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Mary I, by John Strype, M.A., Vol. I, Part II, p. 27.*]

In contemporary Modern English, it reads:

> 'Pleaseth it your Highness to be advised, that upon the 21st of July we entered the mountains, named Col de Tende, so upright to ascend and stand, that in many places it made us creep of all fours: and sloping so steeply in descent, that without great force to go bolt up – or to stand upright, we could not avoid falling down headlong . . .'

Now I wanted to read that passage to you because when Pace wrote that 'without great force' they 'could not avoid falling down,' he spelled the word ***could*** with an 'L' just like we do today as 'c-o-u-l-d.' But, up until this point, there was no 'L' in the word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this letter from Richard Pace is the oldest surviving document to use that modern spelling with the letter 'L.' So where did that 'L' come from? Well, the answer has to do with the way speakers try to make sense out of the somewhat random nature of English, but in doing so, they sometimes get it wrong. Let me explain what I mean.

Today, if someone expresses regret about something, you might hear them say something like 'woulda, coulda, shoulda.' That type of expression reflects how we associate the words ***would***, ***could*** and ***should*** with each other. We do that in part because they have similar sounds and similar spellings, but also because we use them in similar ways. They are part of a small group of verbs that English teachers called modals, or modal auxiliaries, or modal verbs. It all sounds very fancy, but they're really just a small group of words that we put before the main verb in the sentence to qualify the verb in some way. We usually use them to indicate the subject's ability or willingness to perform an action, or to refer to likelihood that the action will occur. So rather than a simple sentence like 'The horse jumps the fence,' we might use one of these modals and say something like the 'The horse would jump the fence,' or 'could jump the fence,' 'or should jump the fence.' Again, these words add different shades of meaning to the sentence, and there are only a few of those modal verbs in English. In addition to ***would***, ***could***, and ***should***, we also have ***will***, ***can*** and ***shall***, as well as few others.

Now if you're really perceptive, you may notice that that second group of words is related to that first group of words. That's because, historically speaking, ***will***, ***can*** and ***shall*** were the present tense form of the verbs, and ***would***, ***could***, and ***should***, were the past tense forms. So you had present tense ***will*** and past tense ***would***, and present tense ***shall*** and past tense ***should***, and present tense ***can*** and past tense ***could***. Now those old distinctions have been largely lost in the way we use those words today, but that's how they developed as distinct words over time.

That also helps to explain why words like ***would*** and ***should*** are spelled with an L, even though we don't pronounce those L's today. ***Will*** produced Old English ***wolde***. And ***shall*** produced Old English ***sheolde***. So the L in those words was once pronounced, but it became silent during the Middle English period, producing a pronunciation much closer to the modern pronunciation, even though the L was retained in the spelling.

But now lets look at that other pair – ***can*** and ***could***. There was no L in ***can***. The Old English version of ***can*** was ***cunnan***, and it produced the past tense form ***cuðe***, which evolved into ***cude*** in Middle English. So there was never an 'L' sound in those words. And those words were never spelled with an L. So in Early Modern English, the language had ***would***, ***should*** and ***coud***, with the long vowel sound becoming short over the course of the 1500s, thereby producing the modern ***would***, ***should*** and ***could***. But again, ***would*** and ***should*** were still spelled with an L to reflect an 'L' sound that once existed in those words. But ***could*** was spelled without an L because it never had an 'L' sound. But it was probably inevitable that English speakers would lose track of that old historical distinction. All three words were pronounced the same way except for the initial consonant, and all three words were used in similar ways grammatically. And like today, people often lumped them together and thought of them as related words. So it was just a matter of time before people started to spell them all the same way. And that's why that letter from Richard Pace to Henry VIII in 1524 is so notable. It's the first evidence we have of someone making that spelling change that would soon become standard. So the word ***could*** got its modern L, even though the word was never spelled or pronounced with an L before then. It got its L simply due to its close association with ***would*** and ***should***.

As I noted, that letter from Richard Pace was written to keep Henry VIII informed about the progress of his war with France. But it was a war that soon ground to an end. Back in England, Henry and his officials were starting to be consumed by the growing interest in Martin Luther's religious movement on the continent. In the same year that Richard Pace wrote that letter to Henry, the bishop of London summoned all of the printers and booksellers in England to a meeting where he warned them about publishing or selling books that were deemed to be heretical. The bishop was Cuthbert Tunstall, and he deemed that no new text could be published without the consent of a board of censors. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 50.*] The Church was still trying to get a handle on the power of the printing press.

Given Bishop Tunstall's concern over heretical books, it probably isn't surprising that he had recently turned away a young chaplain from the West Country who wanted to compose an English translation of the Bible. The chaplain's name was William Tyndale. And Tyndale had tried to get the bishop's permission for an English translation because the laws were so strict in England at the time. Without the Church's consent, anyone who tried to translate the Bible into

English would likely be deemed a heretic, and there was a good chance that both the translation and the translator would be burned in public.

Tyndale was not to be deterred however. He was a follower of Martin Luther, and he knew that Luther had recently translated the Bible into German, and he also knew that Luther enjoyed the protection of local political leaders in northern Germany. So Tyndale decided to travel to Germany where he could prepare his English translation of the Bible without being persecuted.

Again, Tyndale was highly influenced by Luther, and we might say that he was a ***fan*** of Luther. And I use that word ***fan*** for a reason. Of course, ***fan*** is a shortened version of the word ***fanatic***. And the word ***fanatic*** appeared for the first time in an English document around this point in the year 1525. And ***fanatic*** is a good word to use here because the original sense of the word was someone filled with religious fervor. ***Fanatic*** is derived from the Latin word ***fanum*** meaning a temple or a church. It originally referred to things associated with the temple, and then to the religious inspiration and zeal that people acquired inside the temple. So a cleric like William Tyndale might be described as a ***fanatic*** in that original sense of the word because he was so inspired by his religious convictions that he willing to risk his life to produce an English version of the Bible.

He set about translating the New Testament into English shortly after he arrived in Hamburg. Now as we know, Tyndale was not the first person to translate the Bible into English. The Anglo-Saxons had translated large portions of the Bible into Old English, which was not really all that controversial at the time. The Church became much more concerned about those types of translations in the latter Middle Ages. Then of course, John Wycliffe had prepared his translation in the late 1300s working from the standard Latin Vulgate Bible. But if you think back to the episode I did about Wycliffe's translation, you may recall that Wycliffe took a very conservative approach to his translation. He wanted to minimize the scrutiny of the Church, so he stuck very closely to the Latin Bible. In most cases, when he encountered a Latin term that had any kind of special significance, he kept the Latin word rather than translating it into English. In some cases, he anglicized the word by dropping the specific Latin ending, and in other cases, he used a French form of the word that was a bit more familiar in English. But in the end, he maintained a LOT of the original Latin vocabulary in his 'English' translation. So Wycliffe's Bible was written in a very Latinate form of English, and that made it a challenge for many common people to read – if they could get a copy of it in an era before the printing press.

Well, William Tyndale lived almost a century and a half later in a very different era. He understood the power of the printing press, and he understood that he could get his translation into the hands of people throughout England. So he wanted to compose an English translation that the common people could read, and a version that they would enjoy reading. So rather than working from the Latin Vulgate Bible like Wycliffe did, Tyndale relied mainly on Erasmus's Greek translation, thereby going back to the original language of the New Testament. This was consistent with the Humanist view at the time that scholars should go back and study literature in the original language in which it was composed and not rely upon later translations. Tyndale was fluent in many different languages, so he also consulted Luther's German translation and the Latin Version used by the Church. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 56.*]

One of the reasons why William Tyndale is so important to the history of English is because he was such a great writer, and he coined many common phrases and terms that have survived the centuries. Most scholars agree that he had the talents of a great poet, even though he wrote in prose. He lived at a time when most people read out loud, even when they were reading alone. And his writings tended to have a certain flow and rhythm that allowed them to roll off the tongue. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 56.*] And that wasn't an accident. He knew that his translation would be read by the people throughout England, but just as importantly, he thought that it would one day be read from the pulpits as well. He wanted it to be as captivating and listenable as possible.

His translation often showed a preference Old English words, but the primary goal was a simple and plain English. So he also used French and Latin loanwords, but they were usually words that had been common in English for a long time and had the feel and force of native English words. In this regard, Tyndale stands in contrast to those English writers I mentioned a couple of episodes back who thought that English was too 'rude and rusty' to deal with sophisticated ideas. Tyndale thought that plain English was just fine.

For example, whereas Wycliffe had stuck close to the Latin Vulgate Bible and had used the loanword ***desert*** in several passages, Tyndale replaced ***desert*** with the native English word ***wilderness***. And where Wycliffe used the French word ***chamber***, Tyndale preferred the Old English word ***room***. Where Wycliffe used the French word ***powder***, Tyndale changed it to the Old English word ***dust***. Comparing the two translations, we often see this shift from French to Old English. Wycliffe's ***liberty*** became Tyndale's ***freedom***. Wycliffe's ***suspend*** became Tyndale's ***hang***. Wycliffe's ***fraternal*** became Tyndale's ***brotherly***. Wycliffe's ***enemy*** became Tyndale's ***foe***. Again, in all of those cases, a native Old English word replaced a French loaonword.

But as I noted, Tyndale was perfectly willing to use a French loanword if it was common in the language. For example, Wycliffe had composed the line "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt," buy Tyndale didn't like Latin word ***affliction***, so he changed it to ***trouble***, thereby producing the line "I have surely seen the trouble of my people." ***Trouble*** is actually a French loanword, but it had been used in English for over three centuries by that point, so it was as familiar to English speakers then as it is today.

Tyndale not only preferred to use common words, he also had a knack for coming up with memorable English phrases to express ideas that had been originally composed in Greek or Latin. And many of Tyndale's words and phrases have survived the centuries and are still with us today.

At the end of the last episode, I said that I was going to talk about Tyndale's Bible translation in this episode, and that his Bible translation was one of the most important and influential documents ever produced in the English language. Now that may have seemed like a grand statement, especially given that most people have probably never heard of William Tyndale and probably aren't even aware that he composed an English version of the Bible. You may have assumed that I confused Tyndale's Bible with the 'King James Bible.' After all, the Bible is supposedly the most read book in the world, and the King James Version is the traditional

English version that was adopted in the 1600s. And the King James Bible is one of the most quoted works in the English language.

But I referred to Tyndale's Bible on purpose, because here's the thing. To a large extent, the King James Bible is William Tyndale's Bible. Tyndale's translation was so popular, and so well received, that it served as the basis for most of the later English translations. Now there were actually several other English Bible's between Tyndale's Bible and the King James version, but they were all really revisions of Tyndale's work. As a result, much of Tyndale's language was preserved throughout those later translations.

In 1998, researchers conducted a study where they compared the language of Tyndale's Bible to the language of the King James Version – also sometimes called the Authorized Version. And that study found that 84% of the words in the King James Version of the New Testament match the words used by Tyndale in his earlier translation. And as we'll see in the next episode, Tyndale also translated part of the Old Testament as well, and that same study found that nearly 76% of the words in the King James Version match the words used by Tyndale in his translation. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 1.*] Other studies have produced similar results, some suggesting that the overlap between the two versions of the New Testament is over 90%. [*SOURCES: 'The Evolution of the English Language,' George H. McKnight, p. 113, and 'A Visual History of the English Bible,' Donald L. Brake, p. 93, and 'Bible: The Story of the King James Version,' Gordon Campbell, p. 15.*]

The point is that many phrases and idioms that we use all the time are common today because they were used in the King James Bible, but in most cases, those phrases and idioms originated with William Tyndale in the early 1500s, and they have been preserved over the centuries in the various translation of the Bible that have been produced since then.

For example, if someone is attacked or criticized and you tell that person to 'turn the other cheek,' you can thank William Tyndale for that. The saying is derived from a passage in the Book of Matthew. Wycliffe used the word ***show*** instead of ***turn***. He wrote that if someone 'smites' you on the right check, 'show' him the other. In Tyndale's version, if someone 'gives you a blow' on the right check, "tourne to him the other." So thanks to the verb substitution, today we say 'turn the other cheek' instead of 'show the other cheek.'

Now if someone is being very judgmental, you might hit them with the sage advice to 'judge not, lest ye be judged.' Well, again, you can thank William Tyndale for that. Wycliffe wrote, "Nile ye deme, that ye be not demed," literally 'Do not deem, that you be not deemed.' So he relied on the Old English verb ***deem***, as in to deem something to be good or bad. But by the early 1500s, the word ***deem*** had been largely replaced by the French loanword ***judge*** in many contexts. So this is a case where Tyndale went with the loanword ***judge***. So in Tyndale's translation, he wrote, "Iudge not that ye be not iudged," which is the same language preserved in the King James Bible.

So that explains the verb, but what about that word ***ye*** in that passage? We've seen that ***ye*** – 'Y-E' – sometimes appeared as an alternate spelling of the word ***the***. So when it was used in that way as an article, 'Y-E' was actually pronounced as ***the***. But there was also a pronoun spelled

'Y-E' – and it was actually pronounced 'ye.' It was an alternate form of ***you***, and that was the pronoun form that Tyndale used in the passage, "Iudge not that ye be not iudged."

So what was the difference between ***ye*** and ***you***? Well, in Middle English, there were many different forms of the word ***you***. Of course, the singular forms were ***thou*** and ***thee***. ***Thou*** was the subject form, and ***thee*** was the object form. And there were also two plural forms – ***ye*** and ***you***. Again, ***ye*** was the subject form and ***you*** was the object form. So that was the technical difference between ***ye*** and ***you***. Now of course, Modern English has simplified all of those various forms. ***Thou***, ***thee*** and ***ye*** have all been replaced with ***you***. Singular, plural, subject, object – it's always ***you*** today. But those older forms were still common in the language in the early 1500s when Tyndale prepared his translation, so he maintained the traditional distinction between ***ye*** and ***you***. So in the line "Iudge not that ye be not iudged," ***ye*** is the traditional form of the pronoun there. And Tyndale's language and influence was so strong that the authors of the King James Bible often chose to maintain his pronoun forms even though the use of the pronoun ***ye*** was a bit old-fashioned by that point a century later. That's why the King James Version maintains Tyndale's use of the word ***ye***, even though ***you*** would have been more common in regular speech at the time in the early 1600s. [*SOURCE: 'The English Language,' Robert Burchfield, p. 29-30.*]

Now let's look at a few more examples of Tyndale's influence on Modern English. Today, if you tell a group of people to 'eat, drink and be merry,' you're using a phrase that was coined by Tyndale in his translation of the Book of Luke. Wycliffe had used the line 'ete, drynke, and make feeste,' but Tyndale changed 'make feeste' to 'be merry.'

In that same book, Tyndale gave us the first recorded use of the word ***fisherman***. It actually appears in the plural form as ***fishermen***. The Latin Vulgate Bible had used the Latin word ***piscatores***, which Wycliffe had translated as ***fishers***. A ***fisher*** was someone who fishes, just like a ***hunter*** was someone who hunts. But Tyndale changed Wycliffe's word ***fishers*** into ***fishermen***, and that gave us the more common term today for someone who fishes.

Now if you ever refer to 'the powers that be,' you can thank Tyndale because that was his wording. The line appears in the Book of Romans where its was rendered as "The powers that be are ordeyned of God." The King James Version kept the same wording. In the 1300s, John Wycliffe had translated the line as 'those things that be' rather than 'the powers that be.'

Now if you refer to someone as a ***weakling***, you can thank Tyndale for that word. He used it in a passage from 1 Corinthians to refer to a soft or effeminate man. It's the first known use of the word in English, but Tyndale apparently derived it from Luther's German Bible. In the same passage, Luther had used the German word ***weichlinge***. ***Weich*** means 'soft' or 'weak' in German. It's spelled 'W-e-i-c-h,' and it actually comes from the same Germanic root as the English word ***weak***. Tyndale knew enough about English and German to recognize the connection between the two words, so he simply substituted the English version of the word for the German version, and German ***weichlinge*** became English ***weakling***.

If you ever say that someone 'doesn't suffer fools gladly,' that phrase can also be traced back to Tyndale. It's derived from a passage in 2 Corinthians which Tyndale rendered as "For ye suffre foles gladly be cause that ye youre selves are wyse." That was a change from Wycliffe's wording. Wycliffe had rendered the first part of that line as "For ye suffren gladli vnwise men." So Tyndale changed 'unwise men' to 'fools,' and had it not been for that change, we would probably say that someone 'doesn't suffer unwise men gladly.'

If you ever tell someone to 'fight the good fight,' that's also a Tyndale phrase. Wycliffe had the line as "strive thou a good strife."

In the Book of Hebrews, Tyndale coined the word ***seashore***. It appears in a line which he rendered as "the sand of the seashore which is innumerable." Earlier, Wycliffe had rendered the same line as "grauel that is at the see side out of noumbre." So Wycliffe's ***gravel*** and ***seaside*** became Tyndale's ***sand*** and ***seashore***, and that's the first known use of the term ***seashore*** in the English language. Again, the King James Version adopted Tyndale's language.

If you ever refer to someone as a ***busybody***, you can also thank Tyndale for that word. In the book of 1 Peter, Wycliffe referred to "a disirere of othere mennus goodis" – 'a desirer of other men's goods." But Tyndale rendered that part of the passage as "a busybody in other mens matters." So the French word ***desirer*** was replaced with a term that Tyndale apparently coined by putting together two Old English words – ***busy*** and ***body***, thereby giving us the term ***busybody***.

And if you ever feel like you've fallen into a 'bottomless pit,' you can also thank Tyndale for that term. That was his translation of a term that Wycliffe had rendered as 'pit of deepness.' So from 'pit of deepness' to 'bottomless pit,' you can hear how Tyndale's language is so much more familiar to us today.

I should note that I'm really only scratching the surface here when it comes to Tyndale's contribution to Modern English, but if you are a patron of the podcast at Patreon, the next bonus episode there will explore his translation in more detail.

Now Tyndale completed his translation of the New Testament in the year 1525. From there, he needed to have it printed, and he was apparently receiving financial support from English merchants to help him cover the costs. He initially traveled to the city of Cologne to look for a printer to publish the translation. He made an agreement with a local printer there, but English agents soon got word of what he trying to do, and in order to avoid arrest or the confiscation of his work, Tyndale fled to the city of Worms. By that point, Worms had a Lutheran leader, so Tyndale knew he would be protected there. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 76.*] Several thousand copies of the English translation were published in Worms, and by February of 1526, the copies were loaded on barges on the Rhine to be shipped to England.

Again, the copies had to be smuggled into England given that English law banned English translations of the Bible. It's estimated that somewhere between 3,000 and 6,000 copies were smuggled into England. The number varies depending on the source. [*SOURCE: 'The Story of English,' Rebecca Fraser, p. 262, and 'Great Tales from English History,' Robert Lacey, p.*

200.] The authorities in England were able to seize or purchase most of the copies at first. An Order issued in October required all citizens in London to hand over their copies. [*SOURCE: The Stories of English, David Crystal, p. 273.*] The copies were burned, with only three of the original versions surviving to this day. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 80.*] But pirated editions of the translation were soon being printed in Antwerp, and smugglers would continue to find ways to sneak them into England. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 83.*]

Meanwhile, Henry VIII's right-hand-man Cardinal Wolsey ordered Tyndale to be seized wherever he resided on the continent to prevent any further efforts to produce or distribute copies of his translation. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 142.*] Bur for now, the order was largely ignored.

Tyndale's translation of the New Testament arrived in England at a time when Henry VIII was getting restless, and was looking to end a couple of old relationships. And this is where we need to shift from the religious break-up that was underway in Europe, and we need to look at a couple of other break-ups – one political and one marital. The first concerned Henry's political relationship with the Habsburg ruler Charles V. The second was his marital relationship to Catherine of Aragon. Those two break-ups would be difficult enough to manage on their own, but remember that Charles and Catherine were close relatives. Charles was Catherine's nephew. And that meant the two issues became intertwined. What began as two separate break-ups evolved into one really big break-up.

Henry's break with the Habsburg ruler Charles V stemmed from the growing power of the Habsburg realm. Henry had generally sided with the Habsburgs because they both had a common enemy in France. But in the previous year, 1525, Charles's forces had soundly defeated the French king at Pavia in northern Italy. The French king Francis I was actually taken hostage and later released when he agreed to a treaty. There was a sudden realization that Charles was now the most powerful ruler in Europe, and with a realm that extended across Europe and across the Atlantic. So some of his allies started to step back to try to keep his power in check.

Henry's break with Charles also stemmed from a personal dispute when Charles refused to back another effort by Henry to invade France at a time when France was vulnerable. So Henry turned against Charles and made an alliance with France against the Habsburgs.

By the way, Henry wasn't the only ally to break with Charles. The Pope did as well. The Pope was Clement VII, and in 1527, he also turned against Charles out of fear that Charles would soon try to dominate Italy. Charles responded by doing just that. His forces invaded and sacked Rome in that year. And, as a result, the Pope became a virtual prisoner of Charles. And that eventually had major consequences for Henry VIII's other break-up.

Of course, that other break-up was the end of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon – Charles aunt. This was the matter that consumed most of Henry's time and attention for the next few years – and in fact, it is often referred to as Henry's 'Great Matter.' By this point, Henry had fallen in love with one of Catherine's attendants named Anne Boleyn. Henry had previously had an affair

with Anne's older sister Mary, but now his attention had moved on to Anne. And he might have been content to have Anne as another mistress were it not for the fact that he still did not have a male heir. As I noted last time, Henry was desperate for a son who could inherit the throne and secure the Tudor Dynasty. Catherine had given birth to a surviving daughter named Mary, but no surviving sons. And now, Catherine was over 40 years old and unlikely to ever give birth to a male heir. So Henry started to entertain the idea of making Anne Boleyn the new queen in place of Catherine. But that would prove to be a very heavy lift.

Of course, Henry could have had a son with Anne Boleyn, but since she was not his wife, any such son would be illegitimate. In fact, as I noted in the last episode, Henry already had an illegitimate son named Henry Fitzroy – literally 'Henry son of the king.' Even though he was illegitimate, his father adored him and treated him as a prince. In fact, we have an interesting anecdote about the younger Henry from this same year, 1527. In a letter dated that year from the boy's schoolmaster [Richard Croke] to the king's right-hand-man Cardinal Wolsey, the schoolmaster described the education of the king's son, but he also mentioned that one of the boy's attendants [George Cotton] was undermining the boy's education in several different ways, including the removal of "those boys whose punishment it was necessary to deter his princely pupil from the repetition of his faults." So this line is referring to young Henry's fellow students who were whipped and punished to set an example for Henry. Apparently, one of the attendants was trying to protect those other boys, much to the chagrin of the schoolmaster. This is one of the first references we have to that type of arrangement in England where a substitute child was punished for the bad deeds of a king's son. The teacher couldn't physically hit or punish the royal offspring, so the teacher had to whip or strike a fellow student instead to make an example out of them. And that produced the term 'whipping boy,' even though the specific term isn't found in any surviving documents until the next century. But we can assume that 'whipping boys' were around during the reign of Henry VIII since this particular letter is one of the oldest surviving references we have to that practice. Today, a 'whipping boy' is a more general term for someone who is constantly berated and blamed for the problems caused by someone else.

Now as I noted, Henry loved his son, but there was no way that son could inherit the throne since he was illegitimate. And given Queen Catherine's age, it didn't seem likely that Henry would ever have a legitimate son, unless he could find a way to end his marriage to Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn.

Now you may say, why didn't Henry just get a divorce from Catherine? Well, that was precisely the problem. The Church didn't allow divorce. And even if Henry tried to get his royal officials to issue a divorce decree, the Church wouldn't recognize it, and any children delivered by Anne would still be deemed to be illegitimate.

But there was another option. In certain limited situations, the Church could grant an annulment. That was a determination that a marriage was invalid and had never actually existed in the eyes of the Church. So rather than ending a valid marriage, it was a judgment that there was never a proper marriage in the first place. The problem was that annulments were hard to obtain, especially when a couple had been living together as husband and wife for almost two decades. To get an annulment, Henry had to show that the marriage violated the Scriptures or a specific

rule of the Church, but more importantly, the annulment could only be granted by the Pope himself. And remember, the Pope was now the effective prisoner of Catherine's nephew, Charles V. Even if the Pope was inclined to grant the annulment, and there is no indication that he was, there was no way that Charles was going to let Henry disrespect his aunt by kicking her to the curb after nearly twenty years of marriage.

Henry moved forward anyway. He directed his scholars to research all they precedents they could find, and put together the best argument they could make for an annulment so that it could be sent to the Pope for his consideration. The primary argument they made concerned the fact that Catherine had previously been married to Henry's older brother Arthur. In the last episode, I talked about that first marriage. Arthur was the older brother and the heir to the throne, and the plan was for Catherine to be his queen. But a short time after they were married, Arthur died. That left Henry as the eldest son, so a few years later, Henry basically took Arthur's place and married Catherine. Well, there's a provision in the Book of Leviticus that reads "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife." And a couple of chapters later in Leviticus, there's this passage: "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." So that was the argument. The Scriptures prohibited Henry from marrying his brother's wife. And God had punished him for doing so by not giving him a son.

But as is often the case with the law, there was a contrary argument. First of all, Henry and Catherine were not childless. They had a daughter, Mary. Also, the Book of Deuteronomy contains a passage that seemed to contradict Henry's interpretation of Leviticus. It reads: "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her." So Deuteronomy could be interpreted as requiring Henry to marry Catherine.

Ultimately, the Pope would have to make the decision, but as I noted a moment ago, he was basically the prisoner of Charles V who was vehemently opposed to the annulment. The Pope was now caught in between the two rival monarchs, so he didn't make a decision either way. He let the matter drag on without a verdict for months. The Pope was willing to delay a final answer as long as he needed to. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 44.*] And initially, Henry was content to let his right-hand-man Cardinal Wolsey take care of the matter through the regular channels. Even if it took a while, Henry was confident that the Pope would eventually give him what he wanted.

Around this time, in 1528, William Tyndale was living in Antwerp in modern-day Belgium. He was aware that Church officials in England had condemned his English translation of the New Testament, so he wrote a new text that was partly a justification for the translation. It was called 'The Obedience of a Christian Man.' In it, Tyndale rejected the argument that English was 'too rude' or rustic to render the Scriptures. He wrote, 'Has not God made the English tongue as well as others?' He noted that the Church's Latin Bible was also a translation. And he even argued that Greek and Hebrew were easier to translate into English than into Latin. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 155.*] He also reminded readers that the New Testament was

rendered in English before the Norman Conquest – in what we would call Old English today. So why shouldn't England have a version in Modern English? [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 155-6.*]

Tyndale had observed how local rulers in Saxony and other parts of the Holy Roman Empire protected Protestants and their writings, so it probably isn't surprising that he wrote that kings and princes should be allowed to rule their realms without interference from the Pope and Church officials. He wrote that kings and governors should govern according to God's laws, but in doing so, they should be obeyed because God has chosen to rule the world through them, and the Pope should stay out of the way. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 158.*]

That seems like passage that might be of interest to that king in England who was trying to get an annulment from his wife. The one who was begging the Pope to approve it. I mean, who was ultimately in charge of England's affairs – the king or the Pope?

Well, many copies of Tyndale's book were smuggled into England, and it turns out that a copy happened to make its way to Anne Boleyn. According to a biography of her life written by the poet Sir Thomas Wyatt, who knew her personally, Anne loved the book and showed it to Henry, and especially those parts about how the king had authority over the Church. And it turns out that Henry really liked those parts of the book. Supposedly, Henry said, "This is a book for me and all kings to read." Maybe William Tyndale wasn't such a heretic after all. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 160-1.*]

Well, Henry may have liked the book, but the Church authorities in England hated it. That included Cardinal Wolsey – Henry's chancellor who was in charge of the day-to-day business of the government and also in charge of securing Henry's annulment. Another person who hated the book was Thomas More. He was the devout Catholic who wrote Utopia – and who composed that expletive-filled response to Martin Luther a few years earlier. Well, More denounced Tyndale's book as a 'holy boke of disobedyence.' [*SOURCE: Great Tales from English History, Robert Lacey, p. 196.*] And he set about preparing his own response to Tyndale.

Thomas More was so frustrated with Tyndale's writings that he poured his criticisms into a long, extended work that comprised four books called 'A Dialogue Concerning Heresies,' but is sometimes referred to as 'A Dialogue Concerning Tyndale,' since Tyndale was the main subject of the book. He claimed that Tyndale had 'wilfully mistranslated' the New Testament.' And he claimed that Tyndale promoted teachings that he knew were false. He said that Tyndale had used 'evil words' and had intentionally changed certain key words for 'evil purposes.' And he said that Tyndale's translation shouldn't be called the 'New Testament.' It should be called "Tyndals testament or Luthers testament."

More's criticism was especially aimed at several key words that Tyndale had translated in a specific way. For example, the Greek word ***presbyteros*** was used in the Bible to refer to a specific office or position within the Christian Church. That's a word that would have normally been translated into English as ***priest***, but Tyndale translated the word as ***senior***. In a later revision, he changed it to ***elder***. But he refused to use the word ***priest*** because he wanted to

remove any implication that the word ***presbyteros*** was referring to the priesthood as it then existed in Europe. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 75.*]

Similarly, the Greek term ***ekklesia*** was usually translated into English as ***church***. But Tyndale translated it as ***congregation***. Again, Tyndale didn't want the translation to interpreted as an endorsement of the Church as it then existed in Europe. He said that there was no such formal institution when the books of the New Testament were written. There was just a body of followers. So it was more appropriate to use the word ***congregation*** rather than the word ***church***. [*SOURCE: In the Beginning, Alister McGrath, p. 75.*]

Also a word in the Latin Vulgate Bible that was normally translated into English as ***penance*** was changed by Tyndale to ***repentance***. ***Penance*** was huge part of the Church's mission in the 1500s, and it typically required the intervention of a priest. But 'to repent' was a purely personal action that didn't require a priest.

Similarly, there Latin Bible used the word ***caritas***, which was normally rendered as ***charity*** in English. ***Charity*** is actually derived from the word ***caritas***. But Tyndale translated the original Greek word as ***love***. That was also a notable change. There a line from 1 Corinthians that reads, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Well, priests routinely gave that message to the congregation in English with the word ***charity***. The passage encouraged charitable giving to others, but it also encouraged charitable giving to the Church itself. The Church relied on charitable donations and bequests. And when Tyndale changed that word from ***charity*** to ***love***, it appeared to be another shot at the Church. Tyndale's choice of words was no accident. As a Protestant, his translation was intended to downplay the role of the Church as an institution. But to traditional Church defenders like Thomas More, it was heresy to translate those words in that way. And in his written response to Tyndale, he made it very clear where he stood.

Interestingly, More's Response was published at almost the exact same time that the word ***Protestant*** was being adopted by those who had sided with religious leaders like Luther and Tyndale. During that same month, in July of 1529, a diet or assembly was held in the city of Speyer in modern-day Germany. It re-affirmed the edict issued against Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms about a decade earlier. But several princes and cities that were loyal the Luther signed a protest – 'Protestatio' – in opposition to the Catholic majority at the diet. That 'Protestatio' is the source of the word ***Protestant*** for this new religious movement. And by this point it was reasonably clear that the Protestant movement had taken on a life of its own, and that the split within the Church was likely to be irreconcilable.

And that split was furthered by events in England that were taking place at almost the exact same time. King Henry had finally convinced the Pope to convene a court proceeding in England to hear evidence and arguments in the annulment matter. The trial opened in May with Queen Catherine herself testifying against the annulment. She appeared in person and denied that she and Arthur had ever consummated their marriage. Therefore, that marriage could not be used to justify an annulment of her marriage to Henry. The proceeding dragged on for a few months. Then the Habsburg emperor Charles V got involved. Remember that he was Catherine's nephew,

and he had Rome in his possession. So he sent an envoy to the Pope to inform him that a decision in Henry's favor and against his aunt would be a great dishonor to his family. Charles's message was received loud and clear at the Vatican. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 53-4.*] The Pope suddenly called an end to the proceeding in London, and he recalled the papal representative back to Rome. There would be no decision in the annulment matter at that time. Henry was shocked. He thought the whole proceeding was a mere formality, and that it would end with the approval of the annulment. But now, everything was put on hold again. [*SOURCE: A History of England, Volume 1: Prehistory to 1714, Clayton and David Roberts, p. 248.*]

Humiliated and outraged, Henry blamed everyone he could , including his chancellor Cardinal Wolsey. He accused Wolsey of putting the interests of the Pope over the interests of the king. Wolsey was fired. And Henry actually brought in Thomas More to replace him. More now became the new chancellor of England.

But More found himself in an awkward position because, while he was a staunch defender the Catholic Church in Rome, the government he was serving started to move in the opposite direction. From this point on, both Henry and Parliament began to embrace the Protestant movement, and they began enacting laws and legislation to ensure that Henry was recognized as the head of the English Church. That meant that the Church of England could act on its own ithout having to answer to the authorities in Rome.

In the next episode, we're going to see how a difficult break-up turned into a bloody mess – literally a bloody mess. Henry's anger was soon directed as most of the key figures in this episode, including Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas More, William Tyndale, and even Anne Boleyn herself. Within the next six years, they were all accused of treason or heresy, and their lives all came to an end.

So next time, we'll continue our story into the next decade – the 1530s. We'll see how these political events played out. We'll explore the Church of England's formal break with Rome, the end of Henry's marriage to Catherine, and his second marriage to Anne Boleyn. We'll also continue to look at several important developments within the English language during this period, including the introduction of the modern punctuation system.

So until next time, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.