

Language, race, and Chaucer adaptations

Jonathan Hsy

Teaching Chaucer alongside modern adaptations invites students to think beyond the medieval English canon. By pairing *The Canterbury Tales* with works across historical, religious, and cultural traditions, this reading list demonstrates how Chaucer's stories have been reimagined across time and place, raising enduring questions about language, race, identity, and belonging.

This list begins by situating Chaucer within the multilingual world of late medieval England before turning to scholarship on race, vernacular language, and the politics of literary adaptation. Together, they encourage students to see Chaucer not as the endpoint of a literary tradition, but as part of an ongoing global conversation about voice, power, and cultural exchange.

The multilingual contexts for Chaucer

- Hsy, Jonathan. "Chaucer's Polyglot Dwellings." In *Trading Tongues: Merchants, Multilingualism, and Medieval Literature*, 17–44. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/27530>.

Hsy, Jonathan. "Language, race, and Chaucer adaptations." *Throughlines*.
www.throughlines.org/suite-content/language-race-and-chaucer-adaptations. [Date
 accessed]..

- Hsy, Jonathan. "Chaucerian Multilingualism, Past and Present." In *Chaucer Here and Now*, edited by Marion Turner, 77–95. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2023.
<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/C/bo207624881.html>.

The social and linguistic contexts of English vernacular writing

- Lalla, Barbara. *Postcolonialisms: Caribbean Rereading of Middle English Discourse*. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2008. Read the first section of Chapter 1.
- Rajendran, Shyama. "Undoing 'the Vernacular': Dismantling Structures of Raciolinguistic Supremacy." *Literature Compass* 16, nos. 9–10 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12544>.

Race and Chaucer adaptations

- Hsy, Jonathan. "Pilgrimage: Chaucerian Poets of Color in Motion." In *Antiracist Medievalisms: From "Yellow Power" to Black Lives Matter*. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2024. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/83922>.
- Wallace, David. "New Chaucer Topographies." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 29 (2007): 3–19.
- Warren, Michelle R. "'The Last Syllable of Modernity': Chaucer in the Caribbean." *postmedieval* 6 (2015): 79–93.
- Barrington, Candace, and Jonathan Hsy, dirs. *Global Chaucers*. Accessed July 30, 2026. <https://globalchaucers.com>.