

manner or thrown into prison does not matter in the final analysis, since in either case the act was done ‘tyrannically’ by the regime. Censoring the children, we must conclude, was apparently the work of a tyrannical innovator. Knutson equates this with the Children losing their affiliation with the Queen in 1608, when they suffered a demotion, a change in title that severed their link to royalty. Would Shakespeare, reacting to this situation, have wanted to characterize the Jacobean administration of justice as ‘tyrannical’? A more credible explanation is to read the same phrase in the way it has customarily been interpreted and cited by the *OED* in definition 2: ‘As an intensive: Exceedingly; violently; vehemently’. The children, in other words, are wildly applauded. The word’s first dated appearance in print with this particular use is in John Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge*, published in 1602, where the fool Balurdo complains, ‘I am tyrannically hungry’ (I4r), a usage that suggests Marston’s knowledge of the line in an acted version of *Hamlet* that contained the ‘little eyases’ passage before 1603. The *OED*’s third exemplary quotation is from the ‘little eyases’ passage. The children, as the *OED* points out, are ‘tyrannically’ or ‘vehemently’ ‘clap’t’ or ‘enthusiastically applauded’ for making disparaging remarks about the ‘common’ or ‘public’ theatres and the ‘gentlemen’ (‘nobles’ are never mentioned) who attend their performances. The restoration of the word ‘tyrannically’ to a theatrical from a political context shifts the passage’s meaning back to its Elizabethan origin. Most editors still agree with the *OED* on this matter and consequently see the virtue of situating Shakespeare’s commentary in 1601, as an expression of professional in-fighting in an unusually sophisticated metatheatrical conversation rather than as an attack on the unfair treatment of the theatre community by a tyrannical government.

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THE ORIGINS OF THE PLAYER KING AND PLAYER QUEEN SPEECH PREFIXES IN *HAMLET*

By modern standards, stage directions in seventeenth-century editions of *Hamlet* are frequently incomplete or confusing. Examples include the missing exit after the Ghost’s ‘Adiew, adiew, adiew, remember me’ (D3r [Q2]), the lack of information in stage directions regarding Polonius’ hiding place during the closet scene (I2r [Q2]), and Rosencraus and Guildensterner’s aborted double entrance in the quarto editions’ presentation of the subsequent scene between Claudius and Gertrude (K1r–K1v [Q2]).¹ Inconsistencies of this type were addressed by eighteenth-century editors, and their emendations often form the basis for modern critical editions. However, these changes are not always correctly attributed. As I will show in this note, the creation of the ‘Player King’ and ‘Player Queen’ speech prefixes during the Mousetrap scene has been misattributed since at least 1877 and continues to be misattributed in the scholarly editions we use today.

In nineteen of the twenty editions of *Hamlet* from Q2 to Q14, including the Folio texts, there is no distinction in the Mousetrap scene between the paratext used to identify Claudius and the Player King, and Gertrude and the Player Queen. In stage directions and speech prefixes, both Claudius and the Player King are referred to as ‘King’ and both Gertrude and the Player Queen are referred to as ‘Queene’ or ‘Queen’. For example, Claudius and Gertrude’s entrance is described as follows, ‘Enter Trumpets and Kettle Drummes, King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia.’ (G4r [Q2]), while the two players’ entrance is described as ‘Enter King and Queene.’ (H1v). This is reflected in the use of identical speech prefixes, ‘King.’ and ‘Queen.’ (G4v–H3r) throughout the scene. Only F1 diverges from this pattern, since the Player Queen’s speech prefix is given as ‘Bap.’ (267), short for Baptista.² However, none of the later Folios follow F1 in this regard, reverting to ‘Queen.’ from F2 onwards. Due to these shared speech prefixes, the

¹ William Shakespeare, *The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (London, 1604).

² William Shakespeare, *Mr William Shakespeare’s Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London, 1623).

distinction between the characters is blurred, as the following example from Q2 illustrates:

Quee. Sleepe rock thy braine,
And neuer come mischance between vs
twaine. *Exeunt.*

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Quee. The Lady doth protest too much mee
thinks. (H2r)

Due to the lack of distinction between the speech prefixes, it is up to the reader to figure out which queen leaves the stage, and which queen passes down her judgement on the other's theatrical performance.

This kind of ambiguity is no longer editorially acceptable, and modern editors of critical editions use different means to clearly distinguish between the characters. For the entrance of the players, editors use one of two approaches: either a stage direction that describes the King and Queen as 'Players', or the use of the compound nouns 'Player King' and 'Player Queen'. Horace Howard Furness,³ John Dover Wilson,⁴ and Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen take the first option,⁵ while the second option has been chosen by the vast majority of modern editors, including Peter Alexander,⁶ Philip Edwards,⁷ G. R. Hibbard,⁸ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor,⁹ and John Jowett.¹⁰ The Arden3 presentation of the stage direction will serve as a representative example: '*Enter [Player] King and [Player] Queen.*' (III.iii.147.1). Editors are almost unanimous in choosing 'Player King'

³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: A New Variorum Edition*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia, 1877).

⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1954).

⁵ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke, 2008).

⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (London and Glasgow, 1988).

⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. Philip Edwards, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, 2019).

⁸ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. G. R. Hibbard, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, 2008).

⁹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, revised ed. (London, Bloomsbury, 2017).

¹⁰ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. John Jowett; *The Complete Works, Modern Critical Edition*, ed. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan, (Oxford, 2016).

and 'Player Queen' as speech prefixes for this scene, with the exception of Bate and Rasmussen, who follow F1's use of 'Baptista' (III.ii.158.1). The Player Queen's exit, as quoted above from Q2, is rendered in Arden3 as follows:

PLAYER QUEEN *Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us
twain.*

Exit. [He sleeps.]

HAMLET Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN The lady doth protest too much,
methinks. (III.ii.221-4)

These distinct speech prefixes, in addition to the editors' judicious use of italics, mean that there is no longer any risk that the reader will be unable to distinguish between the two queens. These changes are not, of course, present in old-spelling editions such as the *New Oxford Shakespeare Critical Reference Edition*, which generally aim to replicate stage directions from the earliest editions. However, in modern critical editions, the reading experience is streamlined through the use of the modernized stage direction and speech prefixes.

This change originally occurred, like many other emendations to the texts of Shakespeare's plays, during the early eighteenth century. While we might expect clear attribution in modern critical editions as to the origins of these particular emendations, many editors do not actually provide this information. Of those that do, the attributions vary. In terms of the emended stage direction, Dover Wilson, Alexander, Taylor, Bate and Rasmussen, Jowett, Robert S. Miola,¹¹ and Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine do not provide textual notes.¹² Furness, Hibbard, and Thompson and Taylor attribute this emendation to Alexander Pope. Philip Edwards' attribution of the emendation to Peter Alexander's 1951 edition can only be explained by a potential mistake between the somewhat similar names Peter Alexander and Alexander Pope. The Player King's speech prefix is left undiscussed by Dover

¹¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Robert S. Miola, 2nd ed. (New York, 2019).

¹² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, updated ed., Folger Shakespeare Library (New York, 2012).

Wilson, Alexander, Edwards, Taylor, Miola, and Jowett. However, other possibilities have been proposed. Furness and Thompson and Taylor claim that this speech prefix originates with George Steevens's second edition of Samuel Johnson's *Works*, while Mowat and Werstine use the general attribution, 'Ed.' (297), which refers to 'an earlier editor of Shakespeare, beginning with Rowe in 1709' (307) without specifying which one. Bate and Rasmussen follow suit, using the same abbreviation, 'Ed.' (142), which attributes the prefix to 'a later editor' without specifying which one (141). In regards to the Player Queen speech prefix, fewer editors offer evidence of attribution, but Furness, Edwards, and Thompson and Taylor all offer Steevens as a candidate. This lack of critical consensus and clarity in attributing the emended stage direction and speech prefixes obscures the origins of an important editorial innovation.

In fact, the stage direction and speech prefixes originate with none of the candidates proposed by the modern editors, but rather with the little-studied 1718 duodecimo edition of *Hamlet*, edited by John Hughs.¹³ This is the first text of *Hamlet* to contain the stage direction 'Enter *Player King and Queen*' (56). In addition, the players are identified in this text for the first time with the speech prefixes '*Pl. King*' and '*Pl. Queen*'. The implication in Mowat and Werstine's textual notes that Rowe's 1709 text may have included these speech prefixes is not supported by the textual evidence: Rowe follows the seventeenth-century approach. The change to the stage direction had been foreshadowed by Thomas Johnson's 1710 Hague edition, in which it is rendered as '*Enter King and Queen, Players.*' (65),¹⁴ but Johnson did not go any further than this, and he retained the same speech prefixes as the seventeenth-century editions. Pope's 1725 and 1728 editions followed Thomas Johnson in adding the word '*Players*' to the stage direction, but also retained the traditional '*King*' and '*Queen*' speech prefixes (VI, 409 [1725], VIII, 265 [1728]).¹⁵ George Steevens' second edition of

Samuel Johnson's *Works*, which has been identified by a number of editors as the first source of these speech prefixes, does indeed make use of them, but would not be published until 1778, exactly sixty years after John Hughs' edition.¹⁶ As such, it is clear that the invention of the 'Player King' and 'Player Queen' speech prefixes and the introduction of the modern stage direction lies solely with the 1718 edition.

Only one modern edition correctly attributes these textual innovations: the online variorum edition hosted at Hamletworks.org, with textual notes for this section written by Frank N. Clary.¹⁷ Unfortunately, however, this edition is somewhat unintuitive to navigate in comparison to print editions, since the user is required to search for specific lines in order to access the relevant textual notes. This may explain why editions of *Hamlet* continue to be printed containing incorrect attributions in textual notes. It is to be hoped that future editions published by major presses such as the OUP, CUP, and Bloomsbury Arden will correctly attribute the invention of the 'Player King' and 'Player Queen' speech prefixes to John Hughs' 1718 edition.

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¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 2nd ed. (London, 1778).

¹⁷ *Hamletworks.org*, ed. Bernice W. Kliman *et al.*, 2014, <http://triggs.djvu.org/global-language.com/ENFOLDED/index.php> (last accessed 3 November 2020).

A POSSIBLE SOURCE FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S 'THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE'

The second part of William Shakespeare's poem 'The Phoenix and the Turtle', published in 1601, is entitled 'Threnos' and consists of five 'heptasyllabic trochaic tetrameter tercets rhyming *aaa*'¹:

¹³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (London, 1718).

¹⁴ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (The Hague, 1710).

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. Alexander Pope (London, 1725) and William Shakespeare, *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. Alexander Pope (London, 1728).

¹ See James P. Bednarz, 'The Passionate Pilgrim and the "The Phoenix and Turtle"', in Patrick Cheney (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 119.