# Wynkyn de Worde's Treatment of Stephen Hawes' <u>The Example of Vertu</u>

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"De Worde was content to remain the mechanic. He was in no sense a scholar, and knew little about the literary value of books."1   Henry Plomer's widely accepted estimate of Wynkyn de Worde has rarely been subjected to detailed examination. The printer's vast output (more than 700 items during his 1492-1535 printing career) and his apprentice role at Caxton's press have undoubtedly contributed to this negative judgement. In 1971 and
1972, however, Norman Blake called for a critical reappraisal of de Worde's image,2 and as a result a number of articles have appeared which provide much helpful and precise information about his workmanship.3   This paper is an attempt to elucidate de Worde's editorial attitude by analysing his treatment of Stephen Hawes's Example of Vertu. Anthony Edwards, answering Blake's call, explained de Worde's monopoly on Stephen Hawes' publications and his cooperative activities in publishing the poet's works. The discussion in the article, however, is confined mostly to de Worde's use of woodcuts appropriate to the text, and he left the problem of textual variants among various editions to a future study.4   In the following essay, which may be regarded as a continuation of Edwards' study, I propose to treat this textual problem in detail. From a textual standpoint, The Example of Vertu is particularly significant and revealing when viewed in the context of an early printer's respect for text. The work is unique in that it has a posthumous edition by de Worde, and, by examining textual variations, we can detect changes in the printer's attitude toward the text before and after the author's death. Hawes' Example was printed three times by de Worde, and for each edition the following copies are extant:

> 1509 edition: a unique copy in the Pepysian Lib.,
> Cambridge, STC 12945
> 1520 edition: a single leaf in the University Lib.,
> Cambridge, STC 12946
> 1530 edition: an imperfect copy in the Huntington
> Lib., California, and a perfect copy
> in Carl H. Pforzheimer Lib., New York
> STC 12947

It is likely that Hawes exercised some measure of authorial control over the first two editions but his death in the early1520's would preclude that possibility with regard to the final edition. There are some 350 variants between the first and the third edition of this 2129 line poem,5 but it is unfortunately impossible to tell with certainty at what stage these changes were introduced, as only one leaf of the the second edition is extant. Compared with The Pastime of Pleasure, the Example is remarkable in the number of variations it exhibits. The Pastime, more than twice as long as the Example, was printed in1509 and 1517 at de Worde's press, and, according to William Mead's list of variants,

there are no more than 280 textual differences including the spelling variants between the two editions, almost all of which can be judged to be accidental.6   How can we, then, explain the unusually large number of alterations in the Example?   In addition to the compositorial factor, we may posit two more possibilities: first, the author's own attempt to improve the text in the second printing; and second, the printer's determination to revise the text in the posthumous edition.Actually, the variants differ in quality, and it is tempting to see the author's hand in a number of revisions. For example,

    1. His dedes were pure without magycyon
       And without nygromacy or corrupcyon          (664-5)
        magycyon] ymagynacyon

    2. For I am moost confort to humanyte
       As man well knoweth at euery encheason
      And can not be forborne for none season     (969-971)
         encheason] season
         for none season] nor in oblyuyon

    3. Fyrst dame hardynes began to plede
       Saynge she was to man moost profytable
       For she the hertes hath often fede
       Of coquerou[re]s as it was couenable       (582-5)
        For she ... fede] Many be the hertes that
                        ofte she dyd fede

    4. Thus god by grace dyd well combyne
       The red rose and the whyte in maryage
       Beynge oned ryght clere doth shyne      (2088-90)
        Beynge ... shyne]
             Beynge vnyed choruscantly dyd shyne

    5. Beholde eke mercury with his fayre lyght
       Castynge adoune his stremys mery
      It may well glad thyn emyspery        (2106-8)
        Castynge ... emyspery]
          Castynge to the lo west his stremes
                     that be mery
         Vnto the consolacyon of thyne emyspery

      In the first two instances compositorial corruptions are improved: in the first case the author's possibly original word 'ymagynacyon', here meaning "scheming, devising", is restored; and in the second, 'season' and 'encheason', which had been transposed, are put back in their original places; furthermore the restored 'for none encheason' is replaced by 'nor in oblyuyon' to create the effect of synonymous repetition. In the third instance, despite the awkward flow of meaning, the rhyme is improved: as Gluck and Morgan note, 'plede' cannot rhyme with the past participle 'fede' but with the infinitive 'fede'.7 In the fourth, the simple words 'oned' and 'clere' are replaced by 'vnyed' and 'choruscantly' respectively; this substitution can be explained by the poet's use of

favoured ornate terms.8    In the last example, there is no textual flaw, but the originally loose organization of the sentence is tightened by the use of the nominalized adverbial phrase. In contrast to these examples in which we cannot entirely rule out the possibility of the poet's revision, there are many textual variants which can in no way be considered to be his own. We can infer from the following lines that Hawes was a poet keenly conscious of rhyme:

> The seconde is lawe that euer serueth
> But within the realme onely
> For other nacyons our lawe dredeth            (617-9)

Hawes' normal form for the present-tense plural is the base form of the verb. The verb 'dredeth' should, therefore, be 'dreed', but here the poet employs the southern variant ending in '-eth' for the sake of rhyme.9    It is utterly impossible, I would argue, for such a poet to destroy a rhyme, as may be observed in the following alternate reading:

> For he dyd murdre and was a thefe
> Wherfore his deth to many was leef            (648-9)
>   leef] lefte

Elsewhere in this poem   the poet uses 'leef' two more times in the phrase of 'dere and lefe' (1017 and 1873), where the adjective obviously modifies beloved and dear persons (Justice and Cleanness) and is left unchanged. One possible motive for altering the rhyme word here is that the compositor, ignoring the context, considered the collocation "death being leef" to be awkward and so replaced the word with 'lefte' in order to produce some concrete meaning like "his death was exposed to people" or "his corpse was left on display".

The tampering with Hawes' cherished phrases is also hardly attributable to the author's hand. The 'partynge influence' (494), for example, is probably a corrupted form of the poet's pet expression 'pyercynge inluence'.10    The editor/compositor of the 1530 edition apparently noticed the corruption and tried to amend it by replacing 'partynge' with the more familiar adjective 'perfyte', but this is not Hawesian diction.

Hawes' characteristic use of parenthetical statements or amplified clauses in narration often results in grammatical disorder.11    The following is one such example, in which, with regard to the rhyme scheme, we cannot postulate a compositor's error of transposing two lines. The parenthetical 'I thanked Sapience into two grammatical units and makes the second one a clause without a subject. In the 1530 edition, the subject 'she' is supplied to clarify the syntax, but it can hardly be the poet's own addition:

> She armed me her selfe alone
> And laced my helmet of her gentylnes
> I thanked her for her grete goodness
> And gaue me my swerde and sheld also         (1389-92)
>   And ... also] Than gaue she me the swerde and
>                                              shelde also

In the example given below, the textual change has contextual justification, which makes it appear to be authorial, but it should be judged to be editorial on the basis of narrative method.

Dame Sapyence taryed a lytell whyle
Behynd the other saynge to Dyscrecyon
And began on her to laugh and smyle
Axynge her how I stode in condycyon
Well she sayd in good perfeccyon
But best it is that he maryed be
For to eschewe all yll censualyte          (1051-7)
  Axynge ... condycyon]
          Demaundynge of hym how he stode in
                                          condycyon
  she sayd] he sayd and
  that he] she sayd that ye

In the 1509 edition Discretion reports Youth's present good behaviour to Sapience and suggests that he should marry to avoid the temptations of lust; whereas in the 1530 text Sapience questions Youth directly about his condition and recommends early marriage to him. The revised text is more dramatic in the interaction of speech and smoother in the sequence of actions: Discretion, at Sapience's suggestion of marriage, quickly mentions that she has in mind 'a lady of meruelous beaute'(1058) for Youth, and then in gratitude Youth 'kneled downe' before Sapience, asking them to 'haue pyte'(1067) on him. Actually, however, if we remember this is a first-person narrative poem, the revised 'Demaundynge of hym how he stode in condycyon' should be 'Demaundynge of me how I stode in condycyon'. We should therefore reject the possibility of the author's own revision here.

There are various inferior readings, from obvious miscompositions to corruptions based on lexical or syntactic misunderstanding, that are undoubtedly not authorial. Typical of such variants resulting from misunderstanding are:12

Thy swerde shall be the to defend
The worde of god the deuyll to blynde          (1400-1)
  the] for       god] god/ and

Than came fast to me dame lowelynes                    (1542)
  Than ... lowelynes] Than to me came dame loue
                                          with lowlynes

In the original version of the former, the object of 'to defende' is the pronoun 'the', and 'The worde of god' postmodified by the infinitive phrase 'the deuyll to blynde' is placed in apposition with 'Thy swerde'; but the reviser seems to have misunderstood the syntax and took the appositive phrase as the object of 'to defende', thus making 'the deuyll to blynde' another complement of the verb 'be'.13

The latter is interesting in the sense that it indicates the compositors' shared awareness of the fallible nature of early printing. The passage is the initial part of a description of "Lowliness", one of the five ladies who welcome the return of Youth and

Discretion with the news of victory over the dragon. The probable process of change from 'lowelyness' to 'loue with lowlynes' is as follows: first, the compositor of the third edition found it strange to allegorize the virtue of lowliness together with perseverance, faith, charity and prayer; and then he imagined that his predecessor had made the common mistake of homoeoteleuton ("loue" and "lowe-lynes") and had combined the two separate words into one; thus he reconstructed "Loue", who he thought had been the original fifth lady, and made a manneradverbial out of 'lowelynes' by placing the preposition "with " before it.14   The editor, who presumably had read the entire text, could not possibly have done this kind of misreading, because Lady Lowlynes is mentioned again 65 lines later in a phrase beginning with the preposition "with".

Another sort of alteration occurs in which certain linguistic items are revised throughout with high frequency. For example,

use or non-use of article:
    indefinite article: 118, 567, 1132, 1212, 1302
                                    1532, 1644 and 1735
        definite article: 172, 410, 507, 512, 580, 652
                                    953, 1264, 1520, 1595, 1797a
                                    1797b and 1994

    omission of pleonastic 'that':
        200, 239, 412, 415, 433 and 538

    use of 'and' in asyndeton:
        437, 543, 1240, 1263 and 1810

    use of 'goodly':
        as adjective: 140 and 1839
        as adverb: 210, 562 and 1293

    use of periphrastic 'do':
        89, 447, 700, 1260, 1266, 1419 and 1640

What we should notice here is that these rewritings are not evident in the pertinent lines of the second edition of Pastime (1517), which, if they are authorial revisions, ought to have undergone the same kind of editing. The most probable explanation for this fact is that these practices are editorial and/or compositorial rather than authorial, and that they were not introduced in the 1520 edition but only in the posthumous 1530 edition of Example. The motive for the editing is obvious: except for the use of 'goodly' and 'do',15 they are made in an effort to standardize and clarify the language for contemporary readers.

There is further evidence for the intelligible book-making: the updating of 'went' (to 'thought' in 1229), 'iclyped' (to 'called' in 1047, 1192 and 1422; to 'named' in 1515), 'lyst' (to 'wyll' in 774 and 1002), 'on a rewe' (to 'in ordre' in 1774), 'wyse' (to 'manner(s)' in 980 and 1264 except in the rhyming position), and '.lx. yere' (to '.lx. yeres' in 1864); and the normalization or standadization of 'more sweter' (to 'more swete' in 54), 'aborded' (to 'went aborde' in 133), the old use of infinitive 'exalten' (to 'she exalted' in 265), 'payre' (to 'depryue' in 503), 'yll' (to 'hurte' in 503), 'checkmate' (to 'stryfe or bate'

in 511), 'hauour' (to 'behauyour' in 543), 'in specyally' (to 'specyally' in 620), 'infynall' (to 'infynyte' in 817), 'inferyall' (to 'general' in 1012), and 'apparage' (to 'parentage' in 1062 and 1765).

In this connection, mention should be made of apparent linguistic clarification. In the following instance, which Gluck and Morgan fail to record as textual variant, the grammatical status of the pronoun 'it' is ambiguous (it is either an anticipatory formal subject or the object of 'For to expresse'), but it seems more natural, in terms of the progression of thought, to take the pronoun as an anticipatory subject and 'The paynes' as the object of the infinitive, which conveys the suffering of Christian sinners described in the preceding lines. The 1530 editor/compositor, however, seems to have overlooked this disjunctive syntax and, taking into consideration the compositors' tendency to overlook a duplicated word, inserted another 'it' with a virgule immediately following, which he assumed referred to the previous description of the suffering of Christian sinners. He then put 'The paynes ... horryble' and interpreted the phrase as an explanatory appositive of the first 'it'.

> For to expresse it is impossyble
> The paynes there they are so horryble        (1946-47)
> 1530    For to expresse it / it is in inpossyble
>                 The paynes there they are so horryble
>
>                                                              (sig. G 5v)

The extant leaf of the 1520 edition bears witness to this textual change. The 1520 text has exactly the same wording as that of the 1509 and certifies that the alteration   was evidently carried out in the 1530 posthumous edition.16

Setting aside the question of the resultant effects, we may observe similar attempts to clarify the language of the text in:

> And yf I were not they had it rue                     (588)
>   Now maye ye perceyue my wordes to be true
>    (The possible motivation for the rewriting is the
>       singular use of 'rue' as past participle and the
>       wrong use of subjunctive pluperfect 'had ... rue'.
>       As the parallel expression 'For and I were not he
>       were forlorne' (602) suggests, it should be put in
>       subjunctive past.)

> Vnto your grace fayne wolde I go
> Ner lettynge of this water blo                  (1259-60)
>   Vnto your grace I wolde go fayne
>   This daungerous water dothe cause me
>                                   to refrayne       (sig. C 5r)
>       (There may have been some hesitation to use the dying
>       'blo', the meaning of which is more explicitly con-
>       veyed by the 1530 'daungerous'. And moreover, the
>       contracted form 'Ner' and the protasis in inverted
>       word-order may have been puzzling. The variants in
>       line 1259 again escape Gluck and Morgan's collation.)

Yet wyl[l] they not make sequestracyon
Of goddes commaundement but syn deedly
Therfore here are they dampned ryght wyse[l]y

(1952-54)


Yet wyll they not make sequestracyon
Commaunded by god but synne deedly
And here be they dampned saue onely his mercy
1520 Yet wyll they not make sequestracyon
Of goddes commaundement but synne deedly
Therfore here are they dampned ryght wysely

(sig. Ffff v)

(The editor/compositor was probably perplexed by
the novel word 'sequestracyon' ("deferral" MED (b))
in the verbal phrase, and so from contextual evidence
he interpreted it to mean something like "abstinence
from fleshly pleasure", which as a conjecture, al-
though sexually biased, can be more or less justified
by the fact that the OED defines the verb 'sequest-
rate' as "to seclude, keep away from general access
or intercourse" (s.v. Sequestrate 1. 1513 Douglas
AEneis ff.); thus 'goddes commaundement', comple-
ment of the verbal phrase, was then changed to
'Commaunded by god' which modifies the newly inter-
preted word. By so doing he thought he could
clarify the text. The substituting of 'saue
onely his mercy' for 'ryght wyse[l]y' in line 1954
is also interesting. The corrupt 'wysey', which
is easily associated with 'mercy' from a typograph-
ical viewpoint, seems to have motivated the rewrit-
ing; but, since the 1520 edition corrected the cor-
ruption and the 1530 edition was based on the im-
proved one, the reviser probably made the textual
change in order to emphasize the moralistic nature
of the text here.)


If we take into account the vagaries of compositors, all these textual changes
seem to reveal deliberate policy on the printer's part. It is of course a matter for
speculation how much de Worde was involved in the editorial process of the third
edition. But in view of his close relationship with Hawes and his great sympathy for the
moralistic nature of his work, there is good reason to suppose that he himself probably
revised the text in some way or other. And even if he were not directly involved, it is
reasonable to assume that he communicated his views to the supervising editor, who first
revised the text briefly and then, after giving editorial directions, left the compositor(s)
to execute further revisions.

The compositors who were left to set the type supposedly carried out the
printer's policy, but actually they seem to have done more than that, as innumerable ad

hoc changes suggest. The compositors, who had been ordered to compose faithfully in the first two printings, now perceived their master's attitude and, in the third edition, reasserted the "freedom of printers" which they had enjoyed to varying degrees in the publication of medieval texts. Once editorial intervention is deemed permissible, the peculiarities of Hawes' versification allow for textual change even by the compositors. Quoting C. S. Lewis, Gluck and Morgan explain that Hawes' metrical usage is "a poetical barbarism in which rhyme itself became the only constant characteristic of verse" and the lines have syllables varying from six to fourteen with four, five or six stresses.17

It is significant that de Worde the master decided to intervene editorially in the posthumous edition of Hawes' poem. Presumably certain aspects of the language were, in de Worde's view, displeasing, but in the first two editions he contented himself with merely cooperating with the poet in choosing woodcuts closely related to the text. But after the poet's death, he went so far as to revise the language and thus tried to create what he thought would be a good printed book, that is, a readable book with the language clarified and the verbal content illustrated. De Worde was conscious of "author's rights",18 a concept which was just beginning to evolve, and he recognized that a printer had to respect the original text during an author's lifetime. Following the author's death, however, he apparently felt free to receive and interpret the text as a reader and, accordingly to make textual modifications in order to make the book worthy to be purchased and treasured. In short, the reader was more important to him than the author. This judgement provides us with an insight into early printers' ideas concerning the relationship between respect for the text and the needs of readers and shows that they were still following the tradition of medieval manuscript-copyists.

When a noble customer, complaining of corruptions in the first edition of The Canterbury Tales, asked for a second printing, William Caxton did not set a new text based upon the more authentic manuscript which had been brought in, but responded merely by haphazardly correcting the first edition against the manuscript. De Worde, who helped the master as foreman in the press, must have realized, on one hand, the importance of textual accuracy from the customer's criticism, and witnessed, on the other, the cavalier, businesslike printing attitude in the measures his master took in response to the complaint. The dualism of text and convenience, which was not dissociated in Caxton's mind, undoubtedly affected the formative years of de Worde's printing life. In fact, this attitude revealed itself when he produced The Canterbury Tales in 1498. He had a better manuscript, but the way he put it to use was facile; all he took from the manuscript was the order of the tales and the text of some tales ("Chaucer's Sir Thopas and Melibeus", "Parson's Tale" and the final part of "Prioress' Tale"); the other tales all came from Caxton's second edition. Behind this eclectic method of editing we can see Caxton's dualism at work, but we should add to that de Worde's consideration for readers' convenience and taste. The salient textual difference is that the manuscript provided glosses and marginalia for those tales. This was a device to help readers easily find the portion they wanted, and this was similar to the book-and chapter-division devices which Caxton, for example, introduced in the Morte Darthur for the benefit of readers. This may explain in part why de Worde, in the publication of the Canterbury Tales, incorporated the manuscript readings with Caxton's second edition.19 De Worde maintained the printing policy he employed in the Canterbury Tales throughout his life and it was exactly this attitude that led him to intervene editorially in the posthumous edition of the Example of Vertu.

De Worde was a printer sensitive to the needs of the reading public. In the case of the Example, he apparently subordinated this sensitivity to respect for the text---at least during Hawes' lifetime. But with Hawes' death, de Worde, no longer authorially accountable, felt free to resume his usual printing policy, and his printing staff likewise returned to their conventional practices. As I hope to have demonstrated, the developing concept of "author's rights" was still greatly tempered by a printer's regard for his own.

[Notes]