

Activity on the texts of *Hamlet* “Practical Criticism” A (2012-13)

The **aim** of this activity is to familiarize students with the conventions of a critical edition and with the way the early (or ‘original’) texts are handled by modern critical editors (in terms of emendations of readings in the dialogue, stage directions, line division; modernization of spelling and punctuation; regularization of speech prefixes) and how the **textual notes** of a critical edition record significant alterations made by the editor from the base text, as well as significant variants in other early texts.

You will be assigned a fragment of a critical edition of *Hamlet* and you will have to write its corresponding textual notes (instructions below) on a different sheet and submit it.

You will also have to return this fragment marked up with *significant* differences from

- the base text of the edition (the the Second Quarto printed in 1604/1605, abbreviated as Q2)
- from its collateral early text (the First Folio printed in 1623, and abbreviated as F1)
- from the critical edition you are using for this Course.

You will compare your assigned fragment with Q2 first and then with F1. For these early texts, you will need to get a facsimile from Early English Books Online (instructions below)

What are the *significant* differences? Basically, those that really affect meaning.

As you compare the critical text and the early texts, you will notice variations in modernization of spelling and punctuation. For instance, your fragment prints

“no man of aught he leaves knows, what is’t to leave betimes? Let be ”,

while Q2 prints

“no man of ought he leaues, knowes what ist to leaue betimes, let be”.

Divergences in spelling such as “ought / aught”, “ist / is’t”, or in punctuation (“leaves knows / leaues, knowes”) do *not* affect meaning and therefore are not significant. You will not mark up these insignificant differences and will not include them in the textual notes!!

Now, you may discern that the variation “betimes? Let / betimes, let” affects syntax and is significant: this should be marked up and recorded in the textual notes.

In your assigned fragment you may also notice significant departures from the early texts:

For instance, the above-quoted line is printed in F1 as

“no man ha’s ought of what he leaues. What is’t to leave be-times?”.

You will see that F1 differs in printing “man ha’s ought of what” instead of “man of aught he”, in printing “leaues. What” instead of “leaves knows, what”, and in not printing “Let be”. These are significant variations and need to be recorded in the textual notes.

Significant variations may involve: substitution of erroneous readings in the dialogue, stage directions or speech prefixes, addition of stage directions, or of words or phrases in stage directions, re-
lineation of erroneous division of verse lines.

(If you are curious enough, you may also compare the fragment with Q1, the 1603 quarto text of *Hamlet*)

How to write textual notes

The textual notes (also called collation notes) provide information as to how the critical editor has altered the early text(s) in order to establish his or her critical text. They record *significant* departures or deviations from the early text(s), the source of these alterations, and the ‘original’ reading of the early text(s) that was not adopted. To a certain extent, textual notes should allow readers to reconstruct the significant elements of the base text of the critical edition. Usually textual notes also record variants in other early texts or modern editions.

The standard form of a textual note is as follows:

79 sledged] F1; sledged Q2 Q1

The elements are:

79	sledded]	F1	;	sleaded	Q2 Q1
line reference	Lemma (an exact replica of the reading in the editor's text)	Square bracket	Abbreviation or siglum indicating the source of the lemma	semi-colon (to separate variants)	Variant (reading in early text or in other editions)	Siglum or sigla indicating the source of the variant

This textual note indicates that the reading ‘sledded’ in the text of the critical edition is found in the First Folio, while ‘sleaded’, not adopted in the critical edition, is found in the Second and First quartos. In the following note, Q2 and Q1 do not coincide but offer variant readings:

56 harrows] F1; horrowes Q2; horrors Q1

Note that F1 actually prints “harrowes” (with a mute “e”) but this difference is not essential and is not included in the textual note.

It is important to observe that the lemma always replicates the reading in question, and perfectly matches the segment of the text occupied by the recorded variant.

Use the siglum “ed.” when the source is neither Q2 nor F1 but a modern editor, and use the editor’s surname (“Hibbard”, “Spencer”) or the publisher’s name (“Oxford”) as the siglum for the critical edition you are using in this Course.

For divergences in punctuation, include the word(s) involved, as in this example:

855 sword:] Caldecott, sword, Q2 F1

This textual note indicates that the reading ‘sword:’, including the colon, is taken from Caldecott’s edition, whereas the early texts, Q2 and F1, print ‘sword,’ with a comma. In some notes, a swung or wavy dash (~) is used to avoid repeating the lemma. The previous note could also appear as “855 sword:] Caldecott, ~, Q2 F1”

In textual notes, readings from the base text, and from other sixteenth and seventeenth century texts, retain the **u/v and i/j conventions** of the originals, but not the long ‘s’, or ‘vv’ for ‘w’, or ligatures.

Commas after sigla are used to separate variants or sigla of editions when differences involve modernization issues or inessential details.

1062 Ay] Capell, I Q2; F1 om.

This note indicates that ‘Ay’ is a reading first proposed by the editor Edward Capell, but that it is in fact a modernization of ‘I’ found in Q2; while ‘Ay’ is not to be found in F1. Note that the abbreviation “om.” follows the siglum (because it is not a variant, but an editorial comment).

Divergences in the division of lines are recorded by including the first word of the lines involved separated by a vertical stroke “|”, as in the next example:

1192-4] Q2; *Pol.* | He | In F1

This notes explains that for the three lines in the critical text 1192-4 (lines that appear as prose, without capitalizing the first word of each line), F1 prints three verse lines beginning with “*Pol.*”, “He” and “In”. Rearrangement of lineation may also be indicated in editorial comments (e.g. “as prose”, “one line”) placed after the siglum.

Abbreviations and symbols used:

“om.” indicates that the lemma is not in the edition

“SD” indicates “stage direction”

“SP” indicates “speech prefix”

Please remember: **Textual notes do not collate**: insignificant modernizations, insignificant turned letters; literal errors that produce nonsense forms (provided that they present no ambiguity as to how they should be emended); elided forms (usually, unless metre is in question or they are either of clear phonetic significance or likely to be helpful to actors, e.g. ‘suckst’ (*Titus Andronicus*, 2.2.144), where the critical text reads ‘suckedst’.

How to access Early English Books Online:

You need to work from a computer connected to the network of the Universitat de València,
- either a university terminal within campus (e.g. in Aula d’Informàtica, or in a library, department),
- or outside campus (from your home computer, for instance) through a virtual private network (VPN) system you need to have installed (instructions at <<http://www.uv.es/siuv/cat/zxarxa/vpn.htm>>)

In your web browser, either type the EEBO’s address: <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>> or go to the Universitat webpage, > then to “Biblioteques” (or “Serveis”), > then to “Servei de Biblioteques”), > then to “Recursos Electrònics”, > then to “Bases de Dades”, > then to “Humanities”, > and then “EEBO”

Finding books in EEBO: e.g. the 1604 quarto, and the 1623 folio of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

- 1- Once on the home page of EEBO, click on SEARCH
- 2- Enter data in the search fields:
 - author keyword(s): Shakespeare
 - limit by date from: 1604 to: 1604 (for Q2)
 - from 1623 to 1623 (for F1; note that the title of the book is not *Hamlet*, but *Mr William Shakespeare’s Comedies, Histories, etc.*)
- 3- Once you see the resulting page, look for the appropriate hit and click on the miniature icon (on the left) representing a small camera within a page.
- 4- Once the index is displayed, select the appropriate image(s) corresponding to your fragment of the edition (see table of correspondences between line numbers and the number of the EEBO image)
 - For the text of *Hamlet* in F1, look for images numbered 383 to 398!!
- 5- Once the selected image is on the screen, you can examine it online or (preferably) download it by clicking on either “Download TIFF file” below the image or on the miniature icon above.
 - If you print these images out, you’d better select the “landscape” orientation in the page setup.