

## Appendix 1.1

### Final Essay Assignment: TEI as Interpretive Close Reading

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This assignment was developed by Elizabeth Hopwood, project manager of the *Early Caribbean Digital Archive*, for Professor Nicole N. Aljoe's Race and Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel, fall 2014, in conjunction with the *Early Caribbean Digital Archive*. My thanks to Julia Flanders, Sarah Connell, Elizabeth Polcha, and Benjamin Doyle for providing models of TEI classroom assignments and feedback on this assignment.

"Markup should be conceived . . . as the expression of a highly reflexive act, a mapping of text back onto itself; as soon as a (marked) text is (re)marked, the metamarkings open themselves to indeterminacy."

—Jerome McGann and Dino Buzzetti, "Critical Editing in a Digital Horizon," 2006

"There is no obvious unit of language."

—Susan Hockey, *Electronic Texts in the Humanities: Principles and Practice*, 2000

For this final assignment, you will draw on and demonstrate the skills of argument and literary analysis that you have been practicing throughout the semester by combining close reading skills with some preliminary textual markup using XML (extensible markup language) and tagging via the Text Encoding Initiative Guidelines.

As we've seen, marking up a text requires one to not only closely attend to issues of format and text structure, but also to make editorial decisions about *how* to describe the text. In other words: for this assignment you will be asked to think about what the markup might reveal: what do we see from marking up the text that we wouldn't from simply reading it?

There are countless ways one might tag or markup a text (what might be the use case—and the challenges—of marking every long s of a primary source document, every question mark of a poem, or every idiom of a play, for example?). What we're doing, in a sense, is creating data sets from the texts—a quantified set

of *some things*. That is the first step. The next step (although you will find that these steps will be simultaneous and iterative) is to figure out: what does this data allow me to *do* or say about the text? In other words, how does this lead to an argument akin to one you might make in a traditional analytical essay? How does it lead to a new way of looking at the text that you were unable to see before?

The TEI allows you to identify structural elements (paragraphs, chapter headings, line groups) as well as interpretative features (metaphors, distinct uses of language, themes) of the text. These require editorial decision-making to determine what counts, what doesn't, when to start the tag, and when to close it. In creating a TEI document, you are not only describing the text as you see it; you are creating a new digital edition of it. This assignment will require you to think formally and creatively about what your digital edition represents.

## Assignment Details

For your assignment, you will mark up a portion of a text. Familiarity with the Text Encoding Initiative is necessary. We will have a couple of in-class labs where we will walk through the basics of how to get started. Document your process as your work in a change log for inclusion in the written reflection. First you will mark up the following:

### Structural details

- Paragraphs
- Section or chapter divisions
- Emphasized words

### Content and Interpretive Markup

- : places with proper names
- : places without proper names
- : people with proper names

Then you will determine additional features that YOU wish to tag, what data you want to collect, and what themes you want to make visible. You will do this by using the `<span>` element with the `class` attribute and a value that you will decide upon. The `<span class="segment">` tag selects a specific piece of text, here associated with your choice of

analysis, specified by the attribute, `ana=" . . . "`. You can use this last tag for tropes or figurative language that you see occurring throughout the text (for example, or ). This tag is important for your project because it allows freedom to select words or phrases that you label descriptively.

Choose between two or three analytical strings ( ) that seem especially interesting or significant to you. It will help if you conceive of this project from the idea level first: if you were to write a traditional literary analysis essay, what might you write about? What kind of argument are you interested in making? What would you look for as evidence within the text? What scenes are you drawn to? Start with the ideas first, then turn to the text to see how markup might help shape or make your argument. We will work together to transform your XML into an HTML page for viewing.

You will then write up a short reflection piece in which you discuss the decisions you made and what you and your readers can learn about the text via your encoding. What did you learn from doing this work that you didn't see from simply reading the text? What argument can you now make? How does the data help demonstrate your ideas?

Be as creative as you wish with your analytical strings. Here are some things you might be interested in tagging, but you do not have to select from this list:

- Food
- Plants and animals
- Ships
- Military allusions and references
- Embedded and interpellated narratives
- References to religion and religious groups
- Legal documents
- Nationality
- Military events
- Professions
- Labor
- Language and dialect
- Textile/sartorial

- Relations and relationships
- Currency
- Punishment
- Disease
- Abolition
- Performance
- References to gender
- Commodities