

Professor Henderson  
Paper topic #1

Your task in this paper will be to compare the editorial treatment of Ophelia's second mad scene (IV. v. 154-216 in Jenkins) in two editions of the play: Harold Jenkins' edition of Hamlet for the Arden series (London: Methuen, 1982), and The Globe Illustrated Shakespeare, edited by Howard Staunton (New York: Greenwich House, 1860).

When we looked at the Q1, Q2, and F1 versions of the closet scene with Gertrude in class, we found important differences between the texts, especially Q1 and Q2/F1. In this case, the distinctions you'll find will be less striking, so don't worry that there is some "big" difference between the two texts that you're overlooking. Instead, focus on the way minor differences in editorial presentation can effect the reader's response to or sense of the scene. You can discuss such differences on three levels:

1. Differences in the reading texts themselves

--What is the effect of differences in punctuation, the representation of songs, and so forth?

2. Differences in the editor's glosses (footnotes or endnotes)

--Look, for instance, at the explanation of Ophelia's distribution of flowers.

3. Differences in the books as whole books

--For instance, what difference does it make that the Globe is illustrated? What do you make of the image of Ophelia?

You'll want to begin by simply noting some salient textual variations. **You will then formulate a thesis in which you make a larger point about these variations.** Do not simply produce a list of differences between the two texts, and don't feel that you have to point out every difference you find; the paper must offer a coherent argument. You can organize your thoughts under any rubric you like: you could talk about the apparent target audience for the two texts, you could talk about the different ways the texts would have us understand Ophelia, you could focus on the way the texts reflect the interests of the age in which they were produced, and so forth. Whatever you do, be coherent.

Remember, too, to consult your "Paper Pointers" guide. Once you've written a draft of the paper, comb through it carefully to be sure your presentation is logical, clear, and explicit.