TEI By Example

TEI by Example. Module 5

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5. Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

This example features a fragment (the front matter and first page) of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a play in three acts. In this transcription, no further scenes are discerned within the acts.
<text>
<front>
<div type="dramatisPersonae" org="uniform" sample="complete" part="N">
  <head>THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY:</head>
  <list type="maleParts">
    <item>John Worthing, J.P.</item>
    <item>Algernon Moncrieff</item>
    <item>Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.</item>
    <item>Merriman, <emph>Butler</emph></item>
    <item>Lane, <emph>Manservant</emph></item>
  </list>
  <list type="femaleParts">
    <item>Lady Bracknell</item>
    <item>Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax</item>
    <item>Cecily Cardew</item>
    <item>Miss Prism, <emph>Governess</emph></item>
  </list>
</div>

<sceneList>
  <head>THE SCENES OF THE PLAY:</head>
  <stage>
    <list type="simple">
      <item>Act I. Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half-Moon Street, W.</item>
      <item>Act II. The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.</item>
      <item>Act III. Drawing-room at the Manor House, Woolton.</item>
    </list>
  </stage>
  <stage type="time">TIME: <emph>The Present</emph></stage>
</sceneList>
<br>
<body>
<div1 type="play" org="uniform" sample="complete" part="N">
  <head>The Importance of Being Earnest</head>
  <pb n="451"/>
  <div2 n="1" type="act" org="uniform" sample="complete" part="N">
    <head>FIRST ACT</head>
    <stage type="setting">Scene <view>
      <emph>Morning-room in Algernon's flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and
      artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.</emph>
      <emph>Lane is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon
      enters.</emph>
    </view>
  </div2>
</body>
</text>
<sp>
  <speaker>Algernon.</speaker>
  <p>Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Lane.</speaker>
  <p>I didn’t think it polite to listen, sir.</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Algernon.</speaker>
  <p>I’m sorry for that, for your sake. I don’t play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but
  I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned sentiment is my <foreign xml:lang="fr">forte</foreign>. I keep science for Life.</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Lane.</speaker>
  <p>Yes, sir.</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Algernon.</speaker>
  <p>And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady
  Bracknell?</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Lane.</speaker>
  <p>Yes, sir.</p>
</sp>

<stage>
  [ <emph>Hands them on a salver.</emph> ]
</stage>

<sp>
  <speaker>Algernon.</speaker>
  <p>Oh! … by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr.
  Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Lane.</speaker>
  <p>Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.</p>
</sp>

<sp>
  <speaker>Algernon.</speaker>
  <p>Why is it that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask
  merely for information.</p>
</sp>

5. Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest
I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married
households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

Good Heavens! Is marriage so demoralizing as that?

I believe it is a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience
of it myself up to the present. That was in consequence of a
misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

I don't know that I am much interested in your
family life, Lane.

No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

The actual text is preceded by a character list and a list of the scenes, both encoded as
<doc> elements inside the <front> part of the <text>, with appropriate values for their
@type attributes. The character list is encoded as a plain <list> structure, containing plain
<item> elements for the characters (divided into sublists of male and female characters).
Role descriptions are encoded with <emph> elements. Whereas the specialised <castList>,
<castGroup> and <castItem>, <role>, and <roleDesc> elements could have been used, this
is a perfectly legal (though less semantically rich) interpretation and application of the TEI
elements. The scenes are listed in a <stage> element, which is a bit more controversial, as the
TEI Guidelines make a clear distinction between the <stage> element (stage directions in or in
between speeches) and <set> ("a description of the setting, time, locale, appearance, etc., of the

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action of a play, typically found in the front matter of a printed performance text (not a stage direction)" elements. Because it is wrapped inside a `<div>` structure, this is valid TEI, but the encoding could probably be improved to:

```xml
<front>
  <set>
    <head>THE SCENES OF THE PLAY:</head>
    <list type="simple">
      <item>Act I. Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half-Moon Street, W.</item>
      <item>Act II. The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.</item>
      <item>Act III. Drawing-room at the Manor House, Woolton.</item>
    </list>
  </set>
  <set>TIME: <emph>The Present</emph></set>
</front>
```

The play itself is encoded as a `<div1>` level text division, in which each act is wrapped in a `<div2>` element. Inside the speeches (<sp>), the speakers are transcribed as `<speaker>`, and the speech as prose paragraphs (<p>). Stage directions (<stage>) occur between and in the speeches. Note how at the beginning of the act, the `<view>` element is used inside a stage direction, to describe the visual aspects of the setting. This is probably a liberal interpretation of the semantics of this element, which is more geared to "the visual context of some part of a screen play", viz. the description of what's on a screen. The `<view>` element doesn't seem strictly necessary here: a `<stage type="setting">` would probably convey the same information.

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