Amal Shukr
Professor Goodrich
English Literature to 1700

Mini-Edition: *King Lear*

The bulk of my mini-edition follows the Folio version of Cordelia’s response, and only references the Quarto version within the last line. I chose the Folio because it offers a more in-depth approach on Cordelia’s refusal to submit to the level of brown-nosing her sisters undertake, and because it underscores the extent of pride King Lear feels toward his youngest daughter. For instance, in the Quarto, Cordelia and King Lear go back and forth expressing “nothing” only once, while in the Folio, they exchange “nothings” twice. While this may seem like a minor deviation, the Folio’s additional exchange solidifies the sanctity of Cordelia’s honesty, even when repeatedly challenged by an authority as powerful as her royal father. In addition, the Folio’s extra exchange emphasizes King Lear’s confused state of disbelief, that his youngest, most cherished daughter refuses to praise him. Moreover, the Folio allows the audience to actualize Cordelia’s prominence where the Quarto fails. By including that “The Vines of France” and “Milk of Burgundy” “strive” to win Cordelia’s heart in the Folio, Lear’s particular obsession with his youngest daughter’s judgment is effectively substantiated, as it is made clear that even the two most esteemed princes seek her love. Building Cordelia up to be such a special woman and daughter in the Folio strengthens the severity of her eventual “betrayal” of Lear, providing even more cause for Lear’s discontent throughout the entire play. While the Folio version of Cordelia’s response is, for me, a better reading of that particular scene, I felt compelled to include the Quarto version’s concluding words: “to love my father all.” The reason is because this phrase effectively clarifies why Cordelia “shall never marry like [her]
sisters,” as she will not give all her love to her father (23). These concluding words prove necessary because they, again, emphasize Cordelia’s honest nature, providing much prolepsis of each daughter's true nature by the play’s ending, despite their contradicting monologues during the play’s beginning. Although I provided annotations for more words, I felt it especially necessary to define the words, “lest,” “mar,” and “begot” using the OED, since their rare use in regular speech deems them archaic. For example, knowing that “begot” alludes to the “creation,” or “bringing up” of another human being allows the audience to realize Cordelia is fully aware of her familial duty and relationship toward her father, ultimately legitimizing her inability to lie about owing him all her love. Cordelia’s specific word choice in describing her relationship with her father proves critical for her characterization, as it reiterates her rational and rightfully blunt nature. While many changes I made were analytical, a number were purely technical. For instance, obvious misspellings like “speake” for “speak” had to be corrected, as they do not correlate with modern-day standards. As far as punctuation goes, a notable change I made was including an exclamation point, as opposed to a question mark, after Lear’s “How, how, Cordelia!” in line 13. The reason is because Lear’s question in response to his daughter’s bluntness is ultimately rhetorical, and holds more significance as a phrase of utter shock than of general contestation. Moreover, I corrected unnecessary capitalizations, especially when Cordelia references her father as “Lord” and “Majesty,” and her future husband as “Lord.” The reason why these words need correction is because such capitalization nowadays is reserved for God and godly figures, not ordinary people. Because kings themselves were seen as divine and men thought to be superior during Shakespeare’s time, capitalizing their epithets proved necessary, although it is clear much has changed since then.

Dividing the Kingdoms: Interdisciplinary Methods for Teaching King Lear to Undergraduates
http://guides.lib.wayne.edu/folgerkinglear
Cordelia’s Response

1 Now, our joy, although our last and least;\(^a\) to whose young love, the smallest; youngest

The vines of France\(^1\) and milk of Burgundy\(^2\)
Strive to be interested,\(^3\) what can you say, to draw

5 A third, more opulent\(^a\) than your sisters? Speak. rich; abundant

Cor. Nothing, my lord.
Lear. Nothing?
Cor. Nothing.
Lear. Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.

10 Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave\(^o\) to raise; exert force

My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
According to my bond\(^o\), no more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little,

Lest\(^e\) you may mar\(^e\) your fortunes. for fear that/hinder; spoil

15 Cor. Good, my lord,

You have begot\(^o\) me, bred me, loved me. created

I return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say

20 They love you all? Happily when I shall wed,

That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry

Half my love with him, half my care, and duty.

Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters, to love my father all.

---

1 In reference to French wine as a true delicacy, which underscores the eminence of the Prince of France.
2 In reference to the famed dairy foods of Burgundy, which underscore the eminence of the Prince of Burgundy.
3 Concerned, especially for personal advantage.