

6. a) The opening Act of *King Lear* effectively demonstrated the initial situation and downward movement in the first stage of Aristotle's structure of tragedy from having introduced King Lear's fatal flaw, the initiation of the downward movement, and finally disowned and abolished those that were honest to him. King Lear's **peripeteia** was introduced from his hubris in his outlandish perception "that future strife / May be prevented" (I i 46-47) from the "will to publish / [His] daughters several dowers," (I i 45-46) in splitting up his kingdom into three divisions. Because of this, the downward movement had begun when Cordelia's response to how much she had loved her father, King Lear, did not meet up with his hubristic expectations. King Lear then told Kent, after defending Cordelia, that after six days he was "to turn thy hated back" (I i 177) and leave the kingdom and disowned Cordelia as "[his] sometime daughter." (I i 122) The first stage of Aristotle's structure of tragedy was shown through the downward movement of King Lear within Act I.

Comment [u1]: ??

b) The use of motifs reinforced the downward movement in Lear's perception of his own identity through references to the natural and unnatural, his sanity/madness, and the 'nothing'. The reference to nature was used to identify a balance within humankind, which was prevalent throughout the play, especially when Lear defined himself as "the Dragon" (I i 124), which it in itself was a Higher Power to the humans. Lear's sanity/madness was also explicitly described by Lear when he had asked himself if he was going mad from his rash actions: "O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! / Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!" (I v 46-47) A reference to 'nothing' was used to identify the final result that had come of King Lear's identity, which was set in stone when he had asked for something to come of nothing by simply demanding Cordelia to speak; even though he understood that "Nothing comes of nothing." (I i 92) From having analyzed the three motifs, it was shown that they were used effectively to reinforce the downward movement of Lear's perception of his own identity.

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c) Lear's position in the downward movement was reinforced through the speeches of Lear's daughters, the Fool, and from Kent. Cordelia and Goneril both contributed towards the downward movement, in which Cordelia described to King Lear that she "shall carry / Half [her] love with [her husband], half [her] care and duty... shall never marry like [her] sisters, / To love her father all." (I i 103-106) Goneril stated that "[Lear struck her] people, and [his] disordered rabble / [Made] servants of their [bettters]" (I iv 262-263) after being disowned by Lear as being a "[degenerate bastard]". (I i 260) These two pieces led King Lear to believe that he only "[has] left... a [single] daughter." (I iv 261) The Fool described the downward movement of King Lear by speaking through madness in order to survive when the world was not sane, such as how he described "[the daughters] will make an obedient [father]", (I iv 241) although it was the father who was trying to make the daughters obedient. Kent had also stated that the downward movement was in effect when King Lear had "swear'st thy gods in vain." (I i 163) When the speeches of Cordelia and Goneril, the Fool, and Kent were analyzed, Lear's position in the downward movement was reinforced.

9. "This shows you are above, / You justicers, that these our nether crimes / So speedily can venge." (IV ii 78-80) In William Shakespeare's King Lear, the concept of justice and mercy were prevalent themes throughout the play. The concept of retributive justice and its effectiveness was seen through the deaths of Cornwall, Goneril, and Edmund. If one were to continue to live in an ordered and supportive world, justice would be more essential than mercy.

For Cornwall, justice was the final push, not mercy, to whom had ordered the removal of Gloucester's eyes. Cornwall died because he was "Slain by his servant, [when Cornwall was] going to put out / The other eye of Gloucester." (IV ii 71-72) Justice had been enacted through Cornwall's own servant and this was what led Cornwall to have to answer for his own actions. It was out of justice, not mercy, which allowed the permanent removal of Cornwall.

Comment [u3]: Throughout this, you need to watch your grammar. Commas before quotations start and periods go after the citations.

Justice was shown to have been more effective than mercy in the death of Goneril. Goneril had “poisoned [Regan] for [Edmund’s] sake, / And after slew herself.” (V iii 242-243) It was out of severe remorse that Goneril had used her own form of justice as to have acted as her own judge, trialed herself, and then ultimately executed herself. Through this, justice was brought into action through the actions of a single person and then onto themselves.

Edmund, perhaps the main antagonist of King Lear, made his final action honourable after he had been mortally wounded by his brother, Edgar. Edmund was brought to justice by Edgar who, after hearing his wrongs from Edgar, states: “Th’ hast spoken right, ‘tis true; / The wheel is come full circle; I am here.” (V iii 175-176) While he was dying, he had realized what his wrongful actions were and then stated that: “I pant for life: some good I mean to do, Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send, / Be brief in it, to th’ castle; for my writ / Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia: / Nay, send in time.” (V iii 245-248) Edmund, to whom had agreed with Edgar that his own actions were unjust, had accepted his demise and from under Edgar’s just actions, Edmund did what had seemed to him ‘unnatural’ and then freed King Lear and his daughter Cordelia. It was justice, not mercy, that had lead Edmund to have made his final actions honourable.

Justice was more essential than mercy when trying to live in an ordered and supportive world. Justice was shown to have ended Cornwall’s tyranny, allowed Goneril to have made an appropriate payment for her own actions within her own judgement, and Edmund to carry out a good, honorable action after having been trialed by his brother for his wrongful actions. Justice was shown to be prevalent in multiple cases where it leads to an effective outcome.

Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*. Toronto: Signet Classic Shakespeare, 1998.