

The tragic errors that King Lear and Gloucester make in misjudging their children constitute a form of figurative blindness— a lack of insight into the true characters of those around them. Yet, Gloucester's greater insight into the character of his two sons after he is blinded reflects an irony: literal blindness ironically produces insight. Cornwall and Regan make these images and metaphors of (failed) vision brutally literal when they blind Gloucester in 3.7. For the remainder of the play, Gloucester serves as a kind of walking reminder of the tragic errors of blindness that he and Lear have committed.