

From a Marxist perspective Edmund does bring hope to the play as he represents capitalism and social change. His character would have been cathartic for an 11th century audience who may have been upset with the feudalistic society in which they lived. However because Edgar can be seen as a characterisation of feudalism and also hope in the play, when he claims that 'some villain hath done [him] wrong' it is clear that capitalism is then represented, as the cause of suffering within 'King Lear'. Shakespeare then uses Edgar and Albany as devices to help reinstate the importance of monarchy for keeping social order and bringing peace to a 17th century audience.

August Wilhelm Schlegel claims that within 'King Lear' 'humanity is shipped of all external and internal advantages and given up prey to natural helplessness'. This reinforces the idea that 'King Lear' is a play of bleak suffering without hope. This idea would have been supported by the argument that complete suffering is inevitable because that is the nature of the tragedy genre. However, only Nahum Tate's rewrite of the play seems to offer some hope within the bleak world of the play. It is true that the original Shakespeare revision is not without hope at all, but this hope eventually leads to more suffering.

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