

On determinism: using the movie "the lion king" essay sample

[Philosophy](#)



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Definition of Philosophy

Philosophy is a systematic study on fundamental questions regarding man's existence, his relationship to other individuals as well as to the world, and the reality that he has. It inquires on the basic course of human life and even those things that are beyond man's control.

Term *philosophy* originally means *love of wisdom*. Its way of inquiry is through the use of rational arguments. Different branches of philosophy include: logic (deals on the nature and structure of reasoning), metaphysics (explains matters such as existence, being, time and essence), epistemology (study of knowledge) and ethics (deals on discussions on how man ought to interact with other individuals). (Deleuze and Guattari)

The style or structure of investigation that is done when philosophizing is basically described as beginning with speculation and questioning on things that appear to be so simple and ending with explanations that cannot be explicitly perceived or grasped on such things other than by reflection, contemplation or philosophizing.

Apparently, one of the goals of philosophy is to establish a systematic structure of worldview. However, it is never the case that way of looking at things and thinking about them are the same with every individuals. In this case, philosophy seeks not to impose anything on people but provide guide questions and systematic criterion on evaluating philosophical problems. It is

to be noted that philosophy detests dogmas such that it would not allow its doctrine to be inhabited by dogmatic principles and beliefs. (Deleuze and Guattari)

The age of philosophy can be divided into four major periods, namely: Ancient Philosophy (inquiry on the First Principle), Medieval Philosophy (inquiry on the difference between religion and philosophy), Modern Philosophy (inquiry on science and knowledge) and Contemporary Philosophy (inquiry on essence and existence).

The Movie: The Lion King

The Lion King was about a lion named *Simba*, who was destined to be the next King of the *Pridelands* but because of an untoward incident, he went away from his home and refused to become the next king.

Simba was the son of *King Mufasa* and *Sarabi*. Being the only son of King Mufasa, he was ordained to be the next king of the Pridelands. Upon knowing it, Simba became so excited of being a king. He idolized his father for being so great in terms of wisdom and battles. King Mufasa, knowing that he must teach and train Simba to become a responsible and honorable successor to his throne, taught everything about the jungle, about battles, and about wisdom. King Mufasa, together with his wife Sarabi, succeeded in instilling all those necessary things that Simba should have for being the future king.

However, all turned evil when King Mufasa's brother, *Scar*, killed him. Scar was so enraged with the fact that he was not going to be the next king because of Simba. With this, he planned to treacherously murder his own

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brother and succeeded doing it. Scar was not contented in murdering his brother Mufasa. He made Simba believe that he himself was the cause of his father's death. Simba was so mortified about what happened to his father and because of this he decided to go away from the Pridelands and never to return again.

Scar triumphantly made it. He became the king.

On the other hand, Simba made himself learn to live away from his home. He made friends with other animals in the jungle like Timon and Pumba. He made himself forget about his home and his supposed fate to be the king of the Pridelands.

In the Pridelands, however, the evil king Scar was devastating the whole kingdom of the lions and lionesses. The Hyenas were his minions in making the Pridelands a living hell. Nala, one of the lionesses and Simba's childhood friend decided to go out of the Pridelands to look for a new place to live in. In her journey she met Simba. She told Simba about the wickedness of Scar and how he was so obnoxious and abusive as king. Finally, she asked Simba to go back to the Pridelands and stop Scar in destroying it.

Simba upon realizing that he had to stop Scar from his evil doings decided to go back to Pridelands. When Scar saw that Simba was still alive he reminded everyone that Simba killed his own father. But when he whispered to Simba that he was the very one who murdered Mufasa, Simba became so furious with Scar. In the end, he killed and overthrew Scar and was able to retrieve his rightful position as the king of the Pridelands.

On Determinism

Determinism is a philosophical doctrine that states that event or happening is entirely determined by previously present causes such that human actions cannot alter it. It is a philosophical theory that denies the possibility of free will and argues that everything is already destined in such a way that all things are part of continuous series of prior causes. (Campbell, O'Rourke and Shier)

The meaning of the term *determinism* has been exposed to various analyses. Some argue that free will and determinism cannot be really put together or cannot be reconciled. Incompatibilists claim that free will and determinism are reciprocally exclusive. Hard determinism, on the other hand, strictly refuses to accept the idea of free will and such concept is nothing but an illusion. Lastly, Soft Determinism or Compatibilists assert that the concept of free will and determinism can be reconciled in certain aspects.(Honderich)

Moreover, there were many philosophers who had tried to settle conflicting arguments regarding free will and determinism. One of them was Thomas Hobbes. He said that will is derivative from appetites while freedom is the dearth of obstacles that which hinder man from doing what he wants to do. Another philosopher was David Hume. He argued that even if the will is determined by the person's motives, the conduct or action to be performed by that person is freely chose by him hence free will is still possible. William James, on the contrary, examined the concept of soft and hard determinism in reconciling free will and determinism.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of determinism does not really exclude participation of human beings. This means that even though events and occurrences are already determined, human actions or human choices still matter. In fact, one of the strands of the doctrine of determinism states that choices are the only things that are determined. With this, human beings still have the freedom to choose among the choices what they want. (Campbell, O'Rourke and Shier)

Varieties of Determinism

There are various kinds of Determinism. Among them are the following: *causal determinism, logical determinism, biological determinism* and *theological determinism*. Causal Determinism states that the future happenings are demanded by antecedent and current events merged with the laws of nature. Having such description, causal determinism implies that things and occurrences in this world are predictable. Conversely, logical determinism assumes that all possible propositions can only be confirmed as true or false whether they expressed past, present or future. In this strand of determinism, the concept of free will is problematic. This is primarily due to the fact that no matter what individuals choose, such choice can only be true or false. Biological Determinism, on the other hand, states that human behavior, aspirations and values are all already set by our genetic make-up. Thus one can say that his son or his daughter would more likely have this attitude or beliefs because it is based on his or her genetic structure and composition. Finally, theological determinism argues that there is a Supreme Entity that is responsible for every event. This Entity predetermines all

happenings in man's life including his choices and actions. (Campbell, O'Rourke and Shier)

Analysis on the Movie, *the Lion King*, using the Doctrine of Determinism

As what I have presented earlier, the concept of determinism entails that all actions and occurrences are completely fixed by prior causes. This means that whatever happens or whatever the action or choice of man is, it would not affect the predestined event. In this way, that which is fated to happen will happen regardless of any factor.

In the movie, Simba was really fated to be the next king of the Pridelands. But due to his evil uncle's wickedness, he did not easily achieve such decree. He went away. He tried to live against the predestined life ahead of him. He even wished to forget such announced destiny for him. But when fate called for the actualization of the declared destiny for Simba, he still managed to be the king of the lion race.

In addition, he was surely had choices to choose from. He can even decline to go back and take back his rightful position as the legitimate king of the Pridelands. Or he can even hide from Nala in his refusal to return to his home. But as what we have stated earlier, he was really destined to be the king of their race such that even if he had choices of not fulfilling it; he still decided to go home and overthrow the evil Scar.

Furthermore, all the things that happened from the time that Simba was born until the time that he was enabled to reclaim his throne were also fated to take place. All those things were necessary in the actualization of what

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destiny wanted Simba to have and to be. The murder of his father, his escape from the Pridelands, Scar's victory in making himself the king, his meeting with new friends, Nala's discovery of him and Scar being killed by him were all caused by the will of destiny. In the end, fate still prevailed.

The movie showed the possibility that our life is really determined. It suggested that whatever path we take or whatever step we make, the end of the line is still the set destination given by either God or by destiny itself.

In our daily undertakings, we may experience dilemmas - of whether we do this or not. But even if we choose to be like someone or to have something, the said choices are still part of the unbroken series of past causes. This tells us that our past, our present and even our future are already and totally constructed such that whatever we do, the end result is still the very thing that fate has given us.

However, we must not put everything on fate. As I have said earlier, the principle of determinism does not exclude participation of human beings. And though our choices and our actions are said to be arranged by destiny, it does not necessarily follow that we must not let destiny do it alone. In fact, destiny does not really acting in behalf of us. It only provides us 'raw materials' such that we can use it in pursuing our destination. We would never reach a particular end without moving towards it.

In applying the philosophy of determinism in man's everyday living, man should not be blinded by the idea that destiny or fate builds the future.

Future is something that is impossible without transcending from the past

and without attending the present. This is what determinism tells us. Our choices are already given. Every little thing is set. Rewards and punishments are fixed. Yet, all these things are motionless. They possess only potentialities. They cannot be put into actuality unless one who is in actuality moves it. (Honderich)

To end this paper, the doctrine of determinism does not strictly advocate an appeal to destiny. It also requires human participation either through acting or choosing. Like Simba, one can truly gain what fate has given to him if he really strives or moves towards its achievement.

Reference:

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