

Racial distinctions: the lion king 2

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Michaelah Frisby Jamie King English 101 2 December 2012 Racial Distinction: Lion King 2 Racial distinctions are –at times –hidden in different forms of media. They may be used to brainwash the audience in a discreet way, enlighten the concept of stereotypes, or even display a situation in which the racial distinction is unintended, yet utilized due to precedence. Racial distinctions are very present and, at times, reasonable. Disney employs these barriers so that the audience recognizes the unfavorable aspects of them. One instance in which we find racial distinctions are in Disney's The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride.

Given to misadventures and mischief, Kiara, Simba's young cub, wanders into the forbidden Outlands, the haunt of Scar's exiled minions, and there she encounters another mischievous cub, Kovu, son of lioness Zira, once a close friend of the late Scar and now the leader of the exiles. Zira plots against Kiara, drawing her son into her scheme. Kovu has divided loyalties as his love for Kiara deepens. Conveyed in the environments, the identities and the physical appearances, these differentiations possess evidence of racial distinctions.

Overall, the environments in which the animals dwell can be categorized into two races: black and white. Kovu's family—the darker, or black lions—live in a more deserted area away from Pride Rock, the flourishing lands. Their home appears abandoned, devastated and demolished. Ridden with dry lands and random fires, this space is where young Kovu and other young lions play, eat, and sleep—where they call home: “[You] exiled us to the out lands,” Zira, Kovu's mother whines to Simba, “...Where we have little food, less water” (The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride).

Their habitat compares so well with the lower class neighborhoods cities if where black families live their lives, where there are abandoned homes and demolished memories. Young children play in an area where, unbeknownst to them, a drug deal took place seconds ago. Yet, they play there all the same. These harsh lands cause these lions to live at risk of crisis every day. However, we find Kiara and her family –the lighter, or white lions –literally living a much higher life. Surrounded by thriving lands and flourishing resources, Kiara’s life on Pride Rock is abundant.

Her family is “ wealthy,” in the sense, because her father, Simba, is the king and Alpha lion. Kiara is protected and her life is sustained impressively. She is enveloped by animals that love her and her family and praise her father because of his power. Much like the privileged white girl that lives on the upper side of the city whose father is respected due to his wealth, Kiara is secure and loved. Essentially, Kiara is identified differently from Kovu because of who she is. Because of whom her father is and what he knows. He knows that Kovu’s mother, Zira, is dangerous.

Thus, he protects her from Kovu, appointing Timon and Pumba, good friends of his, to protect her: “ Hey, Timon! Pumba! ” he calls for them. ‘ I want you to keep a close watch on Kiara. You know she’s bound to run off (The Lion King 2: Simba’s Pride). Kiara is sheltered not only because of the dangers that Simba feel are out there, but also she is protected because he has the power to protect. He can do that because of his wealth and respect. The average upperclass white family man can protect his daughter this way with the employment of bodyguards and such.

Simba's attitude, throughout the majority of the movie, towards Kovu and his family is extremely degrading. He feels that they are not worthy to live on Pride Rock with the rest of the lions. He even goes as far to put them at the bottom of his "class system:" "I banished you from our pride lands." He spits at Zira. "Now you and your young cub, get out!" (The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride). He looks down on them because he, as the wealthier "white man" finds it hard to see them as equals. Happiness appears to surround Pride Rock. While Kiara's life is full of love, Kovu's is full of chaos.

Kovu's mother is harsh in how she raises him. Like a single African-American mother raising three children on her own in a decrepit neighborhood, Zira strives to raise her children the best way that she knows how with the few resources she has available. However, she is rough with her ways and tough with her love. She constantly puts down Kovu's older brother Nuka, and unsuccessfully shields Vitani, Kovu's little sister from the difficult ways of their land, exposing her to dangerous aspects of life, such as her plan for Kovu to kill Simba.

Vitani greets Kovu one evening and playfully asks him if he wants to fight. Roughly is how they play. Here lies a parallel with the lack of sheltered love that is seen in a lot of lower class African American homes due to harsh surroundings, lack of toys, and neglect in parental guidance. Nuka despises Kovu because he can never please their mother: "Hey, it's every lion for himself out here," Nuka replies to Vitani scolding him for leaving Kovu on his own. "That little termite's got to learn to be on his own" (The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride).

Kovu's approach towards Kiara, when they first meet, is negative. He begins to growl at her with his young, yet fierce voice: "Who are you, pride-lander," he asks Kiara with disgust. (The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride) He makes fun of Kiara by saying that she is a daddy's girl. Kovu learns these defensive ways from his mother and his homeland. It is all he knows. , Kiara's attempts to play a game of tag with him are failed: "What's wrong? Don't ya know how to play?" she asks. (The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride). Yet, when she begins to "play fight" with him, he responds playfully.

Meanwhile, Simba and Zira's means for punishment differ as well. Simba has a talk with Kiara about how the dangers of the world will negate her life if she continues to disobey his rules and run off on her own. He ends his lecture by singing her a song about family and sticking together: "We Are One." Zira's ways are much harsher. She screams at Kovu, scaring him intensely, telling him that he will never be friends with Kiara. Compared to human life: Zira -the black parent -scolds her child more harshly because she knows that if she does not, society will.

And Simba -the white parent -gives much more leeway because society sees her skin color, or fur color, and suspects that she means no harm. Lastly, are the physical appearances of the characters. Kiara's family are the lighter cubs, which can be compared to a white family. Whereas Kovu's family are the darker cubs, in comparison to a black family. Though Kiara and the lions in the pride lands vary as far as shades of light skin, they are lighter all the same. As far as physique, the lions of the pride lands are much more fit and appear more well-nourished in contrast to the lions of the outlands.

These lions are much darker, and quite thin. They appear very malnourished. “ Oh! These termites,” Nuka yelps as he viciously scratches, bites, and claws at himself (The Lion King 2: Simba’s Pride). Nuka appears to be the most dirt-ridden lion of them all. Kovu possesses a scar that he receives from his mother’s scornful actions. This scar represents a lot about where he came from. It even acts as a symbol for his father, Scar. Though Kovu was adopted, this scar aids in the resemblance of Scar and him. The use of these color distinctions to the characters bestows visualization on the concept of these racial differences.

Racial barriers are often hidden. Yet, they instill a number of aspects as far as information. In Disney’s The Lion King 2: Simba’s Pride, we find these barriers. They are portrayed in the environments, the identities and the physical appearances of the characters. And though they are not good or bad, they are necessary. These distinctions allow the audience to recognize the negativity in the barriers so that they do not out them forth. Works Cited
The Lion King 2: Simba’s Pride. Dir. Darrell Rooney. Prod. Jeannine Rousell. Perf. Matthew Broderick, Neve Campbell, Andy Dick. Disney Pictures, 1998.
Film