

The oedipal complex in hamlet and the lion king



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In 1601, William Shakespeare wrote the tragedy Hamlet. Hamlet is a young prince whose father has recently died and his uncle, Claudius, has wooed his widowed mother, Gertrude, and taken Hamlet's place on the throne. Not only is Hamlet angry because Claudius married his mother and has taken his throne, Hamlet recently found out Claudius was the reason for his father's death. Hamlet wants to achieve revenge his father and get what is rightfully his; the throne of Denmark. In Disney's 1994 The Lion King, Simba is a young lion cub whose father, Mufasa, is king.

Scar, Simba's uncle, wants to be king and he winds up killing his brother. Scar makes Simba believe he is the reason for his father's death and Simba runs away. As Simba reaches adulthood, he is found by a childhood friend, Nala, who convinces him to go home and become king. Simba also has the same problem as Prince Hamlet; Simba's uncle has killed his father as well and Simba wants to avenge Mufasa's death. While composing The Lion King, Disney writers chose a very similar framework to Hamlet because, although its Oedipal themes are rather mature, they still resonate strongly with young readers.

In 1899, Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, introduced the term Oedipus complex in his book Interpretation of Dreams. This term describes a psychological stage of development in which a male child desires sexual relations with his mother or a female child desires sexual relations with her father. The child also exhibits hostility toward the parent of the same sex—a boy for the father and a girl for the mother. In normal development, a child outgrows this desire. However, in abnormal

development, a child may retain his or her sexual fixation on the parent of the opposite sex.

Also, he is jealous of his father and tends to compete for maternal attention. Freud determined that in order to resolve this complex, it would lead to castration anxiety. Castration anxiety is the fear of emasculation both literally and mentally. In the myth, Oedipus, Oedipus was the mythical Greek King of Thebes and he fulfilled a prophecy in which he would kill his father, marry his mother and bring disaster to his city and his family. The Oedipus Complex pertains to both Hamlet and The Lion King due to the similar situations both of the “princes” face.

The Oedipal Complex is abundant in both Hamlet and The Lion King. Throughout Hamlet, Hamlet defers the slaying of his uncle because, even though he has an undying hatred for him, Hamlet relates to Claudius. Hamlet identifies with Claudius because he did what Hamlet’s subconscious wishes he could do, which is killing his father and marrying his mother. The same circumstances present themselves in The Lion King. Although Simba, which would be Hamlet in this case, does not put off the execution of his uncle, Simba shares the same envy of Scar that Hamlet had of his uncle.