

Research Article

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The Impact of Tony's Existence to Donald's Character Development in *Green Book* Movie

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Abstract

Peter Farelly's *Green Book* is a fascinating biographical movie. This movie displays Donald's personality development through his ego during his journey with Tony. It is the reason the writer interested to analyze the movie. This study is intended to describe the development of Donald's ego. In order to describe the development, the writer practices close viewing. In his analysis, the writer uses the contextual method and psychoanalytic theory. The analysis shows that Donald's superego experiences new vision. The result shows positive impact of Tony's influence in breaking the doctor's idealist temperament. This movie is good for general viewing, especially students of English Department studying the concept of psychoanalysis in practice.

Keywords: idealist temperament; personality development; psychoanalysis; id ego, and superego

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

While appreciation is used to commend a literary work, a study is the way to analyze the essence hidden in the work. This is a kind of activity to learn the elements which can be found in it. Through this activity, people could analyze the elements in those kinds of literary works, especially the movie. Was there any attempt to show the social reality by the director? Or is there any new theory can be found? These could be analyzed with some approach.

This paper contains a study about movie. The movie which will be analyzed, *Green Book*, took place in New York City, October 1962, with Tony Vallelonga and Dr. Donald Shirley as the major characters. Tony is a staff in a night club. Unfortunately, due to the renovation he is forced to get a new job for the next two months. Shortly, his former boss informs him about a new job as driver. His job is to escort Dr. Donald Shirley during his journey for concerts with Don Shirley Trio, including the doctor himself as the pianist,

Oleg as the cellist, and George as the bassist. The concerts take places in the *Deep South*. It is a term formerly used during the American Civil War referring to the region in which the practice of racism was prevalent. Racism is a concept where ones presume that a particular race is superior compared to others. Eventually, he finds himself shares quite different personality with the fancy doctor and his idealist temperament.

According to Keirse, idealists aim to find their true-self and the best possible self they might achieve. It is reasonable if one says that idealist is one of the best recipes for leadership. Their solid vision is usually used to motivate people around them. Their hunger of fulfilling potential is often inspiring [1].

However, there will be always two sides for a coin. The negative impact of being idealist is that ones will tend to put someone in hard time in absorbing their way of thinking. Their solid visions often create barrier against people around them. In the worst possibility, ones might be getting hard times on making relationship.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Intrinsic Elements

In order to fulfill the objective of the study, there are three elements of intrinsic elements to provide. They are character, characterization, and conflict. These are the necessary elements needed to analyze in order to accomplish the study.

2.1.1. Character

This is a primary element of literary work. Without character there will be no story in the first place. Richard Barsam mentions that major characters are presented in such a way to fill the fundamental part of a story. It is their destiny to make something happen either to the world or to them [2].

2.1.2. Characterization

Characterization is used to illustrate the image of characters in real shape. Jones indicates that there are two methods of characterization; the dramatic and the analytic. In the dramatic, the characterization is based on the characters' actions, communications, and the way other characters think about them. While in the analytic, it is based on the author's interpretation on giving the characters attitudes, thoughts, and images [3].

Dickinson also presents some step to characterize individual in literary work as follows [4].

1. Basic appearance consisting of:
 - a. Physical appearance
 - b. Social appearance (the character's relationship with another character and his/her social condition)
 - c. Attitude (the character's motives and actions)
2. Appearance based on points of view consisting of:
 - a. How the character's own interpretation on himself

- b. How the other characters interpret him

2.1.3. Conflict

The next important element to build a story is conflict. In general, people might assume that story with no intense conflicts is boring. When people go for a holiday to a beach, assumed that they need to get out of the world business, they still expect the ripples of the ocean. This is way similar with a story that it needs conflict to build the tension. Perrine explains that conflict could be divided into internal as the character stands against himself or his own world and external as the character stands against outer forces [5].

2.2. *Personality Development of Dr. Donald Shirley*

There are two main theories used in order to analyze Donald's personality development. While theory of psychoanalysis is used to analyze the id, ego, and superego, the theory of racism is used to explain the situations mostly happen in the story since the racism system is prevalent.

2.2.1. Freud's Theory of Psychoanalysis

Norman Triplett, in 1898, conducted a research which today called as social facilitation effect. The result shows that individual's behavior tends to change with the existence of other [6]. Referring to the title, this paper is intended to analyze the impact of Tony's existence to the personality development of Donald.

Furthermore one way to analyze personality development is by using psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud. Personality is a system built by three elements. They are id, ego, and superego. Id is a unit of personality attached since born and relates to instinct and biological needs. Ego is a unit in charge to handle the reality. It is its responsibility to make decision. Superego is the unit relates to the social value. The result of conflicts of these elements is often influence the development of one's personality. It is a unique system that differs human one another. This theory is used in order to acknowledge Donald's personality development.

2.2.2. Theory of Racism

Blaut indicates that racism basically is a practice of discrimination from personal abuse to social oppression. It is a concept where ones presume that a particular race is superior compared to others [7]. Its practice has been tremendously important in European society for hundred years.

3. **Research Method**

3.1. *Method of Data Collection*

In completing this final project, the writer applies library research method to help him in compiling relevant data and information needed. Library research method is any written

information examined through the writer's own notes or other's published works. The compilation of data could be in the type of book, notes, journals, magazines, or internet sites.

3.2. Research Approach

Based on the background of the study, the writer uses psychoanalysis theory as the research approach in this final project. The writer will analyze the personality development of character Dr. Donald Shirley. The writer will use this theory founded by Sigmund Freud to help him in analyzing the issues mentioned in the research problems.

4. Analysis

4.1. Intrinsic Analysis

In this sub-chapter, the writer will discuss about the intrinsic elements in "Green Book" by Peter Farelly. The intrinsic elements that will be discussed are the characters, characterization, and conflict. The writer will focus on Dr. Donald Shirley and Tony Vallelonga as the major characters.

4.1.1. Characters

4.1.1.1. Tony Vallelonga

Tony Vallelonga is an Italian man. During the year, Bronx is considered as destination for European immigrants. His nickname is Tony Lip. He got the nickname from his people since he is considered good at bullshitting. He has a waif named Dolores and two kids named Nicky and Frankie. He is in middle class society. It can be concluded that he lives in an immigrant society, he still has a car, yet he does not have any servant in the apartment. He speaks English and Italy.

4.1.1.2. Dr. Donald Shirley

Dr. Donald Shirley is a colored man living in the second floor of the Carnegie Hall. He studies at Leningrad Conservatory of Music. He has a doctor degree in psychology, music, and liturgical art as mentioned in his first concert in Pittsburgh. He is a member of Don Shirley Trio as pianist. He speaks English, Russia (as he speaks to another member, Oleg), and Italy (as he speaks to Tony in Memphis). He is in high class society for he is a well-educated man, speaks several languages, and lives on the second floor of noble hall. His house is filled by fancy properties and art works. He also has a house assistant named Amit.

4.1.2. Characterization

This element of intrinsic is used to illustrate the image of characters in real shape. There are two characters to characterize in this analysis. They are Tony Vallelonga and Dr. Donald Shirley.

4.1.2.1. Tony Vallelonga

Tony Vallelonga is an average Italian man. Earlier in the story, Tony himself says that he worked mostly worked as driver. He said “... *sanitation, garbage trucks, plus I drive my boss at night. But I can drive anything*”. Based on Donald’s record label research, Tony is known as someone with ability to handle problems. He has many relations as his brother’s wife mentions, “*All the people he knows, he’ll find something in no time*”. There are also some people who are willingly offered him job which later turned down.

Tony is portrayed as a person who would takes advantages from other people. This is shown three times by his acts. The first is when he steal Loscudo’s hat in the night club which triggered his anger for it was his mother’s gift. Later, it turns out that he gives it back to get a fine reward, money, from Loscudo. The second is when the first time he picks up Donald at his house. He recognizes Oleg; the member of Don Shirley Trio tries to smoke. He then put his smoke back to his pocket and asks Oleg for one. The third time is when he picks up the gem stone in their first trip. The stone is dropped down from its place and he considered it as a free stone.

Tony admits himself as a rather talkative in his first trip with Donald. He mentions that his wife often asked him for “quiet time”. “*Dolores, my wife, used to say that all the time... she’s been with the kids all day, and she’ll say, “Tony, how about some quiet time?”*”, he said. This attitude also shown by Donald as he makes annoyed expression each time Tony starts to do his big talk.

4.1.2.2. Dr. Donald Shirley

Dr. Donald Shirley is a colored man. He is rather thinner and taller than Tony. He is a well-educated and acts as a noble man. At their first concert, the presenter said, “... *present a great American artist ... he holds doctorates in psychology, in music, and in liturgical arts ... He is a true virtuoso*”. The way he speaks is different from Tony. His choice of words is rather unusual to Tony. He always wears tuxedo and fancy pajamas in the night. He puts some lotion to his body every time he goes to sleep. He is idealist for he often lectures Tony about his manner, reasoning that it would make him a better person.

Dr. Donald Shirley admits that he is a lonely person. In their trip to the last concert in Birmingham, he shouts at Tony, “*Yes I live in a castle, Tony! Alone! ...and I suffer that slight alone ...*”. He has no relation and is unwillingly to make the first move to contact his brother.

According to Oleg, the member of Don Shirley Trio, Dr. Donald Shirley is a man with courage to change the world. He states that Donald could have better payment and comfortable concert in the North if he wants. Instead, he decides to establish concerts in Deep South to change people’s mind toward colored-people. “*You asked me once why Dr. Shirley does this ... because genius is not enough, it takes courage to change people’s hearts*”, he said.

4.1.3. Conflict

This analysis provides several conflicts occur in the movie between the characters and society.

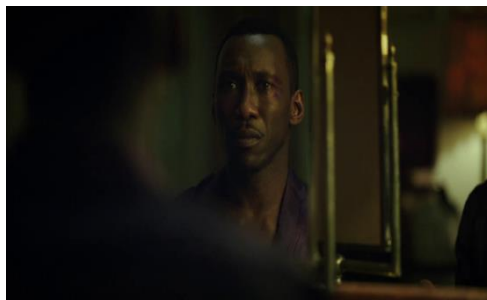
4.1.3.1. Donald and Himself

On their way along the Kentucky state line, Donald mentions that he has a brother somewhere. However he refuses to stay connected with him. Rather he states that his brother knows where to find him. There Tony asserts that if it was him, he would have be the one to take the first move. He believes that the world is full of people who are afraid to make the move, leaving themselves lonely. The next scene is shown in close up; intensifying his expression after the pep talk.

When Tony encounters his friends, they ask him why he would work for a colored people. However they speak in Italy in order to conceal their conversation to Donald who waits. They ask him to meet them later that night to offer better job. At the night, with close up shot, Donald is looking himself on the mirror and drops a tear; this cinematic technique is used to attract the viewer's attention into his expression knowing that Tony might leaves him. Then he waits for him in front of his door and asks him not to take the offer and even offers better payment for Tony. He speaks in Italian; implying that he knew their last conversation. However, Tony states that he just wants to meet them and not to take their offering.



Picture 1. Donald thinks over Tony's pep talk on the mirror (01:36:29)



Picture 2. Donald looks at himself (01:18:24)

4.1.3.2. Donald and Tony

The first conflict is shown after their concert in Pittsburgh when Donald caught Tony gambling with other people. He asserts that Tony should be better than them for he has a choice to get money just by asking him. This scene was taken in medium close up; this cinematic technique is used to attract viewer's attention into his expression and gesture towards Tony.

When they are being arrested in Maryville Police Department, Donald expresses his anger towards Tony. He states that violence is not a proper way to solve problems. He asserts that Tony should not have assaulted the officer for insulting him as colored people. It is not a proper way to do even to protect dignity. He could have stood the insult just for one night. Tony denies him and implies that he should stand for his dignity. Later, he says that Donald does not know how the life of lower social class is since he lived in big place with fancy things and a throne in it. For the first time he shouts for Tony. He could not resist him. He says that even he lives in a palace with luxury throne; he is still a lonely man. He suffers alone for he does not have friends and even his people do not accept him which might caused by his idealist temperament.



Picture 3. Donald expresses his idealist temperament (40:58)

4.1.3.3. Donald and Society

During the year of the movie, discrimination towards colored people is still happening. Therefore, Donald gives Tony the Green Book which contains shelters for colored people. Oleg, one of his trio member also mentions the reason why Donald chooses to establish concerts in the Deep South; it is to change people's view of colored people, that they could do better even for higher class ability like music.

Interesting conflict is also shown when Donald tries to use the restroom of the hall where the concert in Raleigh takes place. The owner stops him and suggests taking the restroom in the outside of the hall. It looks like a very small wooden box. However, Donald prefers to go back to his motel and use their facility that takes couples of minutes to go back finishes the concert. However, the owner implies that they do not mind waiting.

4.2. *Personality Development of Dr. Donald Shirley*

The personality development will be divided into three sections. Those are personality at the beginning, turning point, and the end. The relations between id, ego, and superego are provided as processes which results in the personality changes.

4.2.1. Personality at the Beginning

Donald is portrayed as a colored man with high ability in music. He lives in a fancy apartment with a throne for his place to sit. In the beginning of their journey, Donald often shows his idea towards Tony to be a better man. He believes that he is better than Tony in almost everything, especially manner. This is often shown by his pep talk in medium close up shot. In this part, Donald's ego is fully influenced by his superego. He does not tolerate everything that cross over the society value. He does not hesitate to tell Tony about every mistake he made.

He also believes that violence is not a proper way to solve problems. He mentions it while they are being arrested in Maryville Police Department. He asserts that Tony should not assault the officer for insulting him as colored people. It is not a proper way to do even to protect dignity.



Picture 4. Donald sits on his throne (00:14:54)

4.2.2. Turning Point

The main point to Donald's personality development is the influence of Tony himself. The time they shared during their journey is giving a new perspective to Donald through his superego. As superego is the unit of personality in charge of social value, it is not an exception for Tony's way of thinking to be slowly absorbed by him. As for evidence, when Donald mentions that he refuses to stay connected with his brother, Tony asserts that if it were him, he would be the one to take the first move. He believes that the world is full of people who are afraid to make the move, leaving themselves lonely. The next scene is shown in close up; intensifying his expression after the pep talk.

The next point is that he always there to aid him. There are two times counted where he helps Donald. The first time is in Louisville when Tony keeps him away from the thugs and in Macon where he bribes the police to let him go. In the later evidence, he complains Tony instead of thanking him. He asserts that the police are the guilty ones and it is not a

right way to bribe them. Tony seems to explode and tell him that he should have appreciated him.

When they arrive at Memphis, Tony encounters his friend, Dominic. They conceal their conversation in Italian. He questions why Tony works for a colored man and inviting him to the bar later that night assuming that he might give him a new job. However as expected from a man with higher class, Donald acknowledges their language. Their conversation seems to be a threat to him, given that Tony is the one who always aids him and closest to him in that time. He does not want him to be taken away from him at least for this journey.

The next scene shows Donald dropping a tear in front of a mirror. Apparently this makes a conflict between his id and superego. While his id demands him to keep Tony for he is the one he needs, he also feels guilty for not appreciating his company all this time. Later on that night, he waits Tony in front of his door, begging him not to take the job from his friend by offering him a raise. Tony refuses, telling him that he will not go anywhere for they already have a deal about the journey. After that, Donald feels sorry for he did not appreciate him. This is the starting point where he softens his manner towards Tony.

On their last concert in Birmingham, when Donald enters the restaurant before the concert begins, the staff stops him and implies that colored people are prohibited. Still he asserts that he is the one to entertain the people that night and there must be an exception for it. The owner comes, supports his staff and suggests Donald to have dinner in another restaurant specially provided for colored people near the place. However, Tony assaults him when the owner attempts to bribe him to handle the situation. Donald stops Tony and states that he would play for the concert if only Tony wants him too. Now he seems to acknowledge Tony's attempt in helping him. Later, Tony chooses to leave with Donald following him, leaving the concert unfinished.

4.2.3. Personality at the End

After leaving their last unfinished concert in Birmingham, they agree to have dinner in *Orange Bird*; the place where the owner of Birmingham hall mentioned. There are full of colored people having dinner with blues music on the stage. Somehow, Tony asks him to play the piano while the band is off the stage. This is where Donald finally acknowledges him as a friend rather than a driver. He grants his request. At the beginning of the story, Donald asserts Tony to check the brand of piano before every concert. It has to be *Steinway*. In *Orange Bird*, he is willingly plays the piano for the sake of his friend's request without checking the brand. He even plays the piano with smile on his face. This scene is taken in medium shot; this cinematic technique is used to attract the viewer's attention to his move and expression of happiness in playing the piano.

On their way home, Tony refuses to drive as he is too sleepy. The next scene is taken in medium close up; showing Donald's expression towards his statement. He decided to drive remembering that Tony used to ask him to get home for Christmas night. Upon their arrival in his home, Donald wakes him up. Tony invites him, yet he refuses and takes

the car by himself. This intensifies the difference with the character at the beginning while he will not even take his belongings from the baggage himself.

Upon the arrival at his apartment, Donald decides to sit on the usual chair instead of his throne. The first scene is taken in long shot with him sitting on the usual chair with fancy things; this cinematic technique is used to attract the viewer's attention into the state of him being lonely with his surroundings. Then he looks at his throne and remember Tony's pep talk about the first move to communicate. He then decides to come to his house and get a warm welcome from the family.



Picture 5. Donald's earlier expression in playing (01:12:39)



Picture 6. Donald's last expression in playing (01:50:18)



Picture 6. Donald sits in usual chair (01:58:41)



Picture 7. Donald comes to Tony's house (02:01:42)

5. CONCLUSION

Green Book is a fascinating movie directed by Peter Farrelly. It displays the relationship between Tony Vallelonga and Dr. Donald Shirley. The doctor who establishes concerts in Deep South has no choice but to recruit Tony as his driver. The earlier existence of Tony in his life is rather a difficult time. Nevertheless, the barrier created between Tony and his idealist temperament seems to shatter eventually. Donald's personality changes as time flows. He finally acknowledges Tony as a friend rather than his driver, letting Tony to drink with him at night, and appreciates his help during the concert. For the best impact of Donald's personality, he cancels the last concert and spends a quality time with Tony in Orange's Bird, a café originally built for colored-people. It is his first time playing piano with his people with a bright smile on his face. Later, he also makes his first move in staying connect with people. He comes to Tony's apartment and celebrates Christmas day.

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