

**THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE MAIN CHARACTER OF THE FILM
*GREEN BOOK***

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Abstract: Being an African-American in the United States of America is challenging due to the persistent racism in that country. One of the worst effects of racism is losing someone's identity. Despite their best efforts, African Americans still struggle to fit into American culture and find acceptance. This study was conducted because of this issue. This research is entitled "The Cultural Identity Analysis of the Main Character "Don Shirley" in the film *Green Book*. This study aims to learn more about Don Shirley's struggles with cultural identity and his eventual identity negotiation. This descriptive qualitative research was conducted using Stuart Hall's theory of identity. This research reveals that Don Shirley initially adopts the identity of a white-cultured guy due to the influence of racism on his thoughts, words, and actions. However, this does not guarantee his acceptance by society. Therefore, he finally embraces himself and negotiates his African-American identity.

Keywords: *African-American, cultural identity, negotiation of identity, racism*

INTRODUCTION

Living in America is difficult for an African-American. Some people who belong to this dominating culture occasionally view other civilizations as inferior. This may also lead to discriminatory or even racist behavior against a socially inferior group. This is often experienced by African Americans living in America. Banaji et al. (2021) conclude that as a result of white people not being able to appreciate differences and segregating black people in America, many black people are disadvantaged and do not have good life opportunities in the fields of education, health, and work. Racism issues like this often appear in films, one of which is *Green Book*.

Green Book shows the mutual friendship between Tony Vallelonga, also known as Tony Lip, an Italian immigrant and Dr. Donald Shirley, a great and talented Afro-American pianist Tony works for. The way Americans treat Don Shirley in the film "Green Book" depicts a rare phenomenon related to his identity. He is glorified for his great and awesome musical performances on the stage, but once he gets out from the stage, he is no one but an Afro-American with dark skin and a bad African stereotype. He is treated without any humanity at all. On the other hand, he also seems weird in the eye of almost all Afro-Americans, because he does not look like a "slave" at all, while most Afro-Americans are stereotyped as slaves at that time. He loses his identity, and he tries so hard to show his identity as American so that he can be accepted, yet, his physical appearance shows his identity as a "rich and strange" Afro-American so he gets rejection as well, despite his magnificent ability.

The film *Green Book* is an interesting research object because of the cultural identity issues of Don Shirley. As a rich and talented man, Don Shirley was supposed to be a secure and happy man as he might not have the bad stereotype of African-Americans within him. Yet, the Americans do not see him the same way. Unexpectedly, he is still a man with all the African-American stereotypes in the eye of Americans. He seems to hardly negotiate with his real identity and even wants to prove his identity as American. This research was conducted to also find out how Don Shirley finally learns to embrace his true identity.

There are some previous studies related to this research. Wijaya and Mutiah (2019) use the theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, and they discovered that the fight against racism appears in three forms. First, fighting against racism individually, second, institutionally, and third, personally. Another study on the film *Green Book* is conducted by Nurwahyuni and Samelia (2021) that used the discourse theory of van Dijk. The writers find out that there are three types of discrimination and stereotypes in this movie. Next, Hidayat (2021) researches identity and food in Adichie's *Americanah* using the theory of Kwame Anthony Appiah. He finds out that the root of Ifemelu's identity is seen through both the negotiation of his cosmopolitanism identity and also his local identity as Nigerian, as he shows his partiality towards the local Nigerian culture, specifically Nigerian food. Another research on the negotiation of identity is conducted by Paramita et al. (2022). They use Identity Negotiation Theory by Stella Ting-Toomey. They find

out that the characters of Bollywood movies need to negotiate their identity to fit in with society. Furthermore, Afifulloh (2022) also researched identity in Netflix cinema. He argues that identity is constructed especially in terms of gender. He concludes how Netflix cinema shows gender equality that inspires non-America films such as Indonesian and Indian films. No previous study has discussed or found identity problems experienced by African Americans due to discrimination by white people in the film *Green Book*. Therefore, unlike the aforementioned studies, this study will endeavor to make further elaboration on how Don Shirley, the main character of the film *Green Book*, finally negotiates and accepts his identity as African American.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Character and Characterization

Abrams & Harpham (2015) state that characters are the representation of a narrative performance, which contains moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities through how they deliver the conversation uniquely or through their action. Besides character, there is also characterization. Baldick (2015) mentions that characterization represents the persons in literary works. Thamrin & Wargika (2013) show that characters were built based on what the character did and said, what the other characters said about him, and how their appearance and milieu were.

Cultural Identity

The identity issue is one of the crucial issue that is happening around us, in terms of cultural studies. Most of the time, identity is not only about someone's choice, but also includes our response toward something outside us (Vignoles, 2018). Identity itself is a concept of understanding oneself. Someone must understand their identity. Yet, to know "who they are" now has become such a complex and problematic issue. Cerezo et al. (2020) state that when we talk about identity, it will always relate to the problems of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and also religion. Having social identity based on race, ethnicity, or gender, such as blacks or whites, men and women, et cetera, is not as simple as carrying out a specific role in accordance to the identity that they have, but will always be affected by the assessment given from the society (Vignoles, 2018).

The issue of identity is contractually mentioned by Stuart Hall in Yang et al. (2021) as he divided identity into essentialists and nonessentialists. The thought of

essentialists itself is hard to be constructed, and that is why he rejects the concept of essentialists, as identity is not a fixed essence. When someone searching for their identity does not find what they perceive to be a fixed essence, they may become stuck in an issue with their cultural identity. Additionally, someone may experience a deeper identity crisis as a result of the rapid changes in technology and the barriers of culture, socioeconomic status, and gender that are beginning to fall apart. The crisis identity happens because a person sometimes has difficulty finding their position in this world which has different cultures (Al-hoodie et al., 2021; Manurung et al., 2022).

Talking about identity means talking about the matter of belonging, commonness with people, and the difference between someone and others. Stuart Hall's study of cultural identity states that the concept of identity means it is related to the future as well as the past, and it is not something that already exists, or place, time, history, and culture which are transcended (Yang et al., 2021). Identity is not only the matter of "being", but it also talks about the process of "becoming" that happens continuously regarding the social condition, economy, et cetera. Furthermore, Hall's study states that identity is also affected by consciousness and also social interaction (Yang et al., 2021). In this case, it is the reason why identity has a strong relation regarding how one treats others as well as how others treat one in return.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method to discover the film *Green Book's* social and cultural phenomena. Cresswell (2016) mentions that qualitative research methods can be used to analyze social issues such as gender, class, and race. Myers (2019) mentions that qualitative research methodologies were developed in the social sciences so that researchers may conduct studies into social and cultural phenomena. Apuke (2017) states that qualitative research is used to gain knowledge and the ability to interpret social interactions.

In this qualitative research, the researchers did an observation as the technique of collecting data. The researchers' observations of Don Shirley's final acceptance of his identity and negotiation with his condition served as the research's instrument. As a first step, the researchers attentively studied the film while taking meticulous note of Don Shirley's related actions, dialogue, and scenes for unit analysis. Second, the researchers

used a perspective on cultural identification to find the data. Thirdly, the researchers collected and classified the data which then were analyzed using the identity theory of Stuart Hall in Yang et al. (2021). Lastly, the researchers concluded from the data collected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Researchers have found references to Don Shirley's identity crisis in numerous moments of the *Green Book* movie, which chronicles Don Shirley's life as an African American. These references relate to racial, gastronomic, musical, and linguistic concerns. This part presents the findings, including the relationship between Don Shirley's identification and race, the foods he consumes, the music he listens to, the language he uses, and how his identity is negotiated.

Race and Identity

There are some relations of how someone's racist action could affect someone's crisis of identity (Perry et al., 2016). First, racism affects a person's identity when it results in insulting name-calling, in this example, a black person. This is demonstrated by Don Shirley, whose identity is impacted by the disparaging nickname given to him.

The film shows Tony Lip meets some of his Italian friends and they call Don Shirley "eggplants" (a slang and offensive language which is mainly used by Italian-Americans when calling a black person, associated with the eggplants' nearly black color). They converse in Italian as they believe Don Shirley cannot understand what they are saying. Ironically, Don Shirley is aware of the derogatory slur "eggplants" that Lip's pals are using to refer to him, as evidenced by the fact that he can understand Tony Lip when he eventually speaks to him in Italian. Although the movie shows Shirley as an African-American, it does not show the stereotype of African-Americans as temperamental people like in other literary works such as Martin's *Property*. Rasiah (2016) states that Martin's *Property* represents the stereotype of African-Americans as criminal and violent people. However, *Green Book* shows that Don Shirley chooses to negotiate with Tony Lip elegantly, and he offers Lip a pay raise as well. It happens because he is also afraid that Tony Lip chooses to leave him and work with Lip's friend instead.

It can be seen from the dialog below, that although Don Shirley seems undisturbed when he is being called insulting names, he finally confesses that he has endured people's rejection and insulting names in his entire life, which later on finally leads him to his crisis of identity.

Don Shirley: Please. You hit him because of what he called you. I've had to endure that kind of talk my entire life, you should be able to take it for at least one night.

Tony Lip: What, I can't get mad when he says that stuff 'cause I'm not black? Christ, I'm blacker than you are.

Don Shirley: Excuse me?

Tony Lip: You don't know shit about your people! What they eat, how they talk, how they live--you don't even know who Lil' Richard is! (Farrelly, 2018, 1:31:25-1:31:44)

The word "endure" shows implicitly that he feels hurt being called those names, but instead of getting angry and fighting back with violence, he responds wisely just like the white people. Tony Lip also makes the identity crisis of Don Shirley clearer, when he honestly tells Don Shirley that he is different from black people in general, starting from what and how he eats, how he talks, and how he lives. Don Shirley has adopted the white culture so he can be accepted, yet, it will never get rid of the fact that he is "black".

The Film shows when Tony Lip meets Oleg in the restaurant, and he explains that Don Shirley is in his "dressing room". Sadly, the dressing room does not look like a proper dressing room at all. Instead, it is worse and seems more like a broom closet. However, Don Shirley does not complain and he remains silent. He does not fight back, although Taylor et al. (2019) mention that the stereotype of almost all African men solves problems with violence. Furthermore, Oleg explains to Tony Lip why Don Shirley accepts people's bad treatment towards him and does not fight back; because no matter how genius someone is, courage is needed to make a change in society, not violence.

Jim Crow Laws' examples of segregation undoubtedly had an impact on Don Shirley's identity as well as those of black people. The film shows after Don Shirley gets drunk and beaten in the bar, Tony Lip comes to save him. Don Shirley gets beaten there because he entered the white people's bar there, which was against the law at the time. He genuinely is aware that he is not permitted to enter the pub, but he yet persists in trying in hope that by dressing "differently" from the regular blacks, he will be welcomed there. Even though he dressed formally, he still gets horrible treatment. He acts the reverse of

what would be expected of a black person who gets upset easily. He responds gracefully like the white; he explains to them nicely of his presence there and shows no retaliation at all when he is battered. Ironically, by asking Tony Lip if the situation in the bar in Lip's neighborhood would be the same or not, it implies that Don Shirley is aware of his black identity and that he will not be accepted in any non-black bars, regardless of how hard he tries to adapt to the whites' culture through how formally he dresses or behaves.

The movie also depicts the moment Don Shirley asks Morgan for the restroom and, to his surprise, he leads Don Shirley to a restroom outside the hall, in the middle of the pines. Jim Crow Law, which established segregation at the time, also required that toilets for whites and blacks be separated. This issue somewhat affects Don Shirley's identity as well. In the hopes that he won't be treated differently from white people just because he is black, he imitates everything they do. However, he is still not permitted to utilize the same facilities as white people. Amazingly, he does not get angered when he is treated like this. Instead, he refuses politely and finally chooses to use the toilet in his hotel before he goes back here to perform.

The next findings, the movie depicts Graham Kindell and his crew forbidding Don Shirley from dining in the main restaurant due to Jim Crow Law-related restrictions on who was allowed to eat there. Don Shirley, however, is unwilling to accept the explanation and will only eat inside the restaurant. Don Shirley knows that he will not be accepted to eat there due to the segregation, yet he acts elegantly like the white people by negotiating to Kindell as he is the main star who will entertain his guests, so he is supposed to be allowed to eat there, too. When Don Shirley tells Kindell he does not understand why he cannot eat there, it implies the confusion about his identity of why people still look down on him just because he is black, although he has greatly adapted to the whites' culture and even be the main star of the performance that night.

After a long argument, Kindell still prohibits Don Shirley from eating in the whites' restaurant and he offers Don Shirley to eat in the "storage" room instead. Don Shirley refuses to eat in the storage room, and instead of solving the problems with violence, the argument is closed elegantly by Don Shirley when he gives Kindell choice to let him eat in the restaurant or not to perform and entertain Kindell's guests.

Food and Identity

This research argued that the kind of food that someone consumes and how they eat can also show someone's identity. Hidayat (2021) states that someone's identity can be seen in what they eat and how they eat. The film shows another implicit sign from Don Shirley that he lives higher social class compared to fellow immigrants is also the way he eats. Most lower-class workers get used to eating with their hands so they can also eat faster. However, Don Shirley does not get used to it, which is proven from the moment he asks about "how to eat without utensils". Implicitly, it means he usually eats with the complete table manner, or at least, using plates and utensils. This is why he refuses to eat the fried chicken as he feels weird eating directly using his hands. The film also shows Tony Lip's identity as an immigrant or low-class worker, because he gets used to eating with his hands, compared to Don Shirley who is unable to do that.

In the movie, Morgan Anderson as the host serves fried chicken and other dishes that are also commonly referred to as "black people's food," including collard greens, grit, etc. During the 1960s, fried chicken becomes the "symbol" of black people's food because they need much energy to do slavery work, yet, it should be cheap in price. A bit different from the fried chicken that Tony Lip bought in a bucket before, this time, the homemade fried chicken and other African food are served by Morgan Anderson in a serving hood. Morgan Anderson serves the food in the serving hood to make it seem classier. Luckily, Don Shirley does not feel awkward anymore eating fried chicken, as he already ate it before, when Tony Lip pushes him to try some in the car. It is proven in the moment Shirley smiles at Lip when he sees the food. Don Shirley seems to embrace his true identity as black better this time.

Music and Identity

This research also finds that music shows someone's identity. Indeed, someone's identity can be constructed from the music they play (Potter, 2019). It can be argued that in the film, in the middle of Shirley and Lip's conversation in the car, suddenly a song sung by an African-American named Aretha Franklin was played. Ironically, Don Shirley tells Tony Lip that he does not know all of those songs. He thinks it sounds weird because Don Shirley as a fellow African-American, does not even know the songs that are sung by "his people", the fellow African-Americans, which almost all black people like to listen to. Don Shirley seems a little bit annoyed because of Tony Lip's statement that

generalized all black people. He thinks that just because almost all blacks listen to the black singer's song, does not mean he also has to.

Don Shirley a black people supposed to be much more familiar with blues music compared to classical music. During the era of 1960s, classical music is strongly known as “the music of high-class, white people”. It can be implied that Don Shirley clearly understands the fact that classical music just belongs to the whites in that era. Meanwhile, he wants to break the stereotype about this fact, and he wants to prove that classical music can also be played by a black person like him. He even refuses the request of the recording company to pursue a career in popular music, because he wants to prove that black people can also play classical music just like whites and he can be accepted by them.

Language and Identity

Language can show someone's culture or where they are from (Lie et al., 2018). Besides that, someone's language ability can also imply their social status. Usually, someone who speaks more languages probably has higher social status, compared to one who speaks only their native language. Particularly, in the era around the 1960s, when access to learning a lot of languages becomes a privilege that not everyone can have. Almost all African Americans spoke slang English with poor grammar in that era. Don Shirley assists Tony Lip as he writes a love letter to his wife. Additionally, Don Shirley instructs him on how to write in a poetic and grammatically accurate manner as well—two things that are typically not considered to be characteristics of an African-American's language. Don Shirley's use of the white people's way of life can be inferred from his exquisite language use and the music he listens to as well as the foods he consumes.

The film shows another moment of Don Shirley helping Tony Lip to write a love letter to Dolores. There is no doubt about Don Shirley's language skills, as he can arrange words beautifully and poetically. He truly shows a different image compared to black people in general. Through his study at university and his outstanding language skill, it can be implied that Don Shirley is very well-educated, while most black people in that era is nearly impossible to study at a university and have a good way of life like him. This is also one of the forms of Don Shirley's adaptation to the whites' culture. Sadly, the politeness and good language skill Don Shirley shows to everyone still does not make him accepted by the whites as well.

Finally, the film shows the moment when Don Shirley greets Dolores with a little touch of Italian language, to make them feel more connected because again, it is easier for someone to feel more connected to others if they speak in the same language. Dolores, who knows that Tony Lip has low language skills, thanks Don Shirley directly for helping Lip to write the letters.

Negotiation of Identity

Although Don Shirley faces a lot of cultural identity issues, the movie shows how he eventually succeeds in negotiating his true identity. Nindyasmara (2016) states that identity negotiation can occur in a person due to several factors such as a sense of the belonging and socio-cultural background. The negotiation process of Don Shirley can be seen clearly; starting from trying to eat the “black people” food, playing blues music, and also to visits fellow immigrants’ houses, or in this case, Tony Lip’s house.

The movie demonstrates how Don Shirley always behaves tastefully and effectively controls his emotions because he wants to maintain his dignity. Don Shirley is fully aware that using violence to combat injustice is completely pointless. He then advises Tony Lip to act with dignity since it will always triumph. This clearly shows the stereotype of “high-class” whites at that time, who never fight with violence and use communication and dignity instead to solve all problems. Ironically, although Don Shirley always shows his dignity towards injustice, he still experiences it because he is black. Having dignity does not prevent him from the injustice by society. This finally leads him to his identity crisis, too.

The film shows the climax moments of Don Shirley’s confusion about his identity.

Don Shirley: Yes, I live in a castle, Tony! Alone. And rich white people let me play piano for them because it makes them feel cultured. But as soon as I step off that stage, I go right back to being just another nigger to them—because that is their true culture. And I suffer that slight alone because I’m not accepted by my people. After all, I’m not like them either! So, if I’m not black enough, and I’m not white enough, and I’m not man enough, then tell me what am I?! (Farrelly, 2018, 1:32:43-1:33:11)

Don Shirley initially tries to position himself in the same category as white people, starting from the clothes he wears, the food he consumes, the music he plays, and many other things. He also understands that he is "different" from other black folks. He never goes through the experiences of being a slave, being illiterate, dressing poorly, eating

fried chicken (which was considered to be the food of black people at the time), or listening to or playing the blues music that practically all black people enjoy. He felt that he is neither white nor black, thus he was unsure about his identity.

The film shows the negotiation of Don Shirley's identity. The first negotiation process of Don Shirley is when he never eats African-American food until he is finally willing to try it. Although he refuses the fried chicken from Tony Lip at first, he finally takes it and tries it. The way he holds the chicken, also clearly shows that he never eats using his hand before. However, his facial expression shows that he enjoys fried chicken pretty well. A well-educated man like Don Shirley never litters, but this time, he seems to be less strict by following Tony Lip and throwing the chicken's bones to the road.

Next, the film shows Don Shirley, a rich man who gets used to the whites' cultures and always plays classical music in churches and luxurious halls, finally learns to negotiate his identity by entering the "lower-class" African-American bar. Everyone in the bar naturally takes notice of him because it is such a novel sight for them to witness an African-American man in a nice, immaculate tuxedo with an Italian assistant. Even though he is unsure of whether he will be welcomed there or not, he nevertheless musters the courage to enter.

The film also shows Don Shirley's fear of being unaccepted by black people disappears once he plays music at the Orange Bird bar. Although he plays the most difficult classical music at first, as a musical genius, he can unbelievably follow the tune of Little Richard's song that he heard only once and makes all the black people enjoy the next blues music he plays. Don Shirley, who was once a classical music player, finally negotiates his identity and adapts to the music culture of black people as well. When he finished playing Little Richard's song, he feels more connected with his fellow black people because they enjoy the music.

It can be seen in the film how Don Shirley has finally adapted to the black music genre and he successfully negotiates his identity to the blacks when he confesses that he has a good time playing music in the Orange Bird bar. He feels deep happiness and suddenly, all the gap that existed between him and "his people" has finally crumbled down, and he feels deep acceptance from the black people until he jokes that he will play in the black people's bar for free once a month.

The negotiation of Don Shirley's identity is also seen when he visits Tony Lip's house. He was unsure to visit Lip's house, so at first, he refuses to come in and decides to go home directly after their long trip. But, not so long after that, he finally drives to Lip's house. He overcomes his fear of rejection and he braves himself to go there.

Finally, the turning point of Don Shirley's journey that shows how he negotiates his identity in the film can be seen when Tony Lip welcomes Don Shirley warmly and happily to his house. He proudly introduces Don Shirley to his family, and all of his big family are also surprised by the change within him. Although they are stunned and frozen for a moment, Johnny, one of Lip's family, quickly greets Don Shirley and asks them to give a seat and a plate for him. On the other side, Don Shirley, the one who was afraid of rejection and always socializes with high-class people, is also now willing to negotiate his identity and humble himself by socializing with Tony Lip, who is known as an immigrant and lower-class person. This is how Don Shirley finally embraces his true identity as a black immigrant.

Discussion

From all of the findings above, it can be argued that there are several aspects of cultural identity issues in the film *Green Book*, especially in the character of Don Shirley. First, it has demonstrated how being called derogatory nicknames can cause someone to lose their identity. Whenever he is called derogatory names, Don Shirley always maintains a calm and elegant demeanor, just like white people. Ironically, regardless of his response, he will continue to be ridiculed for being black.

Secondly, it can be argued that segregation give some effects on African-American. Nensia (2020) explains that segregation of the Jim Crow Laws provides blacks fewer and more restricted rights than whites. Examples of segregation are the separation of public facilities such as restaurants, bars, hotels, and toilets, and even the usage of the road in limited hours as the blacks are prohibited to pass the road when the sun sets. The analysis above has proven the relation of segregation and how it impacts Don Shirley's identity as an African-American. Don Shirley is an African-American who integrates very well with white society and has established his white identity through how he dresses, speaks, and plays music. He thought that his adaptation could help him to be accepted by society and avoid separation, yet sadly, it does not. Even if he behaves, speaks, and thinks

like a white person, he is still a black person in the eyes of society, and he must be segregated from all public facilities.

Furthermore, the findings above show that food truly has an impact on showing someone's identity. What they eat, at many times, actually can imply where they are from or what their races are. In the film *Green Book*, it can be seen that fried chicken is the "identity" of black people. However, Don Shirley never consumes it since he has adopted the culture of whites so thoroughly. The fact that Don Shirley eats with utensils demonstrates that he is not accustomed to his African-American culture.

Ironically, how music more or less affects African identity can also be seen in the film *Green Book*. Potter (2019) states that music does have an impact to define someone's identity. It can be argued from the findings above how music led Don Shirley to his identity crisis. The first picture implicitly shows how Don Shirley has adopted the music style of white people, so hopefully, he can be accepted by the whites. On contrary, he feels it is hard to connect with fellow African-Americans because he never listens to African-American songs. It makes him feel he is neither white nor black. The film shows that although he already learns and plays white people's music all his life, he is still not accepted by the whites. They accept and respect Don Shirley's exceptional musical talent, but once he leaves the stage, they continue to view him as black and treat him similarly to how they treat black people in general. Music is one of the reasons why Don Shirley finally experiences a crisis about his identity.

Moreover, the film shows how someone's identity relates to the language they speak. Juanillo & Labastida-Martinez (2020) state that language is closely associated with someone's identity since a person's identity may be established through language use. The language skill of Don Shirley as an African-American impacted his identity. His politeness, well-structured and correct grammatical usage is a form of his adaptation to the whites' culture. Don Shirley's politeness should make it simpler for him to fit in among white folks. Sadly, regardless of how courteous he is, white people continue to view him as a "black person" and do not care about his politeness or dignity. They continue to treat him poorly, as they do all black people. This contributes to his identity crisis.

Finally, it can be concluded that one of the effects of racism is the African-American might lose their identity. It happens because of their feeling of inferiority.

When they feel that they are “different” from their society, they will try very hard to adapt to the white culture, yet, it is still uneasy for them to be accepted. Moreover, this unaccepted situation can change their perspective, and in the end, they considerably return to their identity as African-American. This negotiation of the identity of African-Americans shows from the character of Don Shirley, in the film, shows how the dominant culture of white people constructs the identity of African-Americans.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

There are two main focuses in this research: first, to find out the aspects of cultural identity issues that happened to Don Shirley, and second, to identify how Don Shirley finally negotiates with his identity. Based on the findings and discussions above, this research concludes that because of the strong racism that exists in America, the main character of the film *Green Book*, Don Shirley, finally decides to adapt his identity to the whites and he acts like he is a “white-cultured” man. In this film, it can be seen how Don Shirley adapts to the cultures of white people for almost his whole life; starting from the music he plays, the food he eats and the way he eats, and the way he speaks with correct grammar. Everything about him shows the cultures of the whites instead of the blacks. He avoids solving problems with violence, and he is also a genius man, while most black people are stereotyped as lazy and unintelligent at that time. Ironically, although his actions, thoughts, and words are mostly similar to the whites, he still does not get acceptance by the whites and they still insult him, treat him badly and make separation of public places’ usage. What makes it more complicated, is that he also does not feel accepted by the blacks. There is one moment when he feels lost and he thinks that he is neither white nor black; he loses his identity.

After going through a long journey and adaptation process, Don Shirley finally successfully negotiates his identity. First, he negotiates with the food he never wants to have in his whole life, the fried chicken, and he also learns to eat without utensils, which is strange for him. Second, he negotiates with the music he never plays before, the blues. Don Shirley, a well-known classical music player, never thoughts before that he will be able to play blues music until he plays it in the Orange Bird bar, the bar for black people. Even more interesting, he feels deep happiness after he plays and he looks happy as never

before. Last, Don Shirley, someone who once was afraid of rejection because he is “black”, finally shows his negotiation when he comes to Tony Lip’s house at the end of the story. It is probably uneasy to overcome his fear, but he still does it anyway, and he is gladly welcomed by Tony Lip and his family. In conclusion, Don Shirley’s negotiation with his identity as an African-American presents in this film.

This film implies that African-Americans can’t escape white culture's dominance. Whether they behave like white people or black people will never alter the fact that they are discriminated against by racists. It appears that white people dominate the construct of African-American identity.

Suggestions

The Biographical Approach is suggested for researchers interested in this film who wish to learn more about "Don Shirley," the film's primary character. This is because this movie is based on a true story. It is feasible to use this research as a fresh alternative topic in the field of literary theory and criticism.

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