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PERFECTIONISM IN "PERFECT SLUMBER PARTY," A SOUNDTRACK OF SOFIA THE FIRST: THE BIG SLEEPOVER

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Abstract

This study explores the representation established by "Perfect Slumber Party," a soundtrack of *Sofia the First: The Big Sleepover*, on perfectionism, acceptance, and social equity. The representation of soundtrack seen from a musical meaning perspective is conducted by analyzing the diverse and subjective perspectives of 'perfectionism' among the born royal, embodied by Princess Amber and her ally and the new princess, denoted by Princess Sofia. The finding shows that the music brings the debate between establishing and eliminating social classes based on the acceptance or rejection of non-perfection. Furthermore, the part of lyrics sung by Sofia reinforces her to be a bold and brave heroine delivering a positive message to the viewers.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the soundtrack is not only appreciated as the addition of the movie but also as the autonomous element that can build its independent meaning. Music in movies or television series enhances the emotional effects delivered to the audiences. The effects of watching a part of a movie or series (represented by moving pictures and thoughtfully selected songs) evoke sadness, happiness, and gloom. Bullerjahn & Güldenring (1994), based on their qualitative and quantitative analysis method entitled "An Empirical Investigation of Effects of Film Music Using Qualitative Content Analysis," conclude that music in the film polarizes the emotive atmosphere and affects the comprehension of the plot. Music has an impactful consequence in establishing a complete movie since it is likely to be dull and flat without it.

Disney has a long history of employing musical elements in its movies and series. Horn (2007) notes that Walt Disney, in 1928, brought the first cartoon talkie (a movie with soundtrack) stared Mickey Mouse called Steamboat Willie, which had blended music, sound effects, image, and dialogue. Since that production, every movie or series by Disney has always been accompanied by remarkable tailored music. Hischak and Robinson (2009), in their book The Disney Song Encyclopedia, state that Disney had profound respect for the musical power in storytelling, and some of Disney's early animated endeavors were articulated mostly by song. Snow White and Seven Dwarfs (1937) and Cinderella (1950) were the two earliest Disney Princess movies complemented by songs. The songs were famous and attractive. Successively, Disney princess movies have always been renowned for the songs reinforced the storytelling. Today, the measurement of the movie soundtrack's fame is conducted by checking the sum of viewers of the movie soundtrack video uploaded on Youtube. In 2013, Frozen was released to the cinema and attained commercial success. Such success was followed by the fame of its soundtracks. "Let it Go," one of the Frozen soundtracks, has obtained 2.2 billion views on the Disney UK YouTube channel and 716 million views on Walt Disney Animation Studios YouTube channel on November 15th, 2020. "A Whole New World," a soundtrack from another Disney movie, Aladdin, has been watched by 79 million viewers on the Disney Music Vevo channel, and 205 million viewers have viewed that same song sung by Zayn malik and Zhavia on November 15th, 2020. Besides, "Reflection," a soundtrack of Mulan (1998), "I See the Light" from Tangled (2010), "Colors of the Wind" from Pocahontas (1995), "How Far I'll Go" from Moana (2016), and other Disney's soundtracks are famous all over the world.

Disney uses music as the signature not only for movie production but also for TV series. Music shows the uniqueness and charms of a motion picture. Hischak notes the rise of television in the 1950s became a new venue for Disney studios as they developed the music

into a standard requirement of the emerging art form. *Disneyland* and *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse* were two of Disney television's earliest programs (2009). Furthermore, hundreds of Disney songs have deep-rooted on viewers' collective minds through the accessibility and affordability of television entertainment (Hischak, 2009). Nowadays, Disney Junior, one of the Disney channel series owned by The Walt Disney Company, broadcasts popular programs such as *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, Elena of Avalor, Fancy Nancy, Doc Mcstuffin, and Sofia the First.* Those programs are accompanied by selected music to strengthen the aesthetic and commercial ideals of the program. This research specifically reviews music from *Sofia the First* the series.

Music from *Sofia the First*, a CGI animated series created by Disney Television Animation, is a suitable object to be analyzed because it repeatedly employs songs that represent a definite idea conveyed by every episode. The series had been aired from 2012 to 2018. Sofia is a little girl living happily in a village that 'suddenly' turns into a princess after her mother marries King Roland II. Sofia's sudden transformation as a princess leads to numerous adaptation processes and adventure series involving Disney's favorite theme, good versus evil, and the importance of a family. Like other typical Disney princesses, Sofia, accompanied by Clover, her best animal friend/rabbit, becomes her favorite children's heroine. Reading such description, *Sofia the First* matches typical Disney princess, as stated by Azmi et al. (2018, p. 687):

Disney princess movies have their signature elements. The movies usually have nice soundtracks, the characters are accompanied by cute animals, and the main theme is good versus bad...contain strong messages about the importance of family relationship. This theme is suitable for its target audience, who are young children who most probably will instill the positive messages when they watch the movies repeatedly.

Azmi's statement supports the importance of soundtracks as part of Disney production, and music even becomes their distinctive values. Audiences watch Disney production for the beauty of picture and story and entertain their ears, as Hischak mentions that the tremendous success and development of the Disney song experience have become presented to every man, woman, and child (2009).

In every episode, selected songs are used to empower specific issues delivered to the audience. "I am not Ready to be a Princess" and "True Sisters" are songs to highlight an episode entitled "Sofia the First: Once Upon a Princess." The songs are intended to show how Sofia adapts to her new role and task as a princess. "The Simple Life" in the episode "The Baker King" shows the dream of another life owned by King Roland II. "The Magic in the Music," which accompanies episode "The Princess Prodigy," empowers the story of musical geniuses.

Among numerous *Sofia the First* soundtracks, this research specifically chooses "Perfect Slumber Party" from "The Big Sleepover" episode. This soundtrack highlights the important issue related to social phenomenon and equality among classes, specifically about perfection, social equity, and acceptance.

Hence, this research is going to explore "Perfect Slumber Party," which emphasizes the dilemma encountered by Princess Sofia, Princess Amber, and their friends related to their differences. "Perfect Slumber Party" is sung by four animated princesses: Princess Sofia, Princess Amber, Princess Hildegard, and Princess Clio (yet Princess Amber dominates the song). This song tells about Princess Amber's willingness, supported by Princess Hildegard and Clio, to have an elegant princess sleepover. However, they are bothered by the fact that Sofia has invited two common girls, Jane and Ruby, from the village to join their supposedly royal slumber party. The "un-royal" behavior of the girl annoys the princesses. Initially, Sofia asks to give them a chance because they are fun as friends. However, the princesses initiate the term "fit in" to emphasize the upper class's certain standard. Sofia then convinces them that she will make Ruby and Jane "fit" the standard.

This research will explore the development of representation on "Perfect Slumber Party" by employing a mixture of popular culture and psychological approaches. Perfectionism and acceptance, as mentioned above, are the depiction brought by the music. Besides, those are supported by the demands of the balance of inputs and outputs of social equity for the princesses feel that Ruby and Jane have failed to contribute sufficiently while fully accepting the benefits of the fabulous princess party.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sofia the First as one of Disney Princesses

Disney princesses are well-known globally, representing beauty, elegance, magical elements, love, and dream. Azmi et al. (2016) categorize three main eras of Disney princesses based on gender portrayal. The first generation of Disney princesses contains three movies, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. Thus, the three princesses like Cinderella, Aurora, and Snow White, who are generally characterized as kind, submissive, and beautiful, belong to the first era. Those princesses rely more on male characters' appearance to be free from their problems. In the later generation, Disney princesses still have more similarities with the previous generation but develop in some ways. *Mulan* (1998), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and *Pocahontas* (1995) are

reinvented by Disney as the representatives of the second generation. England, Descartes, & Melissa (2011) quoted in Azmi et al. (2016), stating that the female heroine still preserves the stereotype of gender because they do not accomplish the last rescue at the end of the movie without the male heroes participation. Rapunzel, Tiana, Anna and Elsa, and Merida from *Tangled* (2010), *Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Frozen* (2013), and *Brave* (2012) are the third generation of Disney princesses. They are very independent, brave, adventurous, bold, and dedicated to pursuing their dream with the minimum help of men. Wilde (2014) supports this by declaring that today Princesses are given a repackaging with constructive connotations of courageousness, empathy, and faithfulness that young women can follow, giving instances of self.

Furthermore, Garabedian (2014) states that modern Disney princesses should be self-determined, fearless, and heroic compared to the past generation because the present-day viewers demand to look at the strong female leads who can stand together with their male counterparts. Hence, Disney boosts the awareness of egalitarianism between man and woman, as well as supports a universal approval of the notion that one is not known by in what way he/she is born. Still, they are appreciated because of their actions.

Seeing the previous fact described above, it is clear that *Sofia the First* belongs to Disney's third-generation princess. Although other princesses are presented in the form of movies (*Tangled* then developed into animation series, *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*) and *Sofia the First* is animated series, those are made by Disney represented the adventure of female heroine with their own distinctive obstacles and troubles. The characterization of Sofia as brave, independent, adventurous, kind, and with minimum help of male characters shows that Sofia belongs to third generation princess that is consciously made to fulfill the contemporary demand of showing the tough female heroine.

The princesses are also well-known for their influence on women as well as little girls. Guizerix (2013) states that Disney has a powerful marketing strategy that relies on the mother's nostalgia for Disney Princesses and their enthusiasm to instigate in her own daughters the identical Princess love, a trend known as "the power of [Disney's] legacy among mothers." According to Azmi et al. (2016), the animation of Disney Princess is specifically intended to match children's attentiveness in which the essential lessons are transported through thrilling songs and characters. *Sofia the First* is one of Disney princesses specifically intended for kids based on a) the age of heroine, Princess Sofia, and her friends are kids who are still attending school, b) Sofia's adventures are more suitable and related to childhood experience c) The conflicts are related to child development. Furthermore, Schildbach (2014, p. 1) states:

In particular, Disney has been presented with this challenge; as a cinema powerhouse with an audience primarily made up of children, there is a perception that Disney has a moral responsibility to present accurate and unbiased representations of all cultures.

Schildbach believes that Disney has an obligation toward its children's fans around the world. Delivering positive moral values that will be role models for the kids should be carried out entirely. Sofia the First becomes one of their tools to fulfill such obligation.

Music and Motion Picture

The relation between music and motion pictures has become an interesting subject to explore. The music showed in the movie is carefully selected to support the flow of the story. Bullerjahn & Güldenring (1994) quoted Pauli (1976, p. 104) on the three basic sets of the link between music and motion pictures: 1. Paraphrasing (paraphrasierung): the particular character of the song keeps in touch with the definite content of the image; the results are actually additive. 2. Polarization (polarisation): the precise character of the song changes the vague or undefined content of the image toward the character of the song. 3. Counterpoint (kontrapunktierung): the precise character of the song opposes the definite content of the picture; thus, the song transports irony or commentaries on the content of the image in another way. Based on this categorization, music is selected based on a certain goal, or specifically definite representation.

In addition to music as an object of cinematic representation, Goldmark, Kramer, and Leppert (2007, pp. 6-7) have created three categories of representation: a) Meaning (musical meaning). What is involved in this representation is not only "content" but also social positioning, the discursive construction of both subjects and objects, and the musical intertext embracing the effect of performance, tradition, allusion, citation, and history. b) Agency (musical agency). Representing music means making it the object of analysis, as well as identifying it as a component of a world and as an operating strength in the creation of that world, not only as an enhancement or attachment to such world. c) Identity (musical identity). Music in the film represents itself via internal difference, a split via its acoustic and symbolic value, elicited by the cinematic-imagistic-dramatic context.

Perfectionism, Acceptance, and Social Equity Theory

Perfectionism, acceptance, and social equity theory are important elements in supporting this research. Hewitt and Flett's model quoted by Lundh (2004) differentiates three dimensions of perfectionism in terms of the direction of perfectionism: perfectionistic demands towards oneself (self-oriented perfectionism), perfectionistic demands towards others (other-oriented perfectionism), and perceived perfectionistic demands from others towards oneself (socially prescribed perfectionism). Perfectionism is related to the degree of acceptance. Furthermore, Lundh (2004) defines acceptance into three categories; self-acceptance (accepting oneself as one is—unconditional self-acceptance), other-acceptance (a person's ability to admit others as they are), experiential acceptance (to accept/admit one's experiences (views, state of mind, etc.) and let them do what they to do, without suppressing or controlling their behavior). The link between perfectionism and acceptance establishes positive perfectionism, combining the acceptance of non-perfection and the aspiring perfection.

Perfectionism and acceptance will define the different values standard followed by a born princess, ordinary-turned-into princess, and common girl reflected in "Perfect Slumber Party." The root of such differences is in the calculation of what people give and what people get. That is a simple definition of equity theory. Furthermore, Hatfield et al. (2011) state that equity theory is related to a maximally profitable relationship when people accurately give and get what they deserve from their relationships- no more and no less. This definition is supported by Adam, quoted by Miner (2015), stating the equity theory is an exchange whereby the individual gives something and gets something in return. Inputs or investments are what people give in relation. In contrast, outputs are what people get. Inequity results in disappointment either in anger (under reward) or guilt (over reward).

DISCUSSION OF MAIN THEMES

This research seeks the representation building process and the aesthetic value-adding on one of *Sofia the First* soundtracks. The song's lyric contains the debate among princesses on the inputs and outputs of Ruby and Jane, who surprisingly annoy the princesses because of their perceived low standard behavior according to typical royal values. This discussion starts with the description of 'fit in' and perfectionism to define the initial different perspectives among them, and is followed by the portrayal of inputs and outputs as part of social equity to explore the root of the initial conflict, and in the end, describes acceptance and non-perfection to show how the princesses solve the conflict.

"Fit in" and Perfectionism

In the episode 'The Big Sleepover' from season 1, episode 2 of *Sofia the First*, Princess Amber and her step-sister, Princess Sofia, hold a royal slumber party that is not only any slumber party since this is the first slumber party since Sofia turned into a royal princess. Princess Amber invites Princess Hildegard and Princess Clio, the most popular princesses from their school, while Sofia invites Jane and Ruby, the village girls, Sofia's best friends since she has not turned into a princess. Amber is disappointed with Sofia's guests, so Sofia promises her that her friends are fun to be around. However, Sofia's friends fail to adjust the royal slumber party standard. The princesses, Amber and her friends, complain, and Sofia replies on their lyrical song "Perfect Slumber Party."

Based on the categorization made by Goldmark et al. (2007) in their book "Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema," musical meaning, musical agency, and musical identity construct the representation of film music. After understanding each definition, the first category, musical meaning, is the most suitable foundation for exploring "Perfect Slumber Party" rather than two other categories since this research focuses primarily on how music drives and forms, reveals and alters cinematic narratives. To find the representation of this song based on musical meaning is to represent what this song really characterizes based on its content and social positioning. Related to its content and social basics, the song brings diverse views on the royal sleepover standard. Amber and her ally believe in the 'high and elegant' standard of royal sleepover;

(Amber)
We do our hair, we have some tea
And when we sing it's Soft and
[Amber, Clio, and Hildegard]
Always on key
[Amber]
And by chance, if we should dance, we'd waltz elegantly
[Clio and Hildegard]
That's our perfect slumber party
(Perfect Slumber Party Lyrics, n.d.)

Amber, Hildegard, and Clio are born princesses who have lived their whole life under the principles and rules of the royalty. Wilde (2014) says the way in which Disney Princesses are packaged to expose ideals of what it means to be a princess, and thus a young lady in a westernized culture. For Princesses, related to western culture, do the hair, drink the tea, sing, and waltz should be carried out elegantly and sophistically to state their highest rank in the society and to prove their capability as a leader. Princess is a role model and leader of her

society who provides the example of being a graceful, charming, educated heroine. Attending the slumber party in a palace is not an exception in proving their standard.

Such royal slumber party standard is perfection in the perspective of born princesses. Perfect is defined by the lyric "at a perfect slumber party, everybody's gotta fit in." 'Fit in' is a distinctive term that emphasizes that others besides the princesses joining the royal event should follow the royal rules. "Snort," "squeal," and "running around with pinecones" done by Ruby and Jane are indeed not part of that standard. This term also builds a clear restriction that the royal slumber party only fits a particular group of girls while the commoner will do extra hard work to reach such a standard.

Hence, perfectionism by the emergence of the slogan "fit in" follows the second direction of perfectionism (other-oriented perfectionism) which perceived perfectionistic demands (of the Princesses) towards others (Ruby and Jane). A royal slumber party is a social setting and limitation that intended people should follow. As mentioned, the role taken by Princess Amber and her ally as the makers of demand refers to their insecurity because of unfulfilled perfection. The princesses' insecurity is triggered as 'fit in' used carelessly by Sofia. According to Amber and her ally, 'fit in' is supposed to be a boundary among classes so that people will sit in according to their social position. By inviting guests that socially lower than the princess and such guests behaving un-royally means the threat of class boundary. The clear differentiation among high, middle, and lower are no longer applied. However, Sofia, with her previous background as a common village girl, feels the need to argue that such ideal perfection does not need to be applied by singing: "At a perfect slumber party Why should we all act the same?" This attitude shows her understanding that boundary among classes is not needed. Also, the demand toward others to follow specific standards limits the uniqueness of relation.

Inputs versus Outputs

According to Adam, quoted by Miner (2015), social equity theory covers inputs and outputs elements that balance what people are giving and receiving from relationships. It is noted from the song that Princess Amber and her ally suspect Ruby and Jane, as commoners, do not contribute enough to the relationship. The inputs brought by them are smaller compared to outputs they received.

The slumber party is the form of relation in equity theory. Adam, quoted by Miner (2015), states that the inputs are education, intelligence, skill, social status, personal appearance, and possession of tools. While, outputs of attending the party are a status symbol, pay, fate uncertainty. Princess Hildegard and Princess Clio attend Enchancia palace riding a royal

carriage with the best attribute from head to toe; shining and appealing dress and the finest hairdo on top. They bow and greet the two princesses with a royal formal attitude and politeness. The two royal princesses act according to their princess setting. They act to fulfill the tradition of the perfect princess slumber party as mentioned in the lyric;

[Clio and Hildegard]
That's our perfect slumber party
[Amber]
And that's the way it's always been
(Perfect Slumber Party Lyrics, n.d.)

However, Ruby and Jane come to the palace by a humble carriage to transport things while wearing a simple commoner gown. They greet Sofia in a casual manner. Comparing the inputs carried by princesses, Ruby and Jane contribute lesser. They have lower education, royal social interaction skill, social status, personal appearance, even possession of tools in attending the slumber party. However, Amber and her ally believe that they receive the most outputs equal to other guests. The status symbol's output is the pride of attending a royal slumber party; pay is the benefits of enjoying the palace and its royal services; fate uncertainty is related to the future relationship between the host and guest of the party. Jane and Ruby enjoy the outputs by providing minimum output, which creates disappointment and eventually threatens the continuation of royal slumber party tradition.

And our patience is wearing thin.
They need to quit.
You must admit
(Perfect Slumber Party Lyrics, n.d.)

It is mentioned previously that Inequity of inputs and outputs results in disappointment either in anger (under reward) or guilt (over reward). Surprisingly, Jane and Ruby assumed to be "over reward," do not feel the guilt. The lacking of such emotion is because Ruby and Jane are unable to measure their inputs. They come as Sofia's guests and become happy associates with princesses in a royal setting. The above quotation shows that Ruby and Jane's presence with their ignorance toward royal slumber party protocol has threatened Princess Amber and her ally's comfort zone. The princesses are ready to throw them away to protect their territory and pride.

On the other hand, Princess Sofia has a different perception of Ruby and Jane's inputs and outputs. She sings;

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At a perfect slumber party
Why should we all act the same?
Cause at a perfect slumber party
Isn't fun the name of the game?
Why can't they bounce on every bed?
Or wear a dozen pinecones all over their head?

(Perfect Slumber Party Lyrics, n.d.)

Sofia is ready to give a different alternative; what if the inputs have other contents? Inputs may consist of fun, novelty, a little bit of rebel, and happiness. Another form option of inputs provided by Sofia activates the possibility that Ruby and Jane deserve to obtain the outputs. "Bounce on every bed," "wear a dozen pinecones all over the head," and "different act" that are so not princess, may open another door of fresh relationship in the slumber party; "Give their dance a single chance. It may be as fun as they said", the lyric sung by Sofia suggesting that by opening arms to welcome different inputs may increase the outputs.

Acceptance of non-Perfection

The soundtrack, as mentioned previously, covers the dialogue among princesses defining 'fit in.' Initially, Sofia tries to convince the other that Ruby and Jane have different qualities to join them. However, the other princesses refuse to negotiate, and finally, Sofia is ready to obey them by singing, 'I've gotta help 'em fit in.' Employing positive perfectionism on this soundtrack, as defined previously, by combining acceptance of non-perfection and aspiring perfection shows a surprising result, although the ending of this episode tells that the princesses are ready to have fun and accept Ruby and Jane's input in the party. However, the song has not reached such an agreement.

According to the princesses, except for Sofia, the lower inputs of Ruby and Jane are categorized as non-perfection. The failure to accomplished perfection hinders the development of 'acceptance.' Acceptance is also established by tolerance and lenience. Still, more importantly, it supports the efforts to obtain perfection or almost perfection. The failure to produce an effort and hard work to attain perfection is based on the doubt of princesses on the lyric; "(Hildegard) They're never gonna fit in" and "[Amber] At a perfect slumber party. They'll never fit in." Such lyrics reflect a strong rejection of Ruby and Jane's presence and suggests their leaving from the party. Furthermore, the elimination of Ruby and Jane means that output should only be received by the deserved and prospered guests and supports high-class existence. Thus, Amber and other princesses are unable to obtain the second type of acceptance, other-acceptance (a person's ability to admit others as they are), as mentioned previously by Lundh (2004).

In addition, Ruby and Jane have attained self-acceptance (unconditional self-acceptance), the first type of acceptance suggested by Lundh (2004), which defines their unmindful and ignorant attitudes toward royal slumber party standard. They show their true self as village girls and refuse to be princess-like. Although their attitude and appearance are the sources of conflict, they continue to become who they really are. It means self-acceptance sometimes is on the contrary with other-acceptance based on this song.

The acceptance of Sofia and her alternative definition of non-perfection is the counterpart of royal princesses' view on classes. It means Sofia has obtained the third type of acceptance, experiential acceptance (to accept/admit one's experiences (views, state of mind, etc.). Sofia believes people from different classes are able to associate and befriends in various class settings. The differences of class and background should not be a reason to limit the relation. Thus, what is brought by Ruby and Jane is not a threat for the high class but an offer to accept a new kind of relationship that breaks the classes' barrier.

CONCLUSION

"Perfect Slumber Party" is not merely an ornament for *Sofia the First:* "The Big Sleepover." This music provides a musical representation that not only supports the meaning of this episode but also is able to build its own meaning if it is separated from the story. The bargaining of perfection and acceptance delivered by the lyric illustrates the relativity of the established standards. A diverse definition of perfection as well as inputs and outputs of social equity among the born princesses, Amber and her ally, and the new princess, Sofia, are caused by their life experiences and environments.

Sofia has experienced both lives in a village and palace and socialized with people from both environments. Meanwhile, Amber and her ally have been living and experiencing the royal environment and royal treatment for their whole life. Sofia is benefited from her wider and various experiences, which establish her deep understanding of perfection. Sofia has given the second direction of perfectionism that demands certain values toward others' different approaches. Demanding certain perfection toward others should be followed by tolerance and understanding of the context. Those two attitudes will help the establishment of acceptance if non-perfection occurs.

Disney has a tendency to relay positive messages to its viewers, particularly children. Princess Sofia is characterized as the symbol of a brave, humble, and nice princess with a unique background (a common girl turning into a princess). The established background

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strengthens her position as someone who is able to embrace diversity. Based on the lyric's argument among princesses, Princess Sofia is the only princess defending Ruby and Jane, reflecting her bold and brave attitude to fight inequality of classes. She is also ready to make her friends 'fit in' the demand of royal standard. This is how Disney fulfills their obligation, as previously mentioned by Schildbach, to transport positive knowledge to its viewers and highlight their support toward equality. This finding also supports the concept established by Garabedian that people should be appreciated because of their actions, not because of their heredity and rank.

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