



**AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES AS REFLECTED IN THE
CHARACTER OF TWILIGHT SPARKLE IN JAYSON THIESSEN'S *MY
LITTLE PONY***

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
For S-1 Degree in American Cultural Studies
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
Diponegoro University

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that this final project entitled *American Cultural Values as Reflected in The Character of Twilight Sparkle in Jayson Thiessen's My Little Pony* was compiled by herself without taking any results from other researchers, whether S-1, S-2, S-3 and diploma degree of any university. The writer also ascertains that she did not take any material from publications or someone else's works except for the references which mentioned in bibliography

Semarang, 21st July 2019

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MOTTO

“I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.”

- *Psalm 121:1-2 NKJV*

This final project is dedicated to my beloved family,
and to everyone who supports and motivates me.

Thank you for your unconditional love.

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The writer realize that this project is still far from perfection. Therefore, the writer will be thankful if there is any constructive criticism and suggestion to make this project better. The writer hopes this project will be useful for the readers.

Semarang, 21st July 2019

Theresia Sitinjak

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Abstract

My Little Pony, directed by Jayson Thiessen, is a movie which reflects American cultural values. This project aims to discuss the American cultural values as reflected in the character of Twilight Sparkle in the movie. The writer analyses the three dimension of Roy D'Andrade's theory of American cultural values. The result of this project shows that Twilight Sparkle in *My Little Pony* movie has three values of the American cultural values, namely individualism, altruism, and industry. In individualism, this female character shows living in adventure, feeling sure about herself, and having time alone as the items. The second value, altruism, she shows finding meaning of life, having close friend, and working for society improvement as the items. The last value, industry, having high standards, being responsible, and being a leader is showed by Twilight Sparkle as the items. In addition, the writer finds the prominent value of all is altruism based on the evidences, the scenes, and the dialogues as proofs.

Keywords: American cultural values, Individualism, Altruism, Industry, Movie.

1. Introduction

Every nation has its own culture commonly formed by the aspects in the life of society. Tylor (1871) states that culture is the complex whole which includes customs, arts, beliefs, knowledge, morals, laws and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Since the culture can be defined in many things such as customs, beliefs, knowledge, morals, and any other capabilities, these things show that every culture has value. Value is concerning about how a person should treat others, how the way a person should work, how the correct relation between a person with societies, and so on (D'Andrade, 2008:4).

America produces many kind of cultural products such as movie, art, and song. Movies provide the objects and subjects by the point of view of many people, and for some people, movies can also bring their imagination to travel into the movie (Riley, 1998). *My Little Pony* movie is an animation musical fantasy movie directed by Jayson Thiessen (2017). The story of the movie is about a friendship between the main character, Twilight Sparkle, with her six friends in saving their hometown named Equestria. Gallafent (2017) states that every stage in the articulation of movie is built on and situated within commonplace elements. *My Little Pony* movie tells about Twilight Sparkle's journey in saving her hometown starts from the trouble that happened in the first Friendship Festival in Equestria that is caused by Tempest Shadow, a pony which is contacted by her superior, Storm King. Twilight Sparkle as a princess of Friendship needs to go to search the Queen of Hippo to make everything better. In the journey of Twilight Sparkle in this movie shows many cultural values. The writer is interested in analyzing the American cultural values based on the theory of Roy D'Andrade's book entitled *A study of Personal and Cultural Values* (2008) as reflected in the character Twilight Sparkle.

Before writing this study, the writer had looked for previous studies which discussed *My Little Pony* as an object. As the result, the writer found that Veale (2013), for example, studied about capital dialogue and community engagement – '*My Little Pony; Friendship is Magic*' understood as an alternate reality game. This study discusses about *My Little Pony* in

general since *My Little Pony* has a sequel short movie also. The discussion of American cultural values as reflected in *My Little Pony* movie makes this study different from other previous study.

The main focus of this research is to study the American cultural values as reflected in the character of Twilight Sparkle based on the theory by Roy D'Andrade in his book entitled *A Study of Personal and Cultural Values* (2008). The writer also analyses on how Twilight Sparkle shows American cultural values in *My Little Pony* movie and the most prominent values are showed by the character of Twilight Sparkle. According to Roy D'Andrade theory, every personality of person will give a relation to the cultural values of society (D'Andrade, 2008:4). It asserts that individualism, altruism, and industry is the dominant cultural values dimensions that are owned by American.

The aims of this project are to analyse American cultural values in the character of Twilight Sparkle in the *My Little Pony* movie based on Roy D'Andrade theory and to find how the character of Twilight Sparkle shows American cultural values in this movie. The evidences, the scenes, and the dialogues in the movie are used as a proof of American cultural values in the movie. In the end, the writer tries to find the prominent values in the character Twilight Sparkle.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Character

Character is a part of intrinsic elements that exists in a story. It is needed to identify and to analyse the American cultural values in *My Little Pony* movie. The character only terms of their function, therefore we can explain the character's behaviour without having recourse to motivational analysis (Paris, 1991). Margolin, in his book entitled *Characterisation in Narrative: Some Theoretical Prolegomena* (1983) explained that the characters are first and foremost elements of the constructed narrative world.

Foore and Perkins (1987:47) state that character is divided into two types which are major character and minor character based on the role that they play towards storyline of a literary work. Major character in fiction needs three-dimensional treatment; a conger of personality characters that more complex than a simple character emerges while minor character often handled two-dimensional treatment; it is striking and interesting but lack depth (Holman, 1936). Kennedy (1979:18) also explains further about major and minor character. He said that a major character is personality of a human that become familiar while in the opposite, a minor character is as a passive action by a character that arrives late upon the scene and then tries to piece together what happened in the story.

2.2 Theory of Personal and Cultural Values

According to Roy D'Andrade in his book entitled *A Study of Personal and Cultural Values* (2008:1) it states that value is important thing in every aspect of life. The individual personality relates to cultural values which is applied in society environment. He gives the perspective that value can be defined from many aspects such as amount and quantity, preference of something, the price of something, and the grade of something decently true.

D'Andrade (2008) justifies the theory of personal and cultural value in his research. He did a research about personal and cultural values in three different countries which are America, Japan, and Vietnam. He used a questioner to the three major groups of people from different culture. The questioner is spread towards each native of these countries, and it was translated the questioner into each language of the country. He also applied 58 clusters of value items in his questioner. These clusters are conceptually clear and well bounded. In supporting his research, he delineated there value dimensions which are individualism versus collectivism, altruism versus self-interest, and industry versus relaxation.

2.2.1 Individualism versus Collectivism

Based on D'Andrade's (2008) perspective, individualism is one of American cultural values. He says that individualism is a value based on concerning on personal behavior and

personal daily routine. D'Andrade (2008:36) states that "individualism means a value orientation is based on values concerning personal exploration, expressing oneself, and determining one own goals". Individualism is the expression of selfhood in pleasures—having loved, relaxing, having fun, having sex, and so on. Even individualism shows that someone is self-centered, it does not mean that this value loses another value like family or the tradition. It is still value family and tradition as the determiner of the future.

Individualism has the opposite which is collectivism. Collectivism is different from Individualism. D'Andrade (2008:37) describes that collectivism is the center on the positive evaluation of the enduring institutions and groups that make up society. It concerns about relation between people in group and prioritize the ties in the group for example family, community. As the opposite of individualism, collectivism is a value that refers to the placement of a high value to ties to others, the groups and the institutions that create these ties.

As the result of the research, individualism contains enjoying life, feeling sure about myself, sexual freedom, enjoying life, life of adventure, right to abortion, understand science, having time alone and resisting authority while the value items of collectivism such having a close-knit family, being sexual restrained, defending my country, having law, being respectful and polite and social order, etc (D'Andrade, 2008:40).

2.2.2 Altruism versus Self-Interest

According to D'Andrade (2008:38), altruism is an action of people toward other people to get a good relationship and to achieve some. Altruism gives the priority to do good thing to others first which known as good-to-others. The item values of altruism are living in harmony, being honest and genuine, respecting other's feeling, being able to adjust, avoiding war, controlling myself, finding meaning in life, treating people equality, having close friend, and working for society improvement.

In addition the item values of self-interest are being obedient, being careful, keeping fit, having social status, being like and belonging, and market competition. Self-interest is focused on what people love to do. People tend to do the things they love to satisfy themselves.

D'Andrade did the comparison between altruism and self-interest. The result of his research shows that the dominant value owned by American is the altruism rather than self-interest.

2.2.3 Industry versus Relaxation

Another dimension that D'Andrade (2008:48) explains in his book is industry versus relaxation. Both industry and relaxation try to show about the personal perception toward the criteria in searching for what they want and love in life. This dimensions used by D'Andrade to analyze the standard of human's life level in industrialized nation. As a value, industry is rated highly rather than relaxation. They tend to uphold the value aspects of industry. The industry versus relaxation dimension is a potential candidate for cultural universality (D'Andrade, 2008:48). The aspects of industry are pursuing knowledge, being persistent, having high standards, planning for the future, being responsible, being practical and realistic, working hard, and being a leader. D'Andrade (2008:52) also gives the aspects of relaxation are being detached, sleeping, drinking alcohol, watching movie, eating, enjoying comics, and etc.

D'Andrade (2008) asserts that the most dominant values of American are individualism, altruism, and industry. The three dimensions of cultural values in America are called American cultural values. The first dimension is individualism which has many value items such life of adventure, sexual freedom, enjoying life, having time alone, right to abortion, understand science, feeling sure about myself, and resisting authority. The second dimension is altruism which has many value items such finding meaning in life, being honest and genuine, being able to adjust, having close friend, treating people equality, controlling myself, avoiding war, respecting other's feeling, living in harmony in nature, and working for society improvement. The third dimension is industry which has many value items such pursuing knowledge, being persistent, working hard, being practical and realistic, having high standards, planning for the future, being responsible, and being a leader.

The writer chose some items of the values to discuss the American cultural values in *My Little Pony* movie. These values were chosen by the writer because all of these values are reflected by Twilight Sparkle's character. The writer uses life of adventure, feeling sure about

myself, and having time alone as the items from the first dimension, individualism. In the second dimension, the writer uses finding meaning in life, having close friend, and working for society improvement as the items to discuss altruism value. For the third dimension, it is interesting to discuss having high standards, being responsible, and being a leader items in industry value. In the last of discussion, the writer gives the most dominant American cultural values as reflected in the character of Twilight Sparkle.

3. Research Method

In this project, the writer uses two kinds of method of study. The first is library research method and the second is method of approach. Library research method is used to identify sources that the writer needs to get factual information or personal opinion as a part of library research (George, 2008:6). In library research method, the writer needs to get information from journals, books, articles, and so on. In method of approach the writer uses exponential approach to analyse the American cultural values as reflected in the character of Twilight Sparkle. Guerin (1992:197) states that exponential approach deals with the inclusiveness of the term suggest at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol and archetype. By using this approach, the writer analyzes the American cultural values of the main character in *My Little Pony*.

In order to analyse American cultural values, theory American cultural values by Roy D'Andrade in his book entitled *A Study of Personal and Cultural Values* (2008) is used to elaborate the American cultural values. D'Andrade (2008) says that kinds of American cultural values such individualism, altruism, and industry. These three values will be analysed by the writer in this research.

4. Discussion

4.1 Character

Twilight Sparkle is the main character of *My Little Pony*. Twilight is a princess of Friendship who should make a Friendship festival in her place named Equestria. Twilight Sparkle is the main character who has an identity to build the story. Another major character

in this movie are Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Rarity, Apple Jack, and Flutter Shy. They are Twilight Sparkle's best friends who help and accompany her from the very first story line until the end of the story. There is also Spike, a cute little dragon, as Twilight's assistant.

The minor characters that exist in this movie are Princess Luna, Princess Celestia, Princess Cadence, Skystar, Queen of Hippos, Capper and the Pirates. All of the characters already explained before are the protagonist characters. The minor and antagonist characters in this movie are Tempest Shadow, Storm King and his soldiers.

4.2 Theory of Personal and Cultural Values

4.2.1 Individualism

4.2.1.1 Life of Adventure

The first aspect of American cultural values that exist in *My Little Pony* movie based on D'Andrade (2008) theory is Individualism with life of adventure as the item. Twilight Sparkle is a pony who has adventures in her life. In the entire movie, it shows about many journeys that she should face such as the journey to find the Queen of Hippo because of the messy situation that Storm King made. As the princess, she knows that she is the only one princess that can save her country. In her journey to find the Queen of Hippo, she faces many things such as the time when she and her friends were in the desert to find a city, she is being so hard to herself. She also gives her friends spirit. This value can be seen in the appendix in data 1.

Another life of adventure that Twilight Sparkle has is when she is in the foreign city. She asks her friend to blend with another people there. She faces trouble in there, and Tempest Shadow is on the way to catch her. Even when she is arrived in the Mountain Aris, where Queen of Hippo lives, she faces another level of life. She found that the Queen of Hippos did not want to help her. It made Twilight Sparkle tried to steal the Pearl in Queen Hippo's place. In the movie (Thiessen, 01.23.46) she also fight with the Storm King. However she won and

brought back the magic power of the three princesses of Equestria. She saved the Equestria from Storm King and his people.

4.2.1.2 Feeling Sure about Myself

The second aspect of Individualism is feeling sure about myself. D' Andrade (2008:36) theory states that American people always have personal preferences that express themselves. American people tend to feel sure about the decision they made by themselves. They will never regret it even though the result is not like the expectation. Twilight Sparkle portrays this aspect very clearly in this movie. She shows that she believes in herself to make a festival of friendship in her country. She also believes that she can find the Queen of Hippo after the messy situation that Storm King has already made. It can be seen in the dialogue as the following

Twilight Sparkle : The queen..
Pinkie Pie : Yeah, the queen. Eh, what queen?
Twilight Sparkle : Celestia told Luna to find the queen of hippos. Luna can't, so I have to. (Thiessen, 00.18.31)

The dialogue above shows that Twilight Sparkle believes of her capability to find the queen of hippo. She decides to go to find the place of Queen of hippos even though she did not know where the queen of hippos live. She is an optimistic person. When she says "*I have to*" in the dialogue, there is a great belief in herself that she is capable of doing that thing. In addition, as can be seen in the appendix data 2, Twilight Sparkle made an expression how she is believe in herself. Also in the rest of the movie, she always thinks that in the journey of finding queen of hippos, she can do things well. Even she tries not to bring her friends in her journey, but her friends still want to accompany her to find the queen if hippos. In the movie (Thiessen, 00.45.42), Twilight makes a great idea unexpectedly when she and her best friends are in the trouble. She is feeling sure that she can save all of them with her idea.

4.2.1.3 Having Time Alone

The third item of Individualism is having time alone. In this movie, Twilight Sparkle had made a mistake that she had to go through time of being alone. In her time of being alone,

she thinks about herself, her friends, her country and her fault as can be seen in the appendix in data 3.

4.2.2 Altruism

4.2.2.1 Finding Meaning of Life

According to D'Andrade theory, one of American cultural values is altruism (D'Andrade, 2008:38). Finding meaning of life is a part of altruism. In this movie, Twilight Sparkle is shown as a princess who have a tough journey in saving her country. From the journey that she had, she is getting a meaning of life especially when she fights with Pinkie Pie and then she meets Tempest Shadow. She knows about the meaning of life. She is finding that she is wrong, and she needs to apologize to her friends. She knows that stealing the Pearls is not a good idea. She is finding that everything she had to do was wrong. It can be seen in the dialogue between Twilight Sparkle and Tempest Shadow as the following

Twilight Sparkle	: I'm so sorry you felt so alone.
Tempest Shadow	: I saw the truth. My friends abandoned me when times get tough. Looks like I'm not the only one. Fixed it, Princess. Friendship is failed you too.
Twilight Sparkle	: Friendship did not failed me. I failed the Friendship. (Thiessen, 01.08.16)

Based on the dialogue above, Twilight knows that she is wrong. She decides to fix everything and try to do her best. While in the other scene, she knows that even though she falls her friendship, the friends will be there with her always. As can be seen in the appendix data 4, Twilight Sparkle finds the meaning of life, the meaning of friendship.

4.2.2.2 Having Close Friend

As the princess of Friendship, Twilight Sparkle has close friends. They are five ponies, these are Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Apple Jack, Rarity, and Flutter Shy. There is also Spike as her assistant. Twilight Sparkle got many support from her friend. It can be seen in the dialogue as follows,

Pinkie Pie	: Twilight, look at me! This, would be the biggest celebration Equestria had ever seen. As the princess of friendship, you cannot fail! This day would define who you are. The pressure is intense, It's almost do my friends and all the ponies can't handle. Arghhhhh!!! But you have us. So stop worrying. (Thiessen, 00.07.40)
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When Pinkie Pie says to Twilight ‘But you have us, so stop worrying’ it can be concluded that Twilight has a close friend that will support her all the time. Even in the tough times, they do help and accompany Twilight Sparkle to find the queen of hippos. They do love each others. It can be seen in the appendix in data 5, 6, 7 and 8. All of the pictures that mentioned in appendix describe Twilight Sparkle has implemented a reflection of having a close friend in American cultural values.

4.2.2.3 Working for Society Improvement

One of altruism items is working for society improvement. This movie shows that Twilight Sparkle do a lot of things to bring the improvement of her society. Festival of Friendship is a really important event for her, it makes every pony around the world gather together. She also tries to make the best Festival of Friendship. It can be seen in the dialogue below,

Twilight Sparkle : Good morning all princesses, thank you all for seeing me. I have an idea that I think will make our friendship festival the most wonderful celebration of Equestria has ever seen.
Princess Luna : Yes Twilight, we are very excited. (Thiessen, 00.03.35)

After the dialogue above, Twilight Sparkle gives the explanation about the idea that she had to the princesses (Thiessen, 00.04.02). She seems to work hard for society improvement. She list all the things that the festival needs to be finished, she arranged how the festival going, she makes sure all the things such as food, decoration, and light goes well.

When Tempest Shadow comes to Equestria, she ruins everything. This becomes the problem which Twilight Sparkle has with five other ponies to save Equestria. Twilight Sparkle does work hard to save her country. She goes to find queen of hippos with all the risks. She fixes all the problem that Storm King made. She defeats the Storm King with her friends. All the things that Twilight Sparkle does is for the Equestria. It is for the improvement of Equestria.

4.2.3 Industry

4.2.3.1 Having High Standards

The last dimension of American cultural values is industry. This dimension is used by D'Andrade (2008) to analyze the standard of human's life level in industrialized nation. As an item from Industry, having high standards is a value that can be shown from the character of Twilight Sparkle. Twilight Sparkle is a princess of friendship who put high standards of herself. It can be seen in the very first story in the movie. Twilight Sparkle has already made a plan for the Festival of Friendship. She asks three other princesses to help her and to make her plan happen. Unfortunately, the other princesses do not want to help her. In the process of making festival of friendship happen, Twilight Sparkle is a princess who put high standards on it, which can be seen in the dialogue below,

Twilight Sparkle : Songbird Serenade's performance is not schedule to start until after you begin the sunset. Based on my perfect calculation, to get the very best lighting for the stage, Princess Celestia, I was hoping you could make sure the sun stays about 28 degrees to the south. And Princess Luna, if you can raise the moon 62 degrees to the north at the same time, it would reflect the sunlight on the other side and really shining the entire stage perfectly. And wait. There's more. Cadence, if you can use your crystal magic to created aurora about the stage, the sun and the moon would shine through it and create truly amazing light show. (Thiessen, 00.04.23)

From the dialogue above, Twilight Sparkle wants high standard in making a great friendship festival. She explains the plan very detail to the princesses. She mention how the sun and the moon should in the right place, and also the crystal magic of Cadence. It also can be seen in the appendix in data 9 how Twilight Sparkle explains the standards that she wants.

4.2.3.2 Being Responsible

The second item of industry is being responsible. Twilight Sparkle is shown being responsible toward her predicate as a princess of friendship. In making a decision to find queen of hippos as can be seen in the movie (Thiessen, 00.19.01) that if Luna cannot go to find the queen of hippo, the only person who will find it is Twilight Sparkle. As a princess of friendship, she also takes her responsibility to make the festival of friendship be the great festival ever.

Twilight Sparkle is a pony who will get any responsibilities that she can do. In the movie, Twilight Sparkle does her responsibility in taking care of her five best friends and also Spike, her assistant. Twilight Sparkle is also saving Pinkie Pie life when they are in the way to

go to the ship (Thiessen, 00.34.48 and Thiessen, 00.45.42). Another responsibility that she takes is saving Tempest Shadow's life even though Tempest Shadow is her enemy. She does it twice (Thiessen, 01.21.09 and Thiessen, 01.25.30). She is aware that to protect and to save everyone is her responsible. It concludes that Twilight Sparkle is being responsible and showing the American cultural values in industry dimension.

4.2.3.3 Being a Leader

As can be seen in the whole story, Twilight Sparkle is a princess whose responsibility in making Festival of Friendship. She is also a leader to her friends and all ponies. In making festival of friendship, she is a leader that commands her friends and other ponies to do the things. When the Equestria is under attack from Tempest Shadow, Twilight Sparkle should find the Queen of Hippo. In that moment, she is being a leader to her friends. She leads her friends and give a command to all of them. It can be shown in the sentences "*Go to the ship*".

As a leader, she must protect her friends from the enemies, Tempest Shadow. In the end of story, Songbird Serenade sings a song about Twilight Sparkle. Here is the lyric that shows that Twilight Sparkle is a good leader of them.

Songbird Serenade: *I know you, you're a special one
Some see crazy where I see love
You fall so low but shoot so high
Big dreamers shoot for open sky
So much life in those open eyes
So much depth, you look for the light
But when your wounds open, you will cry
You'll cry out now and you'll question why
I can see a rainbow
In your tears as they fall on down
I can see your soul grow
Through the pain as they hit the ground
I can see a rainbow
In your tears as the sun comes out
As the sun comes out*

The song, in the fourth line in the lyrics, shows that Twilight Sparkle is a big dreamer and a good leader who can bring back the magic power of the princesses of Equestria, and she also manages to make a Festival of friendship embodied.

4.3 The Most Dominant American cultural values

In the *My Little Pony* movie, Twilight Sparkle gives many values such as individualism, altruism, and industry. Based on the proofs and the scenes already discussed, the writer concludes that altruism is the most dominant value that appear in *My Little Pony* movie. It is supported by the items of altruism which are finding meaning of life, having close friend, and working for society improvement.

5. Conclusion

The American cultural values theory by Roy D'Andrade (2008) such as individualism, altruism, and industry are completely reflected by the character of Twilight Sparkle. From the evidences, the scenes and dialogues, the writer discovers a good appropriation of D'Andrade's (2008) theory about personal and cultural theory towards the thoughts, actions, and attitudes of Twilight Sparkle in the *My Little Pony* Movie.

Twilight Sparkle reflects Individualism by showing her life of adventure, feeling sure about herself, and having time alone. These aspects support the characteristic of Individualism. While in altruism, there are finding meaning of life, having close friend, and working for society improvement as the aspects discussed. Twilight is a good person in having a friendship. She is a hard worker who gives her best in improving her society. The last value is industry. This value consists of three aspects which are having high standards, being responsible, and being a leader. These aspects make Twilight Sparkle a good character in industrialized nation.

Based on the three dimensions which are individualism, altruism, and industry, the writer concludes that altruism is the most dominant value that is shown in *My Little Pony* movie. It is because there are a lot of evidences and scenes that show in the movie that Twilight Sparkle reflects finding meaning of life, having close friend, and working for society improvement.

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APPENDIX

Pictures	Data No.
 <p>Picture 1. Twilight and her friends are in desert (Thiessen, 00.23.16)</p>	1
 <p>Picture 2. Twilight Sparkle (Thiessen, 00.18.45)</p>	2
 <p>Picture 3. Twilight is having time alone (Thiessen, 01.03.21)</p>	3
 <p>Picture 4. Twilight apologies to Pinkie Pie (Thiessen, 01.22.08)</p>	4



Picture 5. Hugging each others
(Thiessen, 00.08.17)

5



Picture 6. They are going to find the queen of hippo
(Thiessen, 00.20.01)

6



Picture 7. In the foreign city
(Thiessen, 00.26.22)

7



Picture 8. They are going to Mountai Aris
(Thiessen, 00.46.04)

8



Picture 9. Twilight Sparkle explains the plan of Festival of Friendship
(Thiessen, 00.04.36)