

**DEFENSE MECHANISM ON WILL'S ATTACHMENT STYLE
IN *GOOD WILL HUNTING***

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*
in English Letters



By

RITYASIWI GITARASIKA

Student Number: 144214135

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
UNIVERSITAS SANATA DHARMA
YOGYAKARTA
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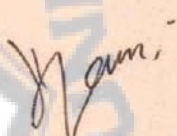
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A Sarjana Sastra Undergraduate Thesis

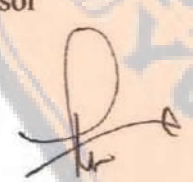
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Defended before the Board of Examiners
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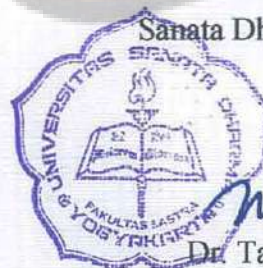
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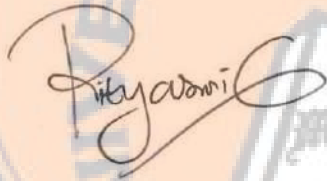


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Yogyakarta, May 17th 2018



Rityasiwi Gitarasika

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IN *GOOD WILL HUNTING***

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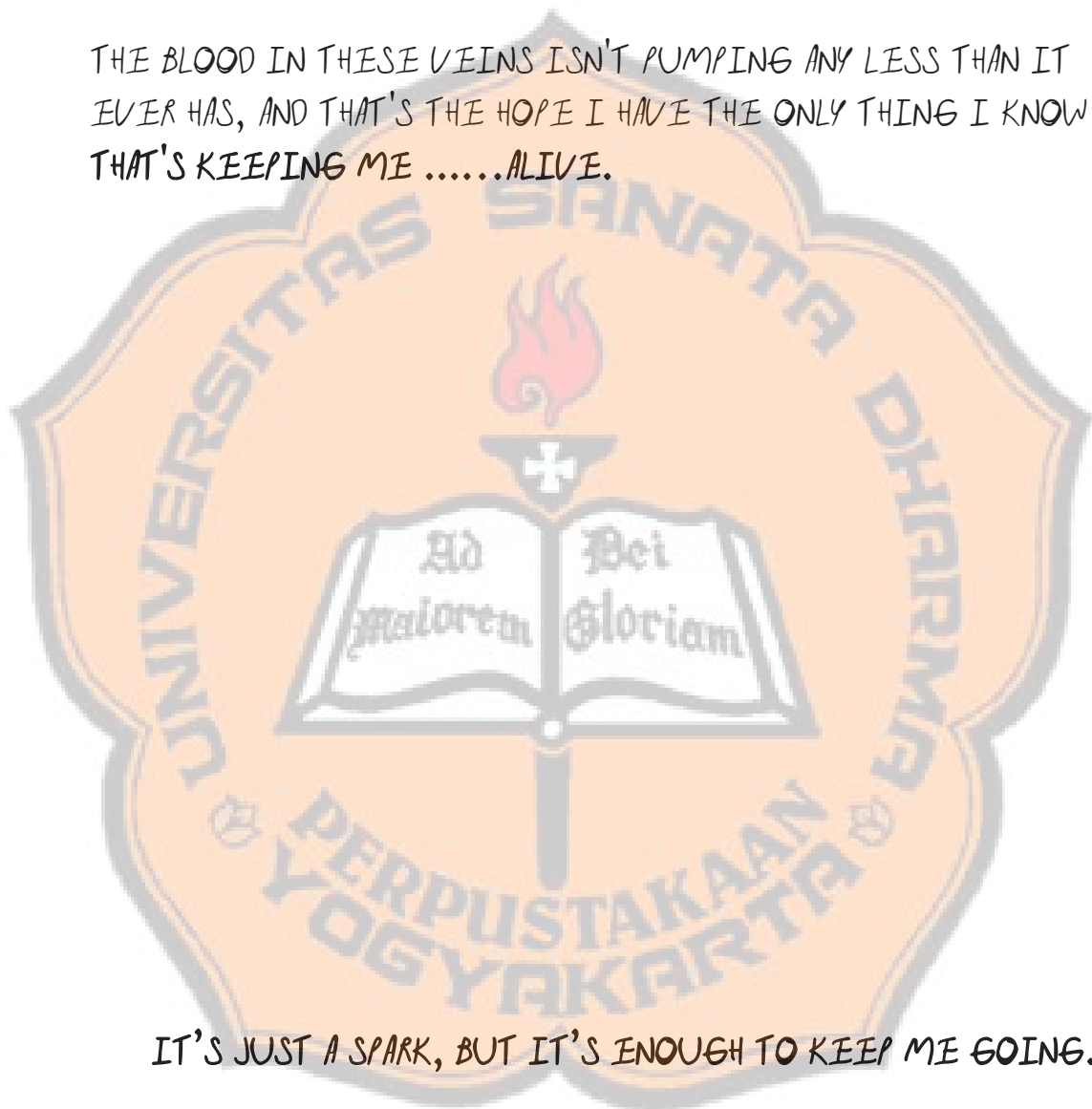
Yang menyatakan,

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THE SALT IN MY WOUNDS ISN'T BURNING ANYMORE
THAN IT USED TO.

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T FEEL THE PAIN,
IT'S JUST I'M NOT AFRAID OF HURTING ANYMORE.

THE BLOOD IN THESE VEINS ISN'T PUMPING ANY LESS THAN IT
EVER HAS, AND THAT'S THE HOPE I HAVE THE ONLY THING I KNOW
THAT'S KEEPING MEALIVE.



IT'S JUST A SPARK, BUT IT'S ENOUGH TO KEEP ME GOING.

.....AND I'M GONNA LET IT HAPPEN.

-- PARAMORE.

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Rityasiwi Gita.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GWH : *Good Will Hunting*
POV : Point of View



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ABSTRACT

GITARASIKA, RITYASIWI. (2018). **Defense Mechanism on Will's Attachment Style in *Good Will Hunting***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Film, like literary works, is a medium to represent some aspects of human life, such as human psychological. In this research, defense mechanism and attachment style become the object for the researcher to get the understanding about the main character in the film. This research analyzes the life of a janitor named Will Hunting presented in a film entitled *Good Will Hunting*, directed by Gus Van Sant and the film script written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. This film explores Will's struggles in finding what he really wants and having normal relationship with everyone around him as a result of his traumatizing childhood experience.

The first objective of the research is to analyze Will's characteristics and the way he interacts with other characters portrayed in the film. The second objective is to discover the tendency of attachment style seen in Will's characteristics. The last objective is about Will's defense mechanism usage to cope with his attachment style.

To analyze the problems formulated above, this research uses psychoanalytic approach and there are some steps that have been conducted. Firstly, do a close reading to the primary source a film entitled *Good Will Hunting*. The next step is analyzing the characteristics of Will Hunting, finding the tendency of Will's attachment style not only by the narrative but also its film-making techniques, and then applying his tendency and characteristics with Lois Tyson's defense mechanism theory.

Will Hunting is a troubled young man who is gifted, aggressive, loner, private and stubborn. These characteristics are not only found through the narrative, but also through its film's color, camera angle, and point of view. The tendency of Will's characteristics in the film can be categorized into an avoidant attachment style; a style where individuals tend to distance themselves from an intimate relationship. In order to cope with Will's attachment style, the researcher has found that Will uses avoidance, projection, and denial defense mechanism. This application of defense mechanism was affected by Will's attachment style; which occurred because of the abandonment and abusive issue that Will experienced during childhood. Psychoanalytic analysis on literary works can broaden the mindset of the readers about psychology and for those who finds themselves within the literary works, can find comfort and help through it.

ABSTRAK

GITARASIKA, RITYASIWI. (2018). **Defense Mechanism on Will's Attachment Style in *Good Will Hunting***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Film, cabang karya literatur, merupakan media yang menggambarkan berbagai aspek kehidupan manusia, salah satunya adalah psikologi. Dalam penelitian ini, mekanisme pertahanan dan gaya keterikatan menjadi objek untuk mendapatkan pengertian lebih dalam mengenai sebuah karakter dalam film. Penelitian ini meneliti tentang kehidupan seorang pesuruh bernama Will Hunting dalam film berjudul *Good Will Hunting* yang disutradarai oleh Gus Van Sant dan ditulis oleh Matt Damon dan Ben Affleck. Film ini bercerita tentang kesulitan Will dalam mencari jati dirinya dan memiliki hubungan yang normal dengan lingkungannya setelah mengalami trauma akan masa kecilnya.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah analisis karakteristik Will Hunting dan cara Will berinteraksi dengan karakter lain dalam film. Tujuan kedua adalah menemukan kecenderungan gaya keterikatan Will yang terlihat dari karakteristiknya. Tujuan terakhir dari penelitian ini adalah mekanisme pertahanan Will yang berguna untuk gaya keterikatan.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikoanalisis dan ada beberapa langkah yang dilakukan dalam penelitian ini. Pertama, penulis telah membaca dengan teliti sumber utama dari penelitian ini, yaitu film *Good Will Hunting*. Langkah selanjutnya adalah menganalisa karakteristik Will Hunting, menemukan kecenderungan gaya keterikatan dari aspek naratif dan juga teknik pembuatan film, dan meneliti mekanisme pertahanan Will menurut teori Lois Tyson.

Will Hunting adalah pemuda yang berbakat, agresif, penyendiri, tidak terbuka, dan keras kepala. Karakteristik Will tidak hanya ditemukan melalui aspek naratif saja, tapi juga melalui teknik film seperti warna, angle kamera, dan juga teknik sudut pandang. Kecenderungan dari karakteristik Will bisa dikategorikan dalam gaya ketertarikan lepas (*avoidant*). Gaya ketertarikan *avoidant* merupakan individual yang menjauhkan diri mereka sendiri dari hubungan yang intim atau dekat. Penulis telah menemukan fakta bahwa Will menggunakan mekanisme pertahanan seperti penghindaran, proyeksi, dan penyangkalan yang disebabkan oleh gaya ketertarikannya tersebut. Aplikasi dari mekanisme pertahanan ini terjadi karena pada isu pengabaian dan siksaan yang telah Will alami sejak kecil. Analisa psikoanalisis dalam kajian literatur dapat meluaskan pikiran para pembaca tentang psikologi.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Literary works are platforms for people to express their ideas or feelings. There are many forms of literary works such as poems, novels, short stories, screenplay, and even film. According to Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie in *The Art of Watching Films*, literature and film share and communicate many elements in similar ways, as film shares the same ability to employ the structures and devices of narrative of literature (Boggs & Petrie, 2008, pp. 41). Film uses images to tell the viewers a story and presents its story in dramatic forms, which are equivalent to the sequence of words on a page. Film presents the action, images, and words to describe the characters, conflict, setting, and others in a story; therefore, film is considered as a branch of literary works and the principles of literary or dramatic criticism can be used to analyze further on film.

According to Hudson in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, literature is a media to represent some aspects of human life such as history, social, moral, psychology and others (1960, p. 10). Literary works as a mirror of the reality can also give readers new perspective, knowledge, and even understanding about human's life. Literature is an intensely personal as well as experience; the sentences, characters, plot lines and tropes reveal who people are as humans. Humanity is a

complicated thing, and it requires infinite amounts of words to describe it. Through literature and analysis of literary work itself, readers can broaden their mindset about humanity and for those who discover themselves within the literary works, can find comfort and help through it.

This research entitled “Defense Mechanism of Will Hunting’s Attachment Style in *Good Will Hunting*” analyzes the main character, named Will Hunting in a 1998 movie called *Good Will Hunting* written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck and directed by Gus Van Sant. Will Hunting is an orphan young man who has a gift for math and chemistry that can take him light-years beyond his blue-collar roots. However, Will Hunting has a hard time to socialize with people outside of his inner circle and he has to face jail time because of his problematic actions. Luckily, a professor in Massachusetts Institute of Technology has recognized his talent and released him under two conditions; Will is obligated to work with him and to attend therapy. This research analyzes the tendency of Will’s attachment style based on his personality and later analyze further on his defense mechanisms that are portrayed in *Good Will Hunting*.

This research uses psychoanalysis approaches to achieve its goal. This research focuses on psychoanalysis area around human’s relationship with others according to John Bowlby’s attachment theory and Sigmund Freud’s defense mechanism theory. Attachment theory conceptualizes the concept of infants bonding with their primary caregivers and the reaction of separation could affect infant’s anxiety and behavior. Bowlby later hypothesized that the nature of

someone's attachment style is formed in childhood and it generally lasts throughout someone's life. Mary Ainsworth who collaborated with Bowlby discovered attachment styles. Ainsworth later discovered three styles in which babies and toddlers form attachments with caregivers: secure, anxious, and avoidant. Research findings published in 1987 by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver, indicated that adults show patterns of attachment style to their romantic partners similar to the patterns of attachment that children have with their parents. (Hazan and Shaver, 1987, p. 511)

Building on Hazan and Shaver's work, a large number of studies have found that each attachment style has differences in coping strategies and affective responses to stress (Mikulincer & Florian as cited in Mikulincer, 1998, p. 420). These coping strategies are often applied unconsciously in certain circumstances that are stressful according to each person with attachment styles. These coping strategies are often called as defense mechanism. The application of defense mechanisms are influenced by some motives; such as the characters past, the society around a character, or even the conflict itself. According to Lois Tyson, defense mechanisms are divided into six types; which are selective perception, selective memory, denial, avoidance, displacement, and projection (Tyson, 2006, p. 14).

This study aims to analyze the tendency of Will's attachment style in his characteristics. Later on, the study continues to analyze Will's defense mechanisms that is caused by his attachment style.

B. Problem Formulation

1. How are Will Hunting's characteristics and the way he interacts with other characters portrayed in *Good Will Hunting* movie?
2. What is Will Hunting's tendency of attachment style seen in his characteristics as portrayed in *Good Will Hunting* movie?
3. What kind of defense mechanisms does Will Hunting use in order to cope with his attachment style as portrayed in *Good Will Hunting* movie?

C. Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to answer the research questions above. The analysis is aimed at discovering the characteristics and the way Will Hunting interacts with his love interest, analyzing tendency of attachment style in Will Hunting's characteristics, and questioning which defense mechanisms Will Hunting use cope with his attachment style as portrayed in *Good Will Hunting*.

D. Definition of Terms

Attachment style. According to Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver, adult attachment style is behavioral tendency in romantic relationship. Hazan & Shaver found that attachment patterns related to the relationship recollections of early experience with parents. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007, p. 25)

Characteristics. Characteristics are aspects of someone's behavior and attitudes.

Defense mechanism. Defense mechanism is mental process, typically unconsciously, to avoid conflict or anxiety (Tyson, 2013, p.26)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Studies

In this chapter, the researcher tries to show and explain some studies which are done to analyze *Good Will Hunting* and some literary criticism related to defense mechanism. These will prove that this movie is worth watching and the researcher's topic is interesting to discuss.

There is a study conducted by Shana M. Van Kirk in an article entitled *Good Will Hunting: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Therapy*. On Shana's article unlike this study that points to Will's attachment style and his process of defense mechanism portrayed in *Good Will Hunting*, Shana explains more about Will's post-traumatic stress disorder and how therapy helps Will to recover. She writes that Will is a victim of abuse, therefore he psychologically separated and distanced himself from memories of any abuse. As the result, Will showed many signs of post-traumatic stress disorder including the symptoms of avoidance to reduce anxiety.

Victims of trauma often react to triggers that are reminders of traumatic events in their lives, as Will did in the therapist's office. When the therapist placed his hand on Will's shoulder, Will unconsciously reacted that he was ready to fight. Will actively avoided anything related to the trauma by using defense mechanism to resist close emotional attachment. Throughout the movie, the viewers sees numerous therapists try to treat Will's disorders with various

techniques but none of it succeed because Will easily detects the false sensitivity of the therapists. Meanwhile the latest therapist played by Robin Williams, Sean, approaches Will with cognitive-behavioral, insight, and psychoanalysis therapies. Sean slowly builds trust with Will through the things that they have in common and their stories (Van Kirk, 2000, p. 51-53).

While Shana speaks about Will Hunting's post-traumatic stress disorder and the healing process through therapy portrayed in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*, this research comes up with the idea of Will's defense mechanism on his interactions with other characters in the movie. This research tries to analyze the application of defense mechanism in Will's attachment style which is portrayed through his personality in the movie.

Another related study that is provided in this section is about the application of defense mechanism theory can be found in a thesis written by Riza Azizah. Riza's thesis entitled *The Influence of Andrea Sachs's Characteristics and Traumatic Experience on Her Defense Mechanism in Lauren Weisberger's Revenge Wears Prada* uses the theory of defense mechanism to analyze the process of how Andrea, the main character, defense herself from the problem in her life. It analyzes Andrea's response to the hard situation that she is facing involving her former boss.

In Riza's study, Andrea is depicted as a person who is haunted by traumatic experience and tries to reduce her anxiety with defense mechanism. She analyzed that people often unconsciously using defense mechanism while facing problem

and do not consider it due to the lack of knowledge in psychological field. Therefore psychological study helps human to cope with their problem so people get better understanding about the theory of defense mechanism. (Azizah, 2016, p. 44)

While Azizah's study points out about the influence of characteristics and traumatic experience could lead into defense mechanism actions, this study analyzes how attachment style which is reflected in the main character's characteristics could affect the application of defense mechanism which portrayed in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theory of Character and Characterization

Character is the most human elements in a film and it is one of the most interesting objects that makes viewers connect to the movie. According to Petrie and Boggs in *Art of Watching Films*, the characters in film must be real, understandable, and worth caring about to be interesting. The characteristics of a character makes the viewers respond towards the character in some way; such as admiration or even hatred (2008, pp. 60). They state there are eight ways how movie viewers could understand the characterization of a character,

The first way is through appearance. A major aspect of film characterization is revealed visually and instantaneously; through casting. The minute viewers sees actors, the viewers quickly makes assumption based on their facial features, dress, physical build, mannerisms, and the way they move.

Though the first visual impression may change as the story progresses, it is important to establish a character on their appearance (2008, pp. 60-61)

The second way is through dialogue. Fictional characters reveal a lot about their characteristics by the things they say and how they say it. Their thoughts, attitude, emotions, social and economic backgrounds can be revealed through the word choice and through the stress, pitch, grammar, sentence structure, particular dialects. (2008, p. 61-62)

The third way is through external action. The best reflections of a character are the actions because appearance can be misleading. The actions of a character should grow naturally out of the character's personality, not forced. The most effective characterization is not only achieved by large actions but by the small, insignificant ones because the most ordinary choice can be revealing who people are. (2008, p. 63)

The fourth way is through internal action. Inner action occurs within characters' minds and emotions consist of secret, unspoken thoughts, daydream, fears, even fantasies. The filmmaker usually reveals inner action of a character through many ways including visual elements as representation of metaphors. Filmmakers usually reveal it through visual elements such as the aspects of the shots, film punctuation, and montages. (2008, p. 63)

The fifth way is through reactions of other characters. The way other characters view a person often serves an excellent means of characterization. (2008, p. 64)

The sixth way is through contrast: dramatic foils. One of the most effective techniques of characterization is the use of foils—contrasting the characters whose behavior, attitudes, opinions are the opposite of the main characters. (2008, p. 64-65)

The seventh way is through caricature and leitmotif. To understand characteristics, actors often exaggerate one or more dominant features or personality traits (caricature). Leitmotif is a repetition of a single action, phrase, or idea by a character until it becomes a trademark or theme song for that character. (2008, p. 65-66)

The last way is through choice of name. Possessing names reflect appropriate qualities of sound, meaning, or connotation. The technique is called as name typing. For the example, the name Dick Tracy, are rather obvious and clear: Dick is slang for detective; meanwhile Tracy means from the fact that detectives trace criminals. (2008, p. 66-67)

2. Film-making Techniques

Movies are escapism, entertainment, and pleasure. The movies shape the way people view the world throughout the years. Movies have their own cinematic language to engage the viewers feeling involved and invested. According to Barsam and Monahan (2010) in their book *Looking at Movies*, cinematic languages are not composed of words but of integrated techniques and concepts which can be interpreted into deeper meanings (pp. 3). Analyzing film involves more than breaking down a scene or the story, but also identifying the tools, techniques and the potential effect of the techniques. Every movie is a

combination of many important elements that form a coherent whole. Movie is formed of visual elements such as cinematic point of views, angles, and color. This research emphasizes those visual elements as those elements are considerably easy to be noticed on selected scenes.

Angles is the level and height of camera in relation to the subject being photographed. This technique offers filmmaker chance to be more expressive to create interpretations they want to show in the screen. Eye level shot came from the observer's eye that the camera's attitude toward the subject being photographed is neutral (Barsam & Monahan, 2010, pp. 242-243). High angle shot is a shot where the camera above the action and it creates implication of superiority sense to the subject being photograph (pp. 243). Low angle shot is a shot where the camera is placed below the action and implies the observer in the position of feeling helpless in the presence of superior object (pp. 244). Dutch angle shot is where the camera tilted from its normal horizontal and vertical position. This shot gives impression of weirdness and quirkiness which is happening in the scene (pp. 244-245). Aerial view shot or bird's eye view shot is a shot taken from aircraft or very high crane and it is used to imply the observer's omniscience.

Cinematic point of view is the different ways the movie camera sees the action taking place before it (Boggs & Petrie, 2006, pp. 126). There are four kinds of point of view (POV) which are used by the filmmakers to affect the viewers emotionally; which are objective POV, subjective POV, indirect-subjective POV, and director's interpretive POV. According to Ford, objective

POV considered “the camera to be window and viewers to be outside the window viewing the people and events within” (Ford as cited in Boggs & Petrie, 2006, pp. 127). This POV creates an emotional distance between the camera and the subject and it does not interpret the action, impersonal observer (pp. 127). Subjective POV is a visual viewpoint and emotional intensify felt by a character participating in the action. Alfred Hitchcock said that subjective POV forces the viewers to become the characters and experience their emotions. The most famous POV shot of subjective is the eye-line shot; where the shot shows the viewers subjectively what the character is seeing (pp. 128-130). The third kind of POV is indirect-subjective POV. This kind of POV gives the viewers the feeling of participating in the action without showing the action through a participant’s eyes. The example of indirect-subjective POV is a close up of a face shot; where the camera shots right up to the character’s face for the viewers to feel the feelings that the characters have more vividly (pp. 130-132). The last kind of POV is director’s interpretive POV. This view is the director’s unique ways to manipulate the viewers’s viewpoint. Through this viewpoint, viewers consciously aware that the director wants the viewers to see the action in some unusual ways (pp. 132-133).

Camera movement is another important element in film-making; it captures static and moving subjects. Camera movement is not only leading and focusing the viewers’s eyes to the subject, but also helping convey the relationship between spatial, causal, and psychological. It adds the director’s development of the narrative and viewers’s understanding of its narrative (pp.

247). Pan shot is a horizontal movement of a camera and it offers panoramic view, guides the attention to the characters or action that are important, and makes the viewers aware of relationships between subjects that are too far apart to be shown in the frame (pp. 249). Tilt shot is a vertical movement of camera. It also creates dynamic possibilities for creating interpretations like pan shot (pp. 249). Dolly shot is a shot taken by a camera fixed into a wheeled or track known as dolly (pp. 249). Crane shot is a shot made by a camera and it is attached on an elevating arm that moves around. By using crane, filmmakers can make extraordinary flexibility (pp. 251). Handheld camera is the opposite of smooth moving-camera shots. Handheld camera creates shakiness of the camera, it creates interpretations of a loss control and crazy that filmmakers often use in purpose (pp. 254). Steadicam is a device which attached to the operator's body to keep the steadiness of shots, less shaky than handheld camera yet creates chaotic effect like handheld camera shot.

Color is suggested to have “a powerful position among the elements of film structure and its function on the screen is both utilitarian and aesthetic” (Jacobs as cited in Basam & Monahan, 2010, pp. 223). Colors not only affect on viewers's visual responses but also psychological or even physiological. Color is not only seen but is also felt emotionally by each viewer with their own interpretations. There are many effects that colors affect on viewers. First, color attracts and holds the viewers's attention; therefore director has several methods of keeping attention focused on the center of interest by using angles and colors. By using bright or saturated colors on the object of greatest interest and placing

that object against a contrast background, the director can easily capture the viewer's eye (Basam & Monahan, 2010, pp. 225-229). Second, colors contribute to three-dimension. By using advancing colors on an object such as red, orange, yellow, and lavender, can make other objects recede into backgrounds. For the example, using the color red on a sofa will make the sofa seems larger than any objects using receding colors such as beige, green, or pale blue (pp. 229). Third, colors create an impression or feeling of temperature. Warm colors such as red, yellow, orange, and lavender will advance. Cool colors such as blues, greens, and beige will recede the objects in the scene. The director of *The Fox*, D. H. Lawrence said that the choice of colors is not accidental; that every garment is selected for a particular kind of emotional tone (Lawrence as cited in Basam & Monahan, 2010, pp. 229- 232). Last, colors function together in different ways. Predictable and consistent visual effects are produced from combination of colors or color schemes. There are four color harmonies; such as monochromatic harmony (based on intensity of one color), complementary harmony (the use of directly the opposite each other on the color wheel), analogous harmony (the use of colors side by side to one another on the color wheel), and triad harmony (the use of three primary colors) (pp. 232).

3. Theory of Attachment and Attachment Style

A British psychoanalyst, John Bowlby (1907-1990), originally developed the theory of attachment. Bowlby observed the patterns of behavior that experienced by infants who had been separated from their parents. Drawing the conclusion, Bowlby hypothesized attachment behaviors, such as crying and

searching, were adaptive responses to separation from a primary attachment figure—someone who provides support, protection and care. The attachment behavioral system, a motivational system was designed by natural selection to regulate closeness to an attachment figure. Attachment figure is someone who is emotionally attached to the person. The attachment behavior system is an important concept in this theory because it provides relation between ethological models of human development and personality.

The attachment system essentially asks the following fundamental question: Is the attachment figure nearby, accessible, and attentive? If the child answers this question to “yes”, they feel loved, secure, and confident, and sociable. However, if the answer is “no”, the child experiences anxiety and likely to exhibit attachment behaviors to protest, clinging, and searching. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007, pp. 16-19)

Attachment style is described as “patterns of expectation, needs, emotions, and social behavior that result from a particular history of attachment experiences, usually beginning in relationships with parents” (Fraley & Shaver as cited in Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, pp. 25). A person’s attachment style reflects their typical functioning of their attachment system in a specific relationship (such as romantic relationships) or across relationships (friendships). Adults’ mental representations of self and others in close relationships are an outgrowth of early relationship with parents (Bowlby as cited in Levy et al, 1998, p 407). The first concept of attachment style was proposed by Mary Ainsworth to describe “infants’ patterns of responses to separation from and reunions with their mother”

(as cited in Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, pp. 25). Ainsworth later classified infants' patterns into three categories, here called secure, avoidant, or anxious. Main and Solomon later added fourth category, "disorganized/disoriented", characterized by combination of avoidant and anxious style which is eliminated on this research's analysis due to lack of data. (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, pp. 25-27)

Bowlby described that attachment characterized human experience from the cradle to grave, then later the theory of adult attachment and attachment style is developed by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver. Attachment experiences in infancy have the power of shaping personality development such as emotional, sociability, curiosity, trust and cooperation (Marusic, 2011, p. 1120). According to Bowlby, a romantic relationship is the prototype of attachment bonds in adulthood. Friendship relations become equally important in the process of adulthood, because it is suggested that "friends thus form an important part of attachment networks in adulthood, along with family members and romantic partners." (Trinke & Bartholomew as cited in Marusic, 2011, p. 1120). Even the best friend could be a primary attachment figure in the absence of a romantic partner in a long committed relationship, providing a source of trust and emotional support (Doherty & Feeney as cited in Marusic, 2011, p. 1120). Hazan and Shaver explained that the attachment bonds of adult relationship may be partial reflection of someone's experiences with their primary caregivers.

In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver developed a self-report measure of adult attachment style entitled

Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process, based on Bowlby's ideas to the study of romantic relationship, that asked respondents to characterize their feelings and behavioral tendencies in romantic relationships. The result would be the measure to capture adult romantic analogues of the three infant attachment styles identified by Ainsworth.

The first type, secure attachment style is categorized for people who has low anxiety and low avoidance percentage; which is usually defined by a chronic sense of attachment security, trust in partners, expectations of partner availability and responsiveness, comfort with closeness, and ability to cope distress and insecurities with threats and stress triggers in constructive ways. The people who have secure attachment style is discovered to have affectionate, caring, and loving relationship with their parents. The relationship between the parents are also noted as warm, confident, and accepting each other.

Second, the avoidant attachment style is concerned with discomfort with closeness and depending on romantic partners, prefer to distance themselves from emotional closeness, self-reliance, and use of deactivating strategies or defense mechanisms to deal with insecurity and distress. In friendship, avoidant attachment tend to have lower capacity for quality interpersonal relations. They show lower trust and altruism and more tough-minded when it comes to relate with others. They will seek less intimacy and involvement in their close relations with partners or friends. People with avoidant attachment style tend to be more introverted (Marusic, 2011, p 1129). Avoidant style of attachment usually have

cold, aloof, self-preoccupied, and rejecting relationship between their parents in early childhood (Levy et al, 1998, pp.407).

The third attachment style is anxious. Anxious attachment style is concerned with a strong desire for closeness and protection, intense worries about partner availability and one's own value to the partner and use of hyper-activating strategies to deal with insecurity and distress. Anxious attachment style usually have good relationship with their parents and their mother or father are likable and respected in the society. Parents who are likeable and respected in the society often made the child feel insecure and have high expectation in relationship. (Hazan & Phillip, 1987, pp. 517)

In further study about the relation of attachment style and coping strategies by Mikulincer entitled *Adult Attachment Style and Affect Regulation: Strategic Variations in Self-Appraisals*, it has been found that each attachment style has differences in coping mechanisms with stressful events or events that trigger anxiety.

Secure person have been found "to adopt constructive, instrumental coping strategies, to seek support from significant others, and to acknowledge distress without being overwhelmed by it." (Mikulincer & Florian, as cited in Mikulincer, 1998, pp. 420). They usually come up with positive constructive coping plans and they can handle stressful events with trust, emotional maturity, and optimistic expectation about stress manageability. Therefore, secure person have more opportunity to cope with stress actively and effectively. (1998, p. 420)

Avoidant person most likely to get defensive when acknowledge of any source of distress. Avoidant person “likes to escape from potential close relationship, minimize emotional involvement, deny attachment needs, suppress bad thoughts, rely on repressive-dissociative mechanism.” (Collins & Read as cited in Mikulincer, 1998, p. 421). They like to close themselves off in order to escape from any confrontation with close relationship and life problems.

Anxious person seems to deal with distress with exaggerating the available attachment figure. They usually approach distress in a hyper-vigilant way, hyperactive bad thoughts and memories, and rely on passive-ruminative ways of coping. Both anxious and avoidant persons are likely associated themselves with aggressive behavior; because unconsciously they have expected response to repeated separations or threats of abandonment by attachment figures. Therefore, both anxious and avoidants will have unbalanced between self-view and self-esteem. (1998, p. 412)

4. Theory of Defense Mechanism

According to Lois Tyson in a book entitled *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*, psychoanalysis is the most useful way of understanding human behavior. Psychoanalysis helps everyone to understand human behavior and able to understand more about literary text, which are about human behavior. Psychoanalytic principles established by Sigmund Freud and theories of psychoanalysis has developed throughout the years. Psychoanalysts believe that individual behaviors are affected from early experiences; such as childhood experiences in the family. The purpose of psychoanalysis is not only to help

people solve the psychological problems, but also to fix and focus on patterns of behavior which are destructive. Often these patterns of behavior are driven unconsciously. The unconscious are the collections of painful experiences, emotions, fears, unresolved conflicts which people repress to avoid the anxiety. (2006, p. 13)

Our unconscious desires are served by defense mechanism. Defense mechanism is a mental process, typically unconsciously, to avoid conscious conflict or anxiety. Every person has different kind of defense mechanism to cope with their anxieties. Tyson also states that “many of our defense mechanisms develop during childhood as ways of protecting ourselves emotionally” (Tyson, 2013, p. 26) These defense mechanisms could become more destructive than helpful as people get older because their unconscious keep protect themselves in a wrong way.

The first kind of defense mechanism is selective perception. This mechanism makes people hear and see what they can handle. The second kind is selective memory; where unconsciously people modify their memories which could trigger their anxiety. The third one is denial; believing that the problem does not exist. The fourth kind is avoidance, where people unconsciously stay away from a certain situation that triggers anxiety. The fifth kind is displacement; where people take their problems or struggle out on someone and not the person who caused the feeling. The sixth kind is projection; a mechanism where ascribing their unconscious fear and problem to someone else and condemning

them for it, in order to deny that they have the problems themselves. (Tyson, 2006, p. 15)

It is also worth mentioning that anxiety can be an important aspect in people's lives, as it can reveal someone's core issues when the defense mechanisms fail to prevent the anxiety. Tyson explains in his other book that:

"A core issue is the underlying cause of some sort of recurring self-destructive behavior, whether that behavior is something as mild as being habitually late for important appointments or something as serious as being habitually involved with abusive romantic partners." (2013, p. 26)

He concludes that the self-destructive behavior such as defense mechanism is caused by core issue. The core issues as Tyson describes in *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide* are fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, low self-esteem, insecure or unstable sense of self, and oedipal fixation.

Fear of intimacy is an overwhelmed feeling that emotional closeness will hurt or destroy someone in so many ways. People who have fear of intimacy as the core issue most likely to distance themselves from emotional closeness (2006, p. 16). Fear of intimacy can be function as a defense if this fear happens rarely. If it happens frequently, it is probably a core issue.

Fear of abandonment is a fear that friends and loved ones around them are going to leave them (physical abandonment) or ignore them (emotional abandonment) (2006, p. 16). Fear of betrayal is a feeling that surrounding cannot be trusted, that they will betray by lying or cheat behind someone's back. Low self-esteem is a belief that someone is less worthy than other people; therefore they do not deserve love or attention from others. Insecure or unstable sense of

self is the inability to sustain a feeling of personal identity or knowing ourselves; this core issue makes people very vulnerable of others' influence. Oedipal fixation is a dysfunctional bond with a parent of the opposite sex that will not outgrow in adulthood. (2006, p. 17)

Core issue usually stay with people throughout life and if the core issue is not effectively address, those core issues will unconsciously determine people's behavior in destructive ways.

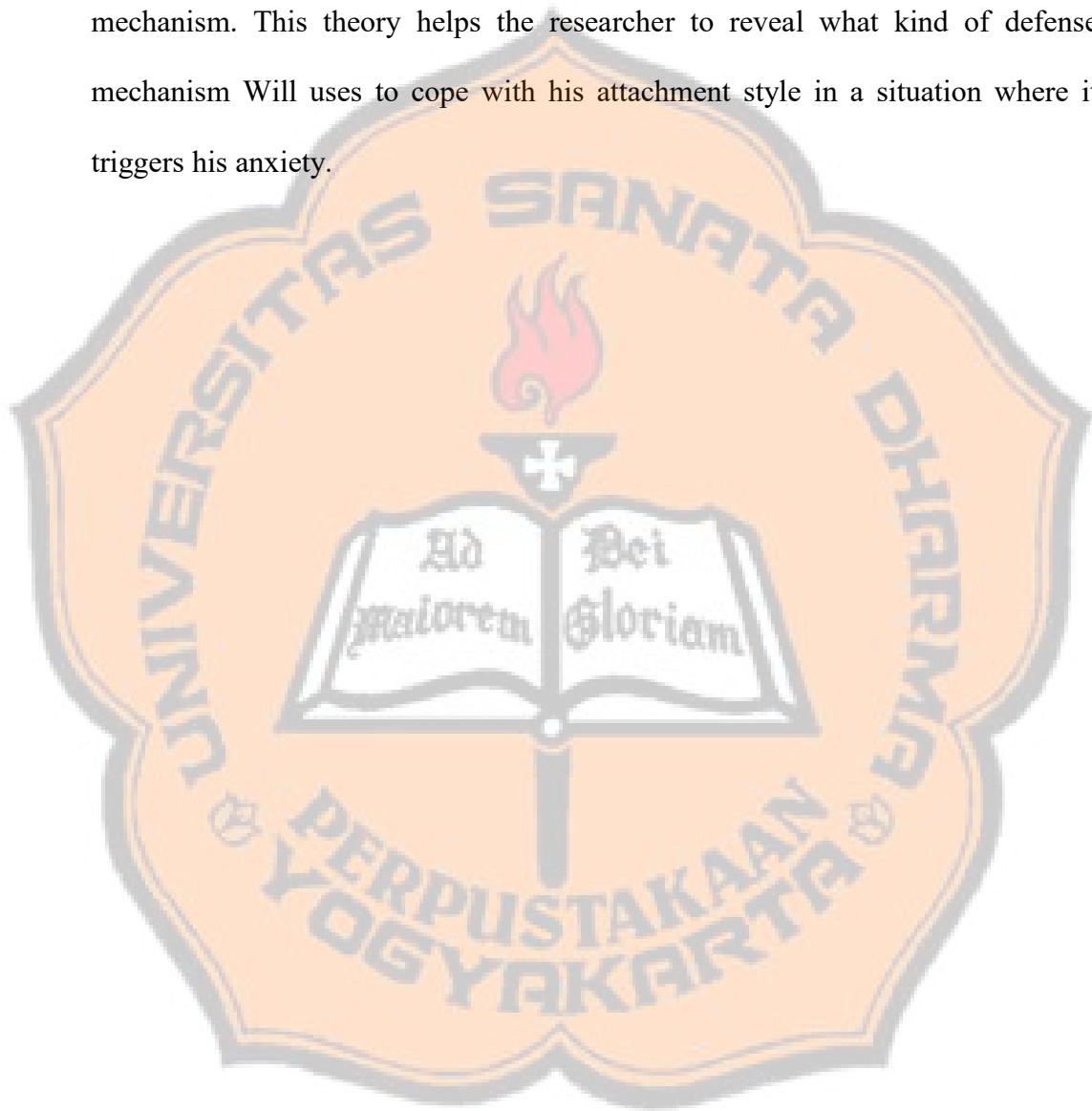
C. Theoretical Framework

Film as one of the literary works is a platform to represent some aspects in human's life; such as history, culture, even human psychology. Watching and analyzing film will broaden people's perspectives on so many aspects and for those who find themselves within these films, hopefully they will find comfort and help through it.

This study focuses on Will Hunting as the main character of Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting* and his attachment style that affected his relationship and the usage of defense mechanism as portrayed in the movie. In analyzing Will, the research uses film theory of character and characterization in order to get a deeper understanding how Will thinks, behaves, and interacts with his love interest and how his characteristics can help reveal his attachment style and defense mechanism.

Theory of attachment is important in this study. In order to know further about attachment style and how it affects someone's interaction with

surroundings, this theory explains how the patterns of attachment in childhood shape in adulthood. This theory is used to analyze Will's characteristics in order to reveal the tendency of Will's attachment style. The last theory is defense mechanism. This theory helps the researcher to reveal what kind of defense mechanism Will uses to cope with his attachment style in a situation where it triggers his anxiety.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

Good Will Hunting is a drama movie directed by Gus Van Sant and written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. This movie was released on December 2nd, 1997 and this movie had won two Academy Awards in 1998; for Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor for Robin Williams. The Academy Award winning movie is starring by Matt Damon (Will Hunting), Ben Affleck (Chuckie Sullivan), Robin Williams (Sean McGuire), and Minnie Driver (Skylar).

Good Will Hunting tells a story of a Bostonian genius who decides to work as a janitor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Will Hunting (Matt Damon) is an careless orphan about his future and his surroundings. He has bad records of assault and grand theft auto on his criminal records. At one time, Will assaults a police officer and then he is arrested. Luckily a Massachusetts Institute of Technology's professor, Professor Lambeau has noticed his hidden talent and released Will on probation. The probation goes on if Will agrees to go to therapy and work with Lambeau to work on some mathematics theorem.

The journey of Will in therapy does not go really well. Will is not willing to cooperate with the therapists. At last Will meets his match, a therapist who comes from the same neighborhood as Will, Sean McGuire (Robin Williams). Will tries to annoy and pushes Sean away but this time, Sean does not give up.

During Will's therapy sessions, Will is seeing a young smart woman he met in the bar. Skylar (Minnie Driver) is a Harvard student who inherits money from her rich father, therefore Will unconsciously feels insecure about himself. When their relationship is getting serious, Will starts to push her away by lying about his family as Skylar wants to get to know more about Will and his upbringing. Before Skylar graduates, she asks Will to move to California with her. Will starts to freak out and all the lies came up so they break up.

In therapy sessions, Sean discovers that Will has an attachment disorder which was caused by abandonment by his real parents. During his times in the orphanage, Will had an abusive foster father. He was moved from several foster homes while growing up due to his aggressiveness.

Good Will Hunting explores Will's struggles and the psychological symptoms that disturbed his ability to have a normal relationship with everyone around him as a result of his childhood experiences.

B. Approach of the Study

To answer the problems formulated in this research, the researcher applies psychoanalytic approach. Psychoanalytic approach is used to see Will Hunting's behaviors that reveal his attachment style and his defense mechanisms. In this study, there is one theory of psychology which is theory of attachment.

According to Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* say that psychoanalytic is the best way to understand human behaviour. Psychoanalysis offers the key of concepts about human experiences and how these concepts operate in our daily

lives. The concepts of psychoanalysis principles established by Sigmund Freud, which the theory is often referred as classical psychoanalysis (2006, p. 11-12).

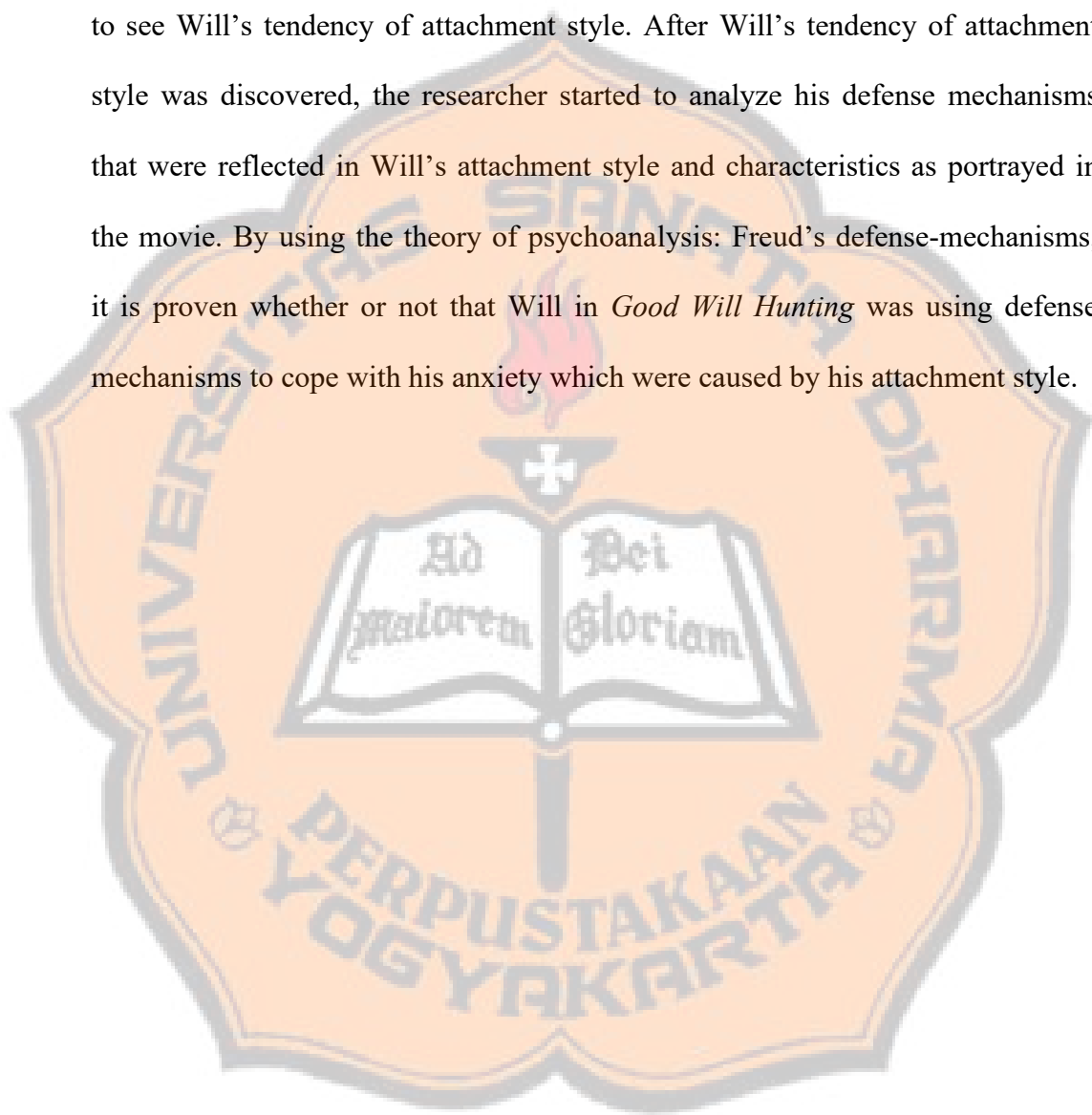
The psychoanalytic approach is considered the best approach in this study since the study analyzes the representation of human relationship with others and defense mechanism in the movie. Therefore, the researcher applies this method in order to answer the questions in the problem formulation.

C. Method of the Study

This research was done over library research. The primary source for this research was the 1997 movie *Good Will Hunting* directed by Gus Van Sant and also the film-script written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. The secondary sources that the researcher use are from the books and journals related to attachment theories, attachment styles, character & characterizations and psychoanalysis' defense mechanisms. Some of the important sources that the researcher use in this research are Joseph Boggs and Dennis Petrie's *The Art of Watching Film*, Mario Mikulincer and Phillip R. Shaver's *Attachment In Adulthood*, and Lois Tyson's *Critical Theory Today*.

To conduct this research, the researcher have watched *Good Will Hunting* to understand and analyzed closely of Will Hunting's characteristics and interactions with other characters as portrayed in the movie. This study was also backed up by the original *Good Will Hunting* script written by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. The characterization and interaction with other characters of Will

were analyzed using Boggs and Petrie's theory of characterization in film taken from *The Art of Watching Film*. The next step is analyzing every characteristic of Will Hunting with the categorization of Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver's theory to see Will's tendency of attachment style. After Will's tendency of attachment style was discovered, the researcher started to analyze his defense mechanisms that were reflected in Will's attachment style and characteristics as portrayed in the movie. By using the theory of psychoanalysis: Freud's defense-mechanisms, it is proven whether or not that Will in *Good Will Hunting* was using defense mechanisms to cope with his anxiety which were caused by his attachment style.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter the researcher analyzes data of the primary data. The main issues formulated in the previous chapter are analyzed in this chapter using psychoanalysis approach. The problem formulations is discussed in this chapter are the way Will Hunting's characteristics and his interactions with other characters portrayed in *Good Will Hunting*, the tendency of Will's attachment style according to the characteristics and discovering Will's defense mechanism that helps him to cope with his attachment style.

A. Will Hunting's characteristics and the way Will interacts with other characters

Firstly, the researcher tries to find the characteristics of Will Hunting and the way he interacts with other characters. This research uses the theory from *Art of Watching Films* by Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie as the main tool to analyze the characteristics of Will Hunting in the movie. According to Boggs and Petrie, there are many ways to analyze the characterization of a character in the movie; which are through the appearance, dialogue, external actions, internal actions, reactions of other characters, and the choice of name. In this section, the researcher analyzes the characteristics of Will Hunting by first using the film's narrative and the film-making techniques in the following if it support the interpretation.

1. Gifted

Will Hunting is a 20-years-old young man who lives in South Boston. At first glance of Will in the movie, Will seems to be a normal kid who is just living his life carelessly. However, as the movie goes along, the viewers discovers that there is no doubt that Will Hunting is an extraordinary young man. He is gifted with above average intellectual in solving mathematics that only few people in the world could.

This characteristics of a character can be seen through someone's external action. The things that the character do in the movie reflect their characteristics. Will Hunting's intelligence is proven in a scene where Will and his friends visit a Harvard bar. Chuckie, Will's best friend, tries to flirt with two Harvard students by saying that they both have a class together; but there is a Harvard guy who messes with Chuckie. The scene continues when the Harvard guy tries to mess with Chuckie using his intelligence that he learns from Harvard. When Will sees that his best friend bothered by this Harvard guy who tries to prove that Chuckie is some kind of fraud, Will steps in and challenges him back with Will's shocking intelligence. The Harvard bar scene is one of the revelations that this movie's main character is a genius. In the original film script, Will says:

WILL. One, do not do that. And two, you dropped a hundred and fifty grand on an education when you could've got for \$1.50 in late charges at the public library.
(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp.22)

Will's monologue in that Harvard bar scene says that he knows all of the Harvard guy's knowledge only through books he read at the library. He points out that most of the knowledge Harvard teach to their students can be read on public library and the Harvard guy is not better than Will and his friends, who are clearly not Harvard students. Will's intelligence helps Chuckie from embarrassment.

Will is no ordinary young man. His gifted characteristics is also shown through his action where he is trialed on the court. Unlike normal people, Will shows up without lawyer and defends himself. In front of the judge and attorney that serves him, Will states that it is his right to defend himself. This scene shows that Will is not only genius at solving mathematics, but he also reads laws for himself. It shows that Will's intelligence is above average and he actually uses his intelligence for his own sake; for the example getting out of court and therapies with therapists he does not want to be involved in.

Will's peers and the people who interact with him also notice his gifted characteristics. The most noticeable reaction of other characters towards Will is Professor Lambeau's reactions. Professor Lambeau sees Will as someone with full of potential because of his intelligence. The reason why Professor Lambeau cares so much about Will in the first place is because he needs Will. Professor Lambeau needs Will to work with him for more mathematics equations; so

together they will achieve something big and noble. In a scene where Professor Lambeau meets with Sean, the therapist, he admits that a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor like himself is nothing compared to Will Hunting. Not only to Will's therapist, but Professor Lambeau also admits it to Will himself. In a scene where Will and Professor Lambeau has a conflict while proving a mathematical proof, the dialogue goes:

WILL. [indicates proof] You know how easy this is? This is a joke.
[crumples proof] I'm sorry you cannot do this- I really am-, because I would not have to sit here and watch you fumble around and fuck it up.

.....

LAMBEAU. You are right, Will. I cannot do this proof, but you can. And when it comes to that, it is only about just a handful of people in the world who can tell the difference between you and me. But I'm one of them.

WILL. I am sorry.

LAMBEAU. Yeah, so am I. Most days I wish I never met you, because then I could sleep at night. I did not have to walk around with the knowledge that there was someone like you out there. I did not have to watch you throw it all away.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 92)

The quotation above shows that Professor Lambeau sees Will as someone who has so many potentials yet Will wastes it all away. Professor Lambeau needs Will and he implies that he is envious of Will's intelligence.

Will's gifted characteristics also can be seen through Will's internal action. Characterization through internal action occurs within characters' minds and emotions consist of secret, unspoken thoughts, and daydreams (Petrie & Boggs, 2008, pp. 63). Although unspoken, this technique is usually shown through visual elements of film-making. The film opens with a montage of mathematics

equation, books, and also for the first time Will appears in the movie while flipping books.



Figure 1



Figure 2

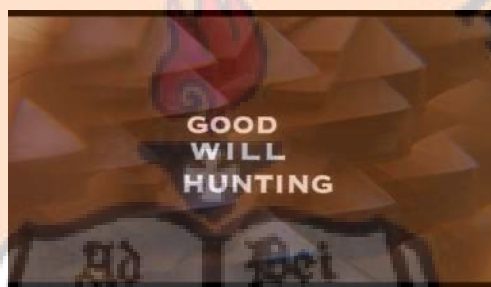


Figure 3

Filmmakers often use a montage to create mood, atmosphere, theme, physical or emotional impact in shorthand of time (Boggs & Petrie, 2008, pp. 215). Filmmaker usually reveals inner action of a character through visual elements such as the opening montage of *Good Will Hunting*. The figures 1 until 3 above appears during the opening montage on 00:00:14 and lasts for two minutes and fourteen seconds. The opening montage consists of credits of people who are working for the movie and kaleidoscope effects as its background. The opening montage also appears to be a foreshadowing of this particular Will's characteristics that later the viewers will discover. The opening montage of the film represents Will's unspoken thoughts which reveals things that he is interested in. The kaleidoscope effects on the montage consists of equations and

books (figure 1 and figure 3) show that those what interested to Will. In figure 2, it shows that Will is very focused on reading the books in his apartment, as he lives in his own world.



Figure 4



Figure 5

In *GWH*, Van Sant subtly uses color scheme to capture Will's characteristics. The color scheme that Van Sant uses in *GWH* is natural colors. Natural colors are combinations of basic color: yellow, red, black, blue, white and green.

In *GWH*, Van Sant uses color to show the real color of Will Hunting. The colors that Van Sant uses are natural colors, therefore it is easy to interpret the interpretations of the colors he uses in the film. The usage of warm and cold colors in this movie is used to pinpoint Will's emotional state being about staying true to his characteristic. Will's true characteristics is a genius young man with a lot of potential and throughout the movie, it shows that Will hides his true self whenever he feels uncomfortable showing his true quality in a new surrounding.

Van Sant uses the application of warm color which consists of yellow, red, and orange (combination of yellow and red) to create a sense of warmth as a metaphor that Will is comfortable with him showing his real characteristics and

not wearing any mask. Figure 4 is the perfect example of the use of warm color in this film; a scene where Will is all by himself in his apartment and doing the theorem. In this scene, the viewers can see in Will's expression that he is so focused on proving the theorem. When no one is around, Will feels free in showing his characteristics and it shows in the use of warm color in Figure 4.

On the other hand, Van Sant uses colder colors to create a sense of Will hiding his true characteristics to the public. In this scene which is represented by figure 5, Will tries to finish the theorem on MIT's chalkboard and it can be seen from the figure that Professor Lambeau walks down the hall then discovers about it. Knowing that someone has seen Will's action, Will indeed runs away to hide the fact that he, a janitor in the university, is the one who proved the theorem. In the figure 5 as the represent of the scene, Van Sant uses cold colors such as grey and light brown dominates to create a sense of discomfort where Will hides himself from people to know that Will is a genius young man.

2. Aggressive

Aggressive is one of the most noticeable characteristics of Will Hunting portrayed in the movie. One way to understand a character is through external actions as it reflects their true characteristics. Throughout the movie, the viewers realizes that it is almost easy to provoke Will's anger. His aggressive behavior can be seen in many scenes and one of them is a scene where Will decides to pick a fight with his kindergarten bully. Will picks a fight with his childhood bully, Carmine, when Will and his friends see that Carmine bothers some lady on the

street. Despite the fact that Will is out of the context, Will and his friends barge in and throw punches at Carmine and Carmine's friends. In Good Will Hunting's screenplay, it was written: "Whatever demons must be raging inside Will, he is taking them out on Bobby Champa." (Affleck & Damon, 1996, pp. 12) (Researcher's note: there is a revision in the movie where the bully's name is Carmine, not Bobby Champa).

Another evidence of Will's aggressiveness is through the reaction of other characters in the movie. When Will defends himself on the court, the judge reveals:

JUDGE MALONE. [The Judge opens Will's CASE HISTORY]. June '93, assault. September '93, assault. Grand theft auto, February of '94. Where, apparently, you defended yourself and had the case thrown out by citing "free property rights of horse and carriage" from 1798. Joke. January '95, impersonating an officer. Mayhem, theft, resisting. All overturned. I am also aware that you have been through several foster homes. The state removed you from three because of serious physical abuse.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 28)

The statement above shows that it is not a new thing for Will to get arrested and brought to the trial. He already has long rap sheet and most of them come from violence. Violence is a familiar thing to Will and it takes control of who he is.

Will's aggressive characteristics always appears wherever he has a disagreement with someone or if he dislikes them and he will assault them either verbally or physically. The evidence of Will assaults other characters verbally can be found during the scenes where Will meets series of therapists before Sean. Will in purpose insults the therapists so he does not have to talk about his

problem with them. However, this case only persists when Will does not agree with men whom he is not fully acquainted. Before Sean tries to break Will's wall, Will constantly tries to look for Sean's weakness so he would give up trying. Will's aggressiveness is always able to push people away, therefore his interactions with other characters who do not know him well will always have a distance.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Van Sant uses film-making technique's point of view shots to create the distance between Will and other characters. During the scenes where Will meets series of therapists that Professor Lambeau has set up with, Van Sant uses eye-level medium two-shots in framing Will and the therapists he met (Figure 6 and Figure 7). As a result, the viewers never see the therapists and Will together in a shot. Even if the viewers sees Will and the therapists together in one shot, Van Sant always uses deep focus effect to keep the viewers focusing on one character;

between Will or the therapists but never together. This technique is being used throughout the therapy sessions until Sean breaks Will and ends up with Will experiences a breakdown. As seen in Figure 8 this is the first time Van Sant puts Sean and Will together in one frame (*GWH*, 01:50:33). By showing the development of Will and Sean's relationship through the film technique, the viewers also notices as the development goes, Will does not attack Sean verbally since then. He becomes more approachable and not pushing Sean away.

Another evidence that Will's aggressiveness appears wherever he has disagreement with other character is the scene where Skylar, Will's love interests, asks Will to move to California with her. In this scene Will and Skylar share intimate moments until Skylar asks him to come with her. Will suddenly freaks out, snaps at her, and throwing fists into the wall. This evidence shows that Will has no control over his feelings and his aggressiveness blinds him to solve the problem he faces with clear mind (Figure 17).



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

Van Sant uses POV technique to reveal Will's aggressiveness on a particular scene in the beginning of the film. In this scene, Will and his friends decide to pick up a fight with Will's kindergarten bully. In this particular scene, Van Sant uses indirect-subjective POV as shown in Figure 9, 10, and 11; where the viewers see a close-up of Will as he beats up his kindergarten bully. The purpose of using this POV is to make the viewers see Will's expressions more vividly. In these POV shots as shown in Figure 9, 10, and 11, the viewers can see in Will's expression that he looks so concentrated yet the viewers can see a smirk draws on his face (Figure 9); as if he takes pleasure in beating his childhood bully.

Even after some punches later (Figure 10 and Figure 11) there are blood, which belongs to Will's kindergarten bully, all over Will's face but he keeps on punching him. In Figure 12, it is seen that Will's friends have to stop Will and

pull him out of the fight. Although after his friends pull him out of the fight, Will's stare still locks on his kindergarten bully (Figure 13). This sequence in this scene shows that it is hard for Will to control his anger, even after someone tries to stop him.

3. Loner

The researcher also finds that Will Hunting has a loner characteristics. Through the dialogue, it reveals that Will does not have a lot of people he can interact with. The dialogue between Will and Sean during their therapy session really shows that Will lives in his own world and he does not have someone who can level with him because of his intelligence:

SEAN. Do you think you're alone? Do you have a soul-mate?

WILL. Define that.

SEAN. Someone who challenges you in every way. Who takes you places, opens things up for you. A soul-mate.

WILL: Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Frost, O'Connor, Kant, Pope, Locke,-

SEAN: They're all dead.

WILL: Not to me they are not.

SEAN: You don't have a lot of dialogue with them. You can't give back to them, Will.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp.102)

The dialogue above shows that Will does not have many friends beside the inner circle consisting Chuckie, Morgan and Billy. This dialogue shows that Will considers Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Frost and etc are his friends who understand him in deeper level. Will even admits that they are all not dead to him. Will admits that he finds difficulty to find someone that challenges him in real life. He is stuck with his intelligence and isolation.

The other way to characterize a character is through the appearance. The appearance of a character through their facial feature, dress, physical build is usually the first thing that the viewers sees and quickly judge. Moreover, characteristics can also be shown not only from the physical appearance of a character, but also from the surrounding they live in



Figure 14

The evidence that Will is a loner can be found in the Figure 14 on opening montage, as Van Sant uses high angle shot to show Will's characteristic. High angle shot is an angle looking downwards and not only to show superiority sense, filmmakers also use this technique to draw attention to the importance of the environment or setting in a scene. It is not rare that filmmakers use the exterior of a character's environment in a particular scene as a representation of a character's state of mind. In Figure 14, the viewers sees that Will's apartment is barely furnished and there are books laying around the floor unorganized.

The placement of the books in his apartment, for the example books sitting next to his bed, gives away an interpretation that books are the things which he actually needs and desires the most about his life. The books' existence in this shot can be interpreted as his loyal companion. The warm color to create a

sense of warmth and comfort, is also used by Van Sant to support the fact that Will enjoys the isolation and the books around him are enough to accompany him. This shot alone gives away the interpretation that Will lives in his own world where he enjoys being alone.

4. Private

The next characteristics the researcher finds about Will is private. Will Hunting is a private individual who does not like to talk about personal stuff. Another way to find characteristics is through appearance. Mannerisms of a character reflects on their characteristics. In the first scenes of the film, the viewers recognizes Will as a janitor in Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As the scene goes by, the viewers can see that Will has interests in the unsolved theorem that Professor Lambeau put in the board hall. Even Will tries to remember the theorem and later he will solve it back at his apartment. However, Will tries his best not to be seen while proving the theorem. Will decides to prove the theorem when no one is around. Not only that but when Professor Lambeau catches him trying to answer the theorem, Will runs away from him and apologizes. This gives an impression that Will does not want anyone to know that he is a genius.

This characteristic of Will is also pointed out by the a monologue that Sean says during therapy with Will,

SEAN. There is an honor in takin' that 40-minute train ride so those college kids could come in the morning and their floors are clean and their trash cans will be empty is an honorable man. [Will says nothing.]

And when they get drunk and puke in the sink, they don't have to see it the next morning because of you. That's a real work, Will. And there is honor in that. Which I'm sure is why you took the job. I just want to know why you decided to sneak around at night, writing on chalkboards and lying about it. 'Cause there's no honor in that.
(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 104)

Through Sean's observation that he expresses through a monologue shows that Will does not want to share to others about his intelligence.

Another evidences can be found through little things that Will do with other characters. Will rarely tells what is going on with him even to his best friend. In the scene where Will and Chuckie lay bricks, Chuckie only discovers that Will that Will has broken up with Skylar a week ago. Despite the fact that Will and his gang hang out almost every night, Will barely tells them about his life. Will prefers to keep things to himself and later in the film, the viewers discovers that he has a trust issue.

Will's private characteristic is also shown when Will meets the series of therapists that Professor Lambeau sets up with, including Sean. The confidence that Will says about him not needing any help holds him back to open up with the therapists. Instead of trying to open up with the therapists, Will insults the therapists to prevent them to know deeper about him.

Sean: Why is he (Will) hiding? Why is he a janitor? Why doesn't he trust anybody? Because the first thing that happened to him, he was abandoned by the people who were supposed to love him the most.
(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 110)

In this scene, Sean reveals to Professor Lambeau why he is so private. Will has a hard time trusting other people because he has traumatic events in his past; where he was abandoned by his birth parents.

5. Stubborn

One way to characterize a character is through the dialogues. Will's stubbornness is shown through things he says to other characters. Seeing Will's potential, Professor Lambeau will not let it go to waste by bailing Will out. Professor Lambeau bails him out with two conditions; Will has to work with Professor Lambeau and Will sees a therapist.

LAMBEAU. I've spoken to the judge, and he's agreed to release you under my supervision. Under two conditions.
 WILL. [suspicious] Really?
 LAMBEAU. Yes. Under two conditions. That you meet with me twice every week. [a beat] and you meet with a therapist.
 WILL. I'll do the math but I'm not going to meet with a therapist.
 (Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 31)

This dialogue between Will and Professor Lambeau taken in the investigation room shows that Will does not think that he needs any therapy. This mindset of Will keeps going on even until Will meets Sean. During the scenes where Will meets series of therapists that Professor Lambeau sets up with, Will does not want to cooperate with them. Instead of talking about himself, Will insults the therapists and distracts them from him.

LAMBEAU. I told you to cooperate with these people.
 WILL. C'mon, that guy was a fuckin' piece of work.
 [Will gets up and adopts a hypnotic persona in front of Lambeau]
 [spooky voice] Look...into my eyes.

LAMBEAU. Get out, Will.

WILL. Okay...don't forget to get another therapist for next week.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 40)

B. The tendency of Will Hunting's attachment style as seen in his characteristics portrayed in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*

After analyzing Will Hunting's characteristics, there are important characteristics that affect Will's ways to interact with people around him. This part continues with analysis of the tendency of Will's attachment style as portrayed in Gus Van Sant's *GWH*.

The researcher uses *Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process* by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver taken from *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* as the main theory to analyze the tendency of Will's attachment style. According to Fraley & Shaver, attachment style is described as someone's patterns of expectation, needs, and social behavior in a relationship (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, pp. 25). Characteristics are patterns of social behavior, therefore the tendency of attachment style can be seen through someone's characteristics. According to Hazan and Shaver, there are three kinds of attachment style; which are anxious attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and secure attachment style. In this part, the researcher uses addition sources related to attachment style theories to back up the researcher's finding about Will's tendency of attachment style.

Drawing the conclusion of Will's characteristics, the researcher has found the tendency of Will's attachment style. The tendency of Will's attachment style

which is portrayed in *GWH* is avoidant attachment style. In this section, the researcher also has found that not only Will's characteristics, but also Will's childhood experiences with his primary caregivers have a role in supporting Will's current attachment style.

Will is a private young man. Will does not want to share deeply information about him to people around him. Although Will realizes that he likes Skylar, but Will decides to lie about his upbringing. Will does not realize that Skylar genuinely wants to know Will better, yet Will thinks that Skylar will not like him for who he is. During the scene where Skylar and Will fight, Skylar challenges Will to be honest with her about his upbringing. Will gets upset because she wants to know more about him and he said, *"Oh, is that what this is really about? You want to hear that I don't have any brothers? That I'm a fuckin' orphan? Is that what you want to hear?"* (Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 96). Later then in the scene, Will reveals that he was abused as a kid and he is really sure that Skylar does not want to be with people like him.

Unlike people who have secure attachment, avoidants do not feel like sharing their intimate thoughts and feelings. Will mostly keeps his feelings to himself, as the result his relationship with Skylar is not honest. Not only Skylar, but Will also keeps things to himself to his best friend, Chuckie. Although they hang out in the bar almost every night, Will does not tell Chuckie much about what is happening with his life. For the example, Chuckie does not even know

that Will and Skylar have broken up for almost a week until Chuckie asks about Skylar when Will and him are working in construction job.

Will has been a loner in his entire life. He surrounds himself with books and his only inner circle is Chuckie and two others. Will has a hard time trusting people and he always looks for reasons to distance himself with new people in his life. The easiest evidence to show Will's tendency of avoidant attachment style is Will's relationship with Skylar, the love interest in the film. During Will's therapy session with Sean, it is discovered that Will indeed avoids meeting Skylar after his first date with her.

WILL. I went on a date last week.

SEAN. How'd it go?

WILL. It was good.

SEAN. Well, are you going out again?

Will: I don't know.

Sean: Why not?

Will: Haven't called her. ...

SEAN. Jesus Christ, you are an amateur.

WILL. I know what I'm doing. She's different from the other girls I met.

We have a really good time. She's smart, beautiful, fun...

SEAN. So Christ, call her up.

WILL. Why, so I can realize she's not that smart. That she's boring? You don't get it. Right now she's perfect, I don't want to ruin that.

SEAN. Maybe you're perfect right now. Maybe you don't wanna ruin that.

Well, I think that's a great philosophy, Will. That way, you can go through your entire life without ever having to really know anybody.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 63)

The dialogue above between Will and Sean shows that Will distances himself from Skylar even though it was only their first date. Will even admits that Skylar is different from the girls he had dated in the past. Therefore, Will is being extra careful because he knows that Skylar is smart. In the dialogue, Sean points out that one of the reasons why Will avoids Skylar is because Will scared that Skylar

will find out that Will is not perfect; therefore she will leave him. Therefore, Will lies about his upbringing. Will is an orphan and in the orphan he was abused by the foster father. As a result, Will protects himself from getting hurt from anyone. Avoidant style tend to be self-reliant and independent in their romantic relationships.

Will's avoidance tendency is also shown through his aggressive characteristics. According to Bowlby, anger in adults can be functional because it is intended to bring a better future state of a relationship, therefore he calls it "anger of hope". He also mentions that anger becomes destructive to a relationship and can lead to violence or death; therefore he calls it the "anger of despair." (Bowlby as cited in Mikulincer & Shaver, pp. 6). Mikulincer added that functional anger is tend to be found in secure attachment styles. On the other hand, avoidant individuals tend to suppress their anger and express it only in indirect ways (pp. 7). Will does not direct his anger straightforward to the person he is angry with. Will tend to expresses his anger to other objects, for the example his job which is laying bricks.



Figure 15

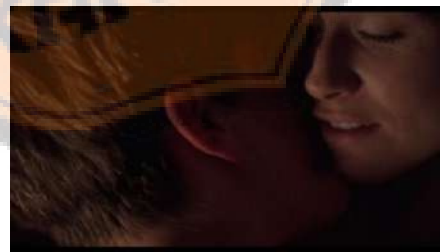


Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

Bartholomew and Alison said that avoidant individuals tend to become violent in the midst of escalating domestic conflicts, especially if their partner was anxiously attached and demanded their involvement. In a scene where Skylar asks Will to move to California with her, Demanding Skylar who asks for more involvement in Will's life makes Will uncomfortable and therefore trigger his short temper (Figure 17). In the scene, Will argues with Skylar until he raises his hand to strike her.

The development of Will's attachment with Skylar is also supported by the film's usage of POV. Although Will is having a hard time to be closer with Skylar due to this attachment style, Will shows progression on getting close to her step by step. During Will and Skylar's progress in their relationship, as seen in Figure 15 and Figure 16, Van Sant uses indirect-subjective POV. This POV shot is used to show close Will and Skylar are; physically and metaphorically in their mental state. A close-up on the characters' faces are used in order to make the viewers to see and feel the characters' feelings more vividly (Boggs & Petrie, 2006, pp.130-132). This POV technique is used during the scenes where Will and Skylar starts getting closer on their date (Figure 15) and in Skylar's apartment (Figure 16). In a scene as shown in Figure 15, Will explains to Skylar

how his genius mind works during their date in a cafe. This scene shows that Will is indeed opening himself up to Skylar. Through the extreme close-up in Figure 16, this shot creates a sense of voyeurism, as if the viewers are in the room with them. This technique makes the viewers can feel the warmth and closeness within two characters. Therefore, Will and Skylar's development in their relationship is shown through the point of view film technique.

However, their relationship development decreases as Will realizes that Skylar wants something more serious in their relationship. This step back of their relationship is showed in a scene where Skylar asks Will to come along to California with her. Will suddenly feels uncomfortable by Skylar's demand, so he reacts negatively and detach himself from deeper intimacy with Skylar. This interpretation is supported by the camera technique changes into eye-level medium two shots (Figure 17 and Figure 18) and the viewers will notice that Will and Skylar are not seen in the same frame again since then. These shots show that there is a distance again that Will creates due to the uncomfortable feeling that Will feels as they get into more serious relationship.

According to Hazan and Shaver, the recollection of someone's relationship with the first caregiver influences attachment style in adulthood. Further research found that physically abused children more often demonstrated an avoidant attachment organization and manifested significantly higher levels of aggression in characteristics, compared to non-abused/non-neglected children (Wiebe, 2006:7). In the movie, the story reveals that Will is a victim of

abandonment by his real parents and during Will's time in the orphanage, his foster father abused him. Through this tragedy, Will's recollections of his caregivers are mostly negative; by the fact that he was rejected by his real family and abused by the replacement of first caregiver. Avoidant style of attachment usually have cold, aloof, self-preoccupied, and rejecting relationship between their parents in early childhood (Levy et al, 1998, pp.407) which matches with Will's relationship with his parents and his foster father; unavailable, cold, and rejecting.

C. Will Hunting's defense mechanisms usage in order to cope with Will's attachment style in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*

After discovering the tendency of Will Hunting's attachment style seen in his characteristics, the research continues with the defense mechanisms that Will Hunting uses in order to cope with his attachment style. Throughout the years, the theories of defense mechanism were stated by many psychologists. Defense mechanisms defined as unconscious mental processes that are used to protect the self from painful emotions, ideas, and drives and may used to regulate emotions experienced in relationship (Freud as cited from Wiebe, 2006, p. 9).

As the researcher has discussed in the previous point, Will Hunting who has been found that he has tendency of having an avoidant attachment style, his defense mechanism to cope with his anxiety are often driven unconsciously. Looking at the evidence in the film and trying to analyze it with the theory of

defense mechanism, some of Will Hunting's behaviour can be categorized to avoidance, projection, and denial defense mechanisms.

In the previous problem formulation, the researcher has found that Will Hunting fits into the category of avoidant attachment style; a style where an individual will keep a distance to a closeness or intimate relationship. Therefore, Will applies avoidance defense mechanism in his behaviors. This theory applies where Will admits to Sean that he has not contacted Skylar after their first date even though Will likes her. When Sean asks the reason why Will does not ask Skylar out again, Will gives an excuse that he does not want to ruin how perfect the image of Skylar to him right now. Although Sean snaps at Will by saying that maybe Will does not want Skylar to know that he is not perfect yet he twists it, this reveals that it is actually Will avoids meeting Skylar because he does not want Skylar to get to know himself deeper. Will perhaps does not want Skylar to discover that Will is not the man who he says he is and she then decides to leave him. The application of avoidance defense mechanism can also be found with the fact that whenever Will is staying over with Skylar, they always stay at Skylar's dorm room. Later in the movie, Skylar mentions that she has never seen Will's apartment and then Will gives an excuse that it is so far from where she lives. The real reason why Will lies about this is because Will is avoiding Skylar to actually get to know the real him.

Projection defense mechanism, which is a shifting action on one's thought or emotions onto someone else, is also found in Will's behavior. The most noticeable behavior that reflects projection is when Will and Skylar argue.

SKYLAR. Well, what aren't you scared of? You live in your safe little world where nobody challenges you and you're scared shitless to do anything else-

WILL. Don't tell me about my world. You're the one that's afraid. You just want to have your little fling with the guy from the other side of town and marry some rich prick from Stanford that your parents will approve of. Then you'll sit around with the rest of trust-fund babies and talk about how you went slummin' too.

SKYLAR. I inherited the money when I was 13, when my father died. That money's a burden to me. Every day I wake up and I wish I could give that back. I'd give everything to spend one more day with my father. But that's life. And I deal with it. So don't put your shit on me. You're the one that's afraid.

WILL. What the fuck am I afraid of?

SKYLAR. You're afraid of me. You're afraid that I won't love you back.

And guess what? I'm afraid too. But fuck it, at least I'm honest with you.

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 94-95)

In this scene, Will projects his fear onto Skylar by saying that Skylar does not want to be with him; because Will comes from a society that is lower than Skylar's. Will even indirectly mentions that Skylar is just experimenting by being with someone poorer than her. Will is only a janitor in Massachusetts Institute of Technology, meanwhile Skylar is a student of Harvard University. Skylar, an intellectual woman, realizes that Will is projecting his fear onto her and decides to snap back at him. Will, fights back, by revealing everything about him and says that Skylar does not want to hear that. Once again, Will twists his feelings again towards Skylar; when in fact Skylar does want to know about Will deeper. This reveals that Will is the one who does not want to reveal and be vulnerable to

Skylar. Will is trying to protect himself from getting hurt in case Skylar wants to leave him because she knows the truth about Will.

The last defense mechanism that Will Hunting uses to cope with his attachment style is denial. As an avoidant attachment style individual, he feels uncomfortable with closeness and one of the ways to reject more closeness is by denying anything. Denial is when an individual believes that the problem does not exist when in fact, there is a problem to fix on. Will is a perfect example for that. Before meeting Sean, Will meets with bunch of therapists that Professor Lambeau has set up with. After a failed session with one of the therapists, Will repeatedly says that he does not want to go to therapy and his denial is also shown through the way he interacts with the therapists he meets.

Will, who has a gifted characteristic that is genius, uses his intellect to get out of this situation where he has to open up with the therapists. Whenever the therapists ask him about something personal, Will always denies it and not owning his problem or even changing the subject. One of the usage of denial defense mechanism's examples is when Will denies that he loves Skylar during the fight. When Skylar confronts him of his lies, Will does not respond it positively and he replies that he does not love Skylar. Even after few days after the fight when Will calls Skylar, Skylar says "I love you" to Will and Will does not answer. Will keeps denying that he actually loves Skylar, but his fear is holding him back.

Each attachment style has differences in coping mechanisms with stressful events or events that trigger their anxiety. It has been found in a study that individuals who are insecurely attached (anxious & avoidant attachments) use significantly greater defense mechanisms than the secure attachment style do (Hoffman, p. 41). Meanwhile fear of abandonment can be a defense mechanism, but in Will Hunting case, fear of abandonment is actually his core issue. His fear of abandonment was caused by his childhood experiences. Although fear of abandonment can be function as a defense, but if the fear happens frequently it can be categorized as a core issue. As Sean mentioned, Will was abandoned by the one, Will's mother, who were supposed love him the most.

SEAN. Why is he hiding? Why is he a janitor? Why doesn't he trust anybody? Because the first thing that happened to him was that he was abandoned by the people who were supposed to love him the most!

.....

SEAN. And who do you think he's handling? He pushes people away before they have a chance to leave him. And for 20 years he's been alone because of that. And if you try to push him into this, it's going to be the same thing all over again. And I'm not going to let that happen to him!

(Damon & Affleck, 1996, pp. 110-111)

Even after Will was abandoned and he put in foster house, Will was abused by his foster father. These recurring events left Will with an impression that people will leave and hurt him in the end. Hoffman mentions that the absence of secure attachment during growing up, individuals may have to rely on defense mechanisms to protect themselves. As the result, it lead to a fixation at developmental stage which individuals have to use defense mechanism in daily basis (Hoffman, p. 45). Will's core issue about fear of abandonment actually led

him into growing up with avoidant attachment style; where his defense mechanism back him up to protect him daily. Even during Will's last sessions with Sean, Will has aware of his condition because of his intellect. Will says to Sean, *"So, uh, what is it, like.. Will has an attachment disorder? Is it all that stuff? Fear of abandonment? Is that why I broke up with Skylar?"* (GWH, 1:48:38 - 1:48:44).



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



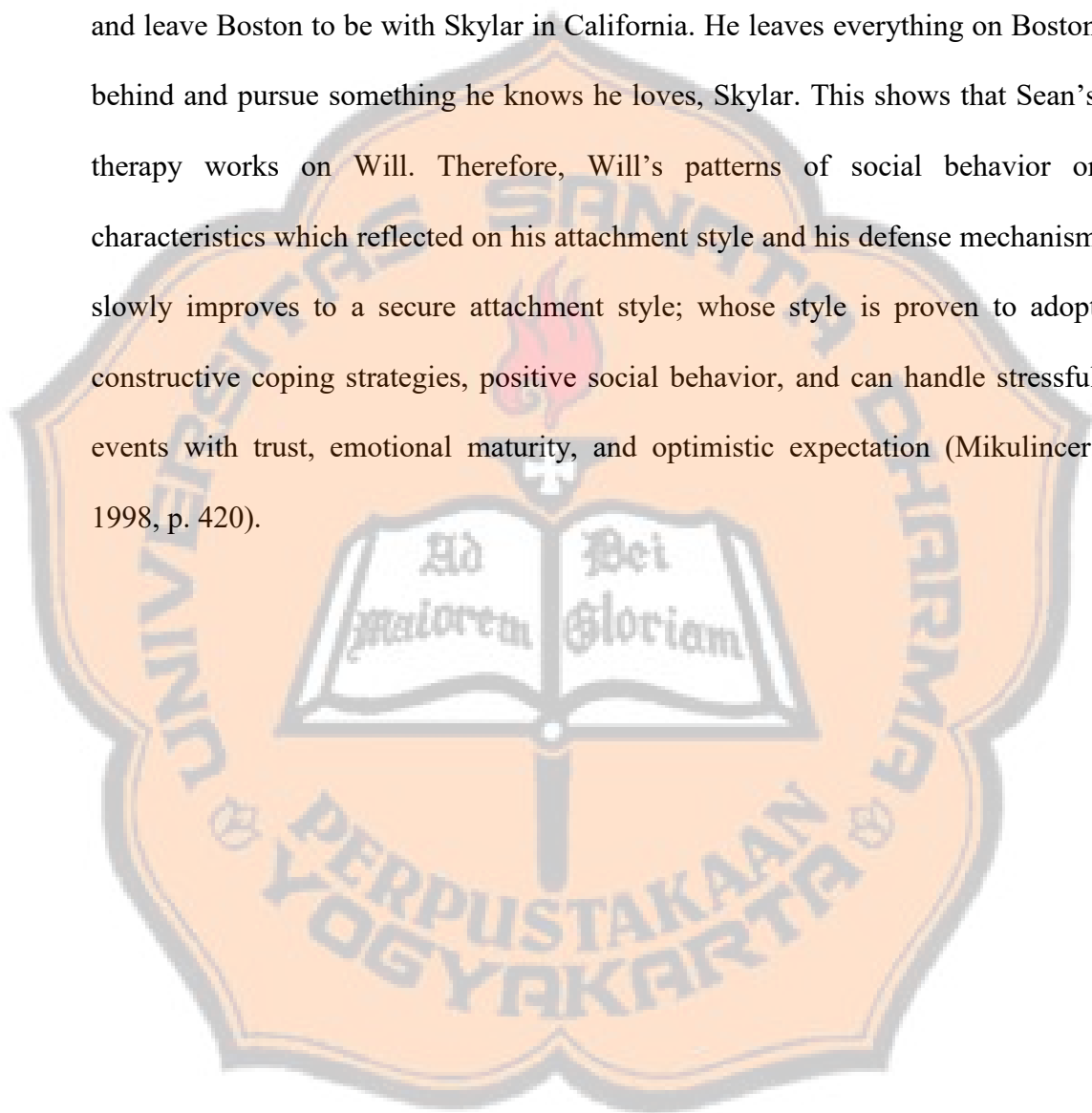
Figure 23

Even though it is a long journey, Van Sant uses the camera angles technique to show to the viewers how Will and Sean build a healthy and trusting relationship through a therapy. During Will's first therapy session with Sean (Figure 19), Van Sant uses eye-level shot; a shot where the viewers have the same level as the observer would see the scene. Through this shot, the viewers see that Will actually sits across and quite far from Sean sits. This placement creates a distance between the two characters; as the scene shows that Will verbally attacks Sean because Will does not want to open up to Sean.

After a scene where Sean breaks Will in the park, the relationship between the two of them grows as Van Sant uses aerial view or bird-eye's shot to show this progress (Figure 20). Van Sant uses a shot from the above so the viewers can see that Will is sitting closer to Sean. The placement where Will sits also can be interpreted as the condition of Will's state of mind about his relationship with Sean, as Will starts to open up and talks about himself more comfortably around Sean (Figure 21).

The next therapy sessions as it represents by Figure 22 and Figure 23, Van Sant uses POV technique to show their relationship grows. Objective POV in GWH is used during these two scene to give an interpretation from the position where Will sits or stands to the viewers that Will feels safe around Sean. They finally build a healthy, trusting relationship like individuals who have secure attachment style; where Will can open up to someone and find comfort in intimacy without feeling fear of abandonment.

An unhealthy attachment style of someone which leads to negative use of defense mechanism can be improved to a secure attachment style through a therapy. As Will's therapy session finishes, Will decides to pack his things up and leave Boston to be with Skylar in California. He leaves everything on Boston behind and pursue something he knows he loves, Skylar. This shows that Sean's therapy works on Will. Therefore, Will's patterns of social behavior or characteristics which reflected on his attachment style and his defense mechanism slowly improves to a secure attachment style; whose style is proven to adopt constructive coping strategies, positive social behavior, and can handle stressful events with trust, emotional maturity, and optimistic expectation (Mikulincer, 1998, p. 420).



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this last chapter, the researcher comes to conclusion of the analysis of defense mechanism on Will Hunting's attachment style. The researcher has three problems which have been discussed in the previous chapters.

The first problem is discovering Will Hunting's characteristics portrayed in the film. Using the theory of character and characterization by Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie, the researcher has found that Will Hunting's characteristics are gifted, aggressive, loner, private, and stubborn. Even though Will is mathematics genius, Will only works as a janitor in MIT and secretly finishes other people's formula. He also has long lists of criminal records which is a prove that he is an aggressive young man. The film also supports the interpretation of Will characteristics portrayed in the film through the color scheme, point of view, camera angles and camera movements. Will is considered as a loner person because he spends most of his time reading books alone in his apartment, as the film shows how isolated Will is through high angle shot. Will's characteristics of being private and stubborn are shown during his therapy session as Will has a hard time of opening up about who he is and he still believes that he does not need any therapy session.

The researcher has found that Will's characteristics have tendency to fall into avoidant attachment style by using theory of attachment style by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver. Avoidant attachment style is concerned with

discomfort with closeness or intimate relationships. Will's tendency in having avoidant attachment style can be seen through his aggressiveness, his loner tendencies, and also the way he kept everything private about his life. Not only his characteristics, but Will's upbringing also showed the tendency of avoidant attachment style. Avoidant individuals usually have a cold, rejecting relationship with their primary caregivers, which was matched with Will's recollection of his caregivers; unavailable and abusive.

Each attachment style has differences in coping mechanisms with stressful events, and it has been found by Hoffman that individuals who are insecurely attached use significantly greater defense mechanism than secure attachment style do. The researcher used a defense mechanism theory by Lois Tyson. Will used avoidance, projection, and denial defense mechanism. In addition, the researcher also found Will's core issue. It appeared that Will's core issue is fear of abandonment. Will's bad recollection of childhood by being abandoned by his real mother and abused by his foster father, it left Will with an impression that everyone will leave him; which lead him into having an avoidant attachment style and used defense mechanism to protect himself from getting hurt. Although Will went to therapy sessions was a struggle, the film showed Will's progress in having better, healthier style; secure attachment style, through the usage camera angle technique such as eye-level shot and bird-eye's shot.

Film, has become one of the most popular form of literary works, not only can be enjoyed by watching the film itself but also can be analyzed deeply

through the narratives and the film techniques that supports more interpretation. In this research, people can learn more about psychological aspect such as defense mechanisms and attachment. Literary works and its analysis can broaden people's minds because literature is the reflection of human's lives.



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APPENDIX

Appendix: Summary of Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*

Will Hunting is a janitor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology who has genius-level intelligence. He spends his day working and during nights he goes to the bars to get drunk with his buddies. One day, Will secretly solves a mathematics theorem on MIT's chalkboard as a challenge from a MIT's professor, Gerald Lambeau. Will is discovered in the act of solving it, and Lambeau initially tracks Will down. Meanwhile, Will attacks his kindergarten bully which leads him into imprisonment after hitting a police officer. Lambeau goes to Will's trial and bails him out on two conditions: Will works personally for Lambeau and Will has to see a therapist to help him with his aggressiveness and defensive personality.

After failure meetings with five therapists due to Will's uncooperative behaviors, Will meets Sean McGuire. Will pushes Sean on the edge by insulting him because he thinks he does not need therapy, yet Sean does not want to give up on him. Meanwhile, Will meets a beautiful woman, Skylar, in Harvard bar. Even though Will likes Skylar, Will keeps avoiding and making up lies to her about his upbringing. When Skylar asks Will to move to California with her, where she will begin her medical school at Stanford, Will freaks out and throws accusations that she does not want to be with Will if she knows the truth. Will angrily expresses his secret upbringing and leaves Skylar.

Will goes to another therapy session and he and Sean share that they were both victims of child abuse. Will reveals that he was an orphan who was abandoned by his biological mother and abused by his foster father. Sean then repeats reassurances that “It’s not your fault” then Will breaks down and acknowledges his inner demons. Will then realizes that his inner demons are holding him back for him to become whoever he wants to be and decides to take charge of his life other than being a janitor in MIT.

After Will’s 21st birthday, he finally leaves the only place he has been in his entire life, Boston. The movie ends with Will drives up to California to be with Skylar and embarks an unpredictable future with her.