Eva Kapytskaya

Ms. Thomasen

English 12

December 20, 2019

*Human Connections*

Identities [are] from the decisions that one makes on a regular basis, constantly layering one’s interactions, experiences, and building connections with others. Though relationships are more sophisticated, as they can be formed in numerous circumstances. **It can be said that relationships are one of the most important when forming our identities and influence the decisions one makes**. Directed by Gus Van Sant; *Good Will Hunting*, conveys that one cannot be alone when facing an emotional crisis. Will Hunting is someone with potential for success in mathematics and science, however, [he] is also someone who pushes anyone away from his feelings and persistently hides from his past, but with help from the sympathetic Dr Sean Maguireto, he eventually finds the will to love again. Written by Nick Hornby *“High Fidelity”* introduces the secluded music junkie, Rob Gordon, who foregoes on a journey of reconciliation to understand what he fails at in relationships, and hopefully make it up to Laura, his long-time girlfriend, who left him. Finally, directed by Olivier Nakache and Èric Toledano from France, “*The Intouchables”* is a story of two people, Driss and Philippe, who are from opposite sides of the economical spectrum, find an unexpected and unique bond of friendship, [which] emphasize that relationships can be found in unusual ways. **Similarly, *High Fidelity*, *Good Will Hunting* and *The Intouchables* portrays characters who have collective relationships with friends and family. While “High Fidelity” and “Good Will Hunting” have characters that cling to a fear of betrayal or abandonment based on past relationships, “The Intouchables” conveys the impact of exposing vulnerability. Although Will’s experiences are much more severe than Rob’s, Driss’s or Philippe’s, it is clear that all characters struggle with the decisions that affect their future. Thankfully, these characters find support from those who are willing to listen and guide them through their self-doubts; therefore, these sources show the importance of human connections when facing struggle.**

 Maneuvering out of crisis, to steer clear of potential strife is an everyday battle, and these characters are looking to avoid their own problems. To start with, Will’s hidden past of being orphaned, travelling foster home to home where he should be ‘loved’ by these unknown figures, instead receives non-justifiable punishment. As Will reached adulthood, he already solidified his conviction that he should not chase after love as it would only bring grief to him and his significant other. Therefore, he never ventures out of his ‘safe’ kingdom of South Boston and to explore the world outside of books: [His counselor tells him] “So if I asked you about art, you'd probably give me the skinny on every art book ever written. Michelangelo, you know a lot about him. Life's work, political aspirations, him and the pope, sexual orientations, the whole works, right? But I'll bet you can't tell me what it smells like in the Sistine Chapel. You've never actually stood there and looked up at that beautiful ceiling; seen that…You don't know about real loss, 'cause it only occurs when you've loved something more than you love yourself. And I doubt you've ever dared to love anybody that much. And look at you... I don't see an intelligent, confident man... I see a cocky, scared \*\*\*\*less kid.” (*Van Sant*) There is no doubt that someone can make a living only using book smarts, however, as Will meets his lover, Will’s circumstances change, and is inexperienced on how to react. With his fear of being hurt again, Will only sees the option to abandon that opportunity and avoid anyone who would expose him to that situation. From *Fidelity*, starting roughly in secondary school, Rob had difficulty managing his relationships. Assumingly, he falls short on support or giving comfort, or receive the notion to stop before a line is crossed and as he learns what not to do, the slips ups build up. Therefore, it gives him anxiety about what can happen and how he would feel in the aftermath. Since, he holds these insecurities, he tries to avoid grief and aloneness. “…I was afraid because I didn’t want to lose her, and we always lose someone, or they lose us, in the end. I’d rather not take the risk… Its fairer, probably. And less emotional, somehow, than the usual mess that ends relationships,” (Horny 249). Rob believes that being in a relationship was not worth the worry after having ‘she erases my number’ many times. He blames himself, having low self-esteem and views himself as ‘not interesting’, which may result him in treating everything with a passive manner. That pain prevented him from seeing the true impact of his actions and how [he] can improve, [not until] when Laura left him. Rob continues to pursue relationships regardless, while Will chooses to neglect them all together. They have different views; however, the reason for their behavior is the same because they both live through unfortunate or troubling circumstances. They still made a similar choice to avoid situations they are afraid to face and escape from the reality of their situation.

Each with unique pasts, these characters fear abandonment, betrayal or the truth about themselves. Being thrown into unfavored occurrences, it’s no surprise for someone to be more anxious and susceptible to making bad decisions, and one’s uncontrollable fears add more [unnecessary pressure]. For example in *Intouchables*, Philippe lives the life of luxury as being from a wealthy family, carefree and supported; the opposite of Will and Rob. However, the assumingly perfect lifestyle left Philippe vulnerable to shattering, when he is in a para—gliding accident, he becomes permanently disable and his wife does not make it, leaving him alone and devoid of joy. He states “My true disability is not having to be in a wheel chair. It's having to be without her”, *(Nakache).* Philippe receives more emotional impact from [the loss] of his wife, as he falls into a state of limbo in the film, refusing to eat, sleep and neglecting to parent his adopted daughter. Eventually, Philippe does speak with another woman and contact her through mail; however, neglects telling her of his disability with the intention of making a good impression. Ultimately, he fears her opinion of him when she learns his condition. He himself could not take the chance for he pictures the worst scenario because he feels vulnerable, in addition, he grew a habit of always concerning his appearance since he is with a noble background. While, in *Good Hunting*, Will’s fear is his main drive, as he only experience relationships from the people in foster homes and with abuse included, he understands it as only a danger. “He used to just put a belt, a stick, and a wrench on the table. Just say, "Choose."” *(Van Sant).* Will is beaten and is alone in his childhood, since this is what he experiences, Will starts to fear having close relatives or relations. Since he sees a ‘dad’ drunken rage on a regular basis, it gives Will the picture of [what he grows] into. Therefore, he sees this as what a relationship would be like, therefore doesn’t pursue it, in fear of hurting others.

It’s almost impossible to live a life without meeting others that are [veterans of solving crises], hence there are individuals that hold more understanding about certain circumstances and can assist others out of theirs. To recap, Will avoids having close bonds and neglects achieving a suitable career; therefore, hides his wicked intelligence. Though Will accidentally grabs the attention of Gerald Lambeau (to be known as Gerry), a Math Professor at Harvard University, who offers to work under his wing. Along with solving advanced mathematics, Gerry makes Will go through many sessions with Therapists, eventually meeting Dr. Sean Maguireto who, where others fail, form a ‘father-to-son’ bond with Will. [Sean insights Will;] “You're not perfect, sport, and let me save you the suspense: this girl you've met, she's not perfect either. But the question is whether or not you're perfect for each other.” (*Van Sant)* Sean is able to set the bar straight and tell exactly to Will what is wrong with him. He is most likely the first to give Will what he really needs because he himself literally comes from the same neighborhood as Will. Eventually, Sean gets Will to realize that none of the abuse that he experienced were done by his actions, simply stating “it’s not your fault”, over and over, it the point that Will breaks down in relief (*Good)*. It proves how much of a difference for people to help one another. From *Intouchables,* being disabled from his wife and then literally being disabled is obviously Philippe’s turning point in his life, however, not as one expects. Driss is Philippe’s attendant and holds no regard for his employer’s condition, constantly telling jokes, plays around during his tasks: he shatters the formal and pristine atmosphere of a French wealthy family and Philippe loves it. [Driss quotes] “We listened to your classics. Now it's time to listen to mine.” (*Nakache*). Philippe offers Driss to stay at his mansion while he works, showing the observer that two people are sharing music with each other, touching each other’s worlds, therefore, he offers a fresh perspective to Philippe. Driss is able to look on the opposite side of things than people around him would not, like not being afraid to speak his mind about the worth of a painting; refusing to take Philippe in a van and instead takes Philippe in a joy ride in a high-value car. He acting as Philippe’s escape from reality [of his dilemma]. This really shows the impact of a human connection, especially when Philippe decides to skip meeting his potential lover out of fear, Driss comes in and surprise Philippe with a date with that significant other.

[In conclusion, these characters gained connections with people who become special to them and impacts their lives in more ways than one. To summarize, Rob learns of his real fear of living with his mistakes which cause many of his relationships to fail and avoid fixing them. While with Will, he cast away future due to his fears of abandonment and refuses any close interactions with anyone. Overall, these choices cause the characters self-doubts to further deepen; similarly, with Philippe as his life takes a huge turn and needs to face it, though does not understand how. Regardless, they meet people they formed personal connections with, begin to trust them and receive help and support in order: like Philippe meets Driss who becomes a true friend with Philippe and help push him forward.] Overall, these people find someone they can count on as people still have similar experiences with [relationships, travel and society]. In addition, forming human connections are a part of how one builds character, even if someone makes mistakes, how one responds to that circumstance is still part of life.

**Work Citied**

*Good Will Hunting*. Directed by Gus Van Sant, Miramax Films, 5 Dec. 1997.

Hornby, Nick. *High Fidelity*. New York (N.Y.), Riverhead, 2000.

*Les Intouchables*. Directed by Olivier Nakache and Èric Toledano, The Weinstein Company, 23 Sept. 2011.

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