Ignorance And Fear Of Different In Good Will Hunting

Social Comment: In generations past, as a result of the segregation and institutionalisation of people who were seen as ‘different’, most people were quite unaware of the true unique qualities and needs, of individuals with disability. This unfortunate ignorance and fear sometimes still persists today. In our society today we often look at individuals with any disability as ‘less than’ or ‘incapable of success’, Good Will Hunting helps bring to light these inexcusable attitudes of society and in doing so shows the audience not only how we as fellow citizens should treat one another but also the capability and potential they hold if we would not look down upon them and give them a fair go.

Ever since the rise and ongoing popularity of the film industries in our society, directors and producers all work together to ensure the film conveys their perspective on significant social and political issues they wish to explore or bring to the attention of the public and potential viewers. Good Will Hunting is a poetic story of a young man's struggle to find his place in the world by first finding out who he is. Will Hunting is a troubled mathematical genius diagnosed with a psychological disorder with an acute awareness of the depth of the human soul. As a result of his troubled background and mental disorder, Will holds no value and is often disregarded in the eyes of the public. The movie is the adventure through the mind of Will Hunting as he is forced by legal instruction to endure therapy as an alternative of jail time. With the help of the psychologist, Sean (Robbie Williams), Will discovers himself and realizes his value in the world by understanding what matters to him most. This powerful film inspires societal understanding of people who by society are seen as ‘different’, as well as hope for a change in our society. The producers of ‘Good Will Hunting’ use countless film techniques which portray to viewers their own position on the topic. Gus Van Sant's directing combined with the writing talents of Matt Damon & Ben Affleck (who plays Will's best friend, Chuckie), is a dynamic combination of technical aspects used to evoke emotion and empathy. This ensures that the film promotes an education emphasizing the social attitudes society towards people with disabilities. Colour, Symbolism and music are significant in highlighting the ignorance and lack of understanding within our society.

Throughout most of Good Will Hunting, very natural colours are used. Van Sant's use of warm ambers is an inventive way to create a sense of humanity and creates a strong sense of empathy for Will. Whenever Will is in a place he feels safe and comfortable, the colours are very warm and inviting. For example, when he is in Skylar's (Minnie Driver) room at Harvard, or in Sean's (Robin Williams) office, or his apartment, the dominant colour is amber. This creates a wonderful sense of warmth and the viewer realizes at these times Will isn't wearing any masks. He is being himself because he feels safe in these situations and has no guide up. The times when Will is in a place where he is hiding within himself, or doesn't have that safe feeling, Van Sant does a very noticeable colour shift to the cold colours, such as blue and white. This creates a sense of manipulation and unrest. It is very impersonal. One example is Will's first meeting with Sean. He is looking at a painting that hangs on the window and as he is looking at it, he is analysing its artistic value and Sean's life. The closer he gets to the painting, the colder the light gets until the end of the monologue when he is right in front of it and the sunlight creates this look that is very similar to an overexposed photograph. This causes Will to look very surreal, and frightening. It's a great moment of a complete shift in mood within a shot. The

coldness of the shot creates a feeling of calculation and the viewer can understand how Will lashes out when in a situation he doesn't feel comfortable with. This ensures that the social comment is vivid and clear to the audience. This also directs viewers to the emotional feeling of empathy and understanding towards those people who aren’t what society perceive as normal.

Irony, is demonstrated heavily in this movie. Although Will is a mathematical genius, his background would suggest quite the opposite outcome. This shows the viewers and society the social attitudes we unknowingly have towards individuals with disabilities. The movie demonstrates this character. It shows his poverty by his language, clothing, and general attitude in life. He does what he wants when he wants. Cursing amongst him and his friends is commonly shown in the movie, in which becomes somewhat exhausting; however, it shows a great deal of culture and character of Will Hunting. As he is dumped into the hands of Professor Lambeau, he becomes somewhat resistant. It is later revealed that Will resents being smart as he says “I don’t want to spend the rest of my life explaining things to people”. People Like professor Lambeau just wanted to use him. On the others side though, the character Sean, the psychiatrist, becomes a close friend as he teaches Will about love and life, and how to overcome his past. He helps will essentially figure out what it truly is that he wants in his life. As the psychiatrist later explains it to Lambeau “this boy has the gift, just not the direction”. As the article Too Smart for Their Own Good states in the US Catholic “Matt Damon's genius janitor in Good Will Hunting can humiliate MIT professors, but he's about as grown up as the average schoolyard bully.” The Irony is displayed between his upbringing, and social status versus his gift of an almost photographic memory that make him a genius of sorts. Society has an expectation that individuals such as hunting will do poorly and as a result many of them don’t live up to their full potential. Good will hunting use irony to portray to viewers the social attitudes society have towards disabilities.